

# SESAC FOCUS

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how wow

UNLEASHED



SESAC ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

CASSANDRA WILSON  
MARK WILLS



by Bill Velez, President/COO



If you're wondering what's exciting here at SESAC, you need look no further than this issue. What an impressive group of artists and writers, and what a great run SESAC is having in every genre of music. Aside from touring and recording superstars like Bob Dylan and Neil

Diamond, and SESAC's consistently strong showing on the R&B/Hip-Hop charts (led by SESAC's power writer Bryan-Michael Cox), there are breaking rock bands like Thrice, New Found Glory, Trapt, Brand New and the Ataris, consistent AC hitmakers like Jim Brickman, and jazz greats like Cassandra Wilson who continue to create some of today's most beautiful and compelling music. Country luminaries from Joe Nichols to Mark Wills to Jim Lauderdale keep SESAC on that chart on a consistent basis, and the company's deep roster of gospel and blues works just continues to prosper. The perennial success of a song like Albert E. Brumley's "I'll Fly Away," or the signing of a timeless catalog like that of blues legend Robert Johnson, are further testimony to SESAC's ongoing policy of combining deep tradition with cutting edge innovation and affiliating the very best in the business.

Whenever you read about SESAC, you'll see the terms 'strategic growth' and 'selective philosophy' popping up often. More than mere slogans, these tenets are key to this company's long-term growth and continued success. Looking through

this issue of Focus, you'll see the fruits of SESAC's continued vision and long-term commitment to quality over quantity.

Success doesn't happen by accident. At SESAC, it's about people. Whether its providing unbeatable service to our licensees or giving our affiliates the kind of careful attention and good advice that helps them build long, fruitful careers, SESAC's incredible staff is to be congratulated on the company's continued growth. Trevor Gale, SESAC's recently appointed Vice President, Writer/Publisher Relations, is featured here addressing some of the pressing issues facing our industry, but every person in every department is responsible for the great strides SESAC is making every day. We brag a lot about our technological innovations and our state-of-the-art website, but one thing that separates SESAC from the pack has nothing to do with technology. When you call SESAC for help, there's always a very qualified, very real person at the other end of the line. Technology's terrific, but it will never replace the people that keep SESAC running, and winning, every day. ★

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FACING THE MUSIC: SESAC'S VICE PRESIDENT, WRITER/PUBLISHER RELATIONS TREVOR GALE FIELDS THE TOUGH QUESTIONS



When it comes to the music business, SESAC's Trevor Gale has just about seen it all. Prior to joining SESAC in 1996, Gale ran his own full-service music production facility in New York City. He also spent many years as an independent record producer, songwriter and drummer, touring and/or recording with artists like Whitney Houston, Aretha Franklin, Vanessa Williams and Run DMC. Under Gale's leadership, SESAC has seen phenomenal growth in the Urban radio formats. These days he oversees all of SESAC's Writer/Publisher Relations, and, as the following conversation vividly attests, Trevor Gale and SESAC are just getting started.

In light of all the shifting paradigms in the music business, what do you see as the future emphasis for SESAC's Writer/Publisher Relations?

A lot of things are changing in the music business, but some of the important things are staying the same. The actual song is still the most important thing, and that will never change. No matter what artist you have or what musical climate, they all have to sing and perform songs. And if we focus on the best songwriters in every genre, I think it's going to continue to be a fantastic ride for everybody involved, the affiliates and those who work at SESAC.

You've been at SESAC for almost 8 years. How has the company changed in that time from your perspective?

Obviously we have had to deal with the climate of the music industry, and SESAC has maintained a very stable fiscal platform. Basically, bombs have been going off all around us in the industry, but we have been doing well. We've had to make changes in terms of how we do our prime business, which is licensing music for radio and television. There's a lot more research being done in the signing process and how it affects the company's goals, and those are positive changes. The affiliate is part of a team

and part of a family. And we're doing things to protect the rights of those affiliates and protect the economic future of their copyrights by protecting SESAC's economic future.

Talk about how your background prepared and enabled you to take on your expanded role at SESAC.

One of the things my background has helped me to do is to understand quality music. I spent many years producing records, and I take that with me into this job, being able to listen to writers' material and separate those who are strong writers from those who might not be as strong. What's going to save this business is quality artists singing quality songs, and my knowledge of that has been a great help.

Secondly, there's my experience dealing with artistic people and with business people. As a musician on the road you're living and working in very stressful conditions with a lot of creative people, and that teaches you how creative people think. On the other hand, because you've been in those positions of working musician, producer, manager, you learn how to deal on the business side as well. And that too is a science. Mastering those different energies is one of the keys to success and one of the main things I rely on everyday at SESAC.

What is it, do you think, that attracts great songwriters to SESAC?

It's a combination of things. We selectively pursue writers every day, but we're also naturally attracting writers every day. A lot of people look at SESAC as a small, undersized boxer who has fought his or her way up through the ranks in a surprise fashion. They want to be part of that because they see themselves as people who are marching to a different drummer. And the fact that we're able to give a lot of personalized attention is also important. Songwriters, artists and creative people like the

spotlight, they like attention, and they like people really giving a damn about them and not just giving them lip service. And they all walk away from SESAC saying, 'Wow, those people at SESAC really took time to listen and gave me good advice.' As well as paying them fairly for their performances, those things go a long way toward keeping writers at SESAC and attracting people to SESAC.

The record business is going through some hard changes. On the performance side however, profits are higher than ever. What do you think the labels could learn from the performing rights organizations at this pivotal time?

The business model for our product doesn't change that much, and when it does change we're able to move relatively quickly. Whereas the record label model has been the same for years and years, and when people started downloading music, the labels weren't paying attention, and they were reluctant to change. I think they're paying for that. But SESAC has been on the forefront of knowing that every type of performance is still a performance. We're there, whether it's trying to license Internet providers or TV stations. Wherever music is playing, we're there to collect that money.

In your position you deal with a cross-section of genres. How do you educate yourself and assure that you're paying attention to the big picture?

That part is easy for me. I've played and appreciated all kinds of music, and it's all just music to me. I just do my best every day to work with the great Writer/Publisher staff SESAC has in all genres, and I keep myself abreast of what they're working on and what writers they're looking at and listening to. I get to be involved in all these different kinds of music, and that's what's really invigorating about this job. ★



# CASSANDRA Wilson

## Gets Glamoured

by Kevin Zimmerman

For her fourteenth album as a leader, jazz stylist Cassandra Wilson chose the curious, evocative title *Glamoured*. The word, she explains, comes from the Gaelic and literally means “to be whisked away.”



“It’s such a wonderful word, and I feel that it applies to the entire set,” says the singer/songwriter, who co-produced the Blue Note album with Fabrizio Sotti. “It’s designed to evoke a feeling of almost being in a daydream.”

Sessions for the album started in December 2002 in Wilson’s hometown of Jackson, Mississippi, stretching into the new year. Onboard were longtime cronies Brandon Ross (guitar), Jeffrey Haynes (percussion) and Terri Lynne Carrington (drums), along with Gregoire Moret (harmonica), Herlin Riley (drums) and Reginald Veal and Calvin Jones (bass).

At the end, she says, “I really liked what we had done, but I felt that there was something else that was missing that I needed to add to it. The problem was,” she adds with a laugh, “I didn’t know exactly what.”

Towards the end of January, Wilson was back in New York, wrestling with having to attend to unfinished business. A meeting with Sotti at NYC club Sweet Rhythm led to immediate dividends.

“We talked, and I discovered what I’d been missing,” she says. “He has an interesting approach to production, which benefits from the context that he often works in, hip-hop, which allows him to experiment with textures. But he also has a very strong background as a jazz guitarist, which makes for an interesting marriage.”

Sotti’s touch is especially apparent on “I Want More,” which an excited Wilson calls “the feel-good hit. It came about completely by accident—Terri Lynne was playing around with some rhythms on the drums during a rehearsal, and she hit a certain rhythm that Fabrizio then started playing guitar over. I came up with some makeshift lyrics, and the song just developed from there.”

Wilson’s musical studies began in earnest at an age when most of us are still learning the vagaries of Legos. “I’d been playing piano since I was five or six, playing classical music at recitals,” she says. “My father gave me a guitar when I was 12 along with a chord book, and told me that, while I understood the piano, it would be good for me to learn the guitar to help me develop a different approach to music. I really started writing songs on guitar, which is about the same time I began singing.”

Her father was himself an accomplished guitarist, and a wide range of music could be heard in the Wilson household. “I grew up listening to all kinds of things—country, R&B, at a certain age funk and even folk. Growing up, there was a wide variety being played on the radio. In the ‘60s and ‘70s, radio was a different thing than it is today. It was much more organic then, and it exposed me to more kinds of artists than I would have heard otherwise.”

That eclecticism has continued to make itself very much felt in Wilson’s

recordings and concerts: alongside such jazz cornerstones as “Let’s Face the Music and Dance” and “Round Midnight,” the artist has gained a lot of attention—not all of it positive—for tackling such unlikely tunes as The Band’s “The Weight,” The Monkees’ “Last Train to Clarksville” and U2’s “Love Is Blindness.”

That approach is very much in effect on *Glamoured*, whose covers include Sting’s “Fragile,” Bob Dylan’s “Lay Lady Lay” and Patsy Cline’s “Crazy.” The use of such diverse sources has been the subject of criticism from some jazz purists, but Wilson shrugs off such naysayers.

“That’s not a valid argument,” she declares. “Jazz is not represented by the repertoire, but

by the treatment of the music. You can take what otherwise might be mundane material and re-energize it. When you think of ‘A-Tisket, A-Tasket’ by Ella Fitzgerald, that was a nursery rhyme, and while ‘My Favorite Things’ is not the most meaty song out there, John Coltrane did fantastic things with it. That’s what lets you know that you’re dealing with a jazz musician—someone who can manipulate the songs and the atmosphere into something new and interesting.”

### “JAZZ IS NOT REPRESENTED BY THE REPERTOIRE, BUT BY THE TREATMENT OF THE MUSIC.”

Consider that mission accomplished on *Glamoured*. The Dylan tune takes on a sweetly soulful tinge, while “Fragile”—initially suggested to Wilson by Sotti—leads off the album in a haunted, yet hopeful, manner. “I hadn’t really listened to that song’s lyrics before, but I stopped dead in my tracks when I did so, especially because of September 11. It conjures up a story that results in a very emotional and visceral reaction. It deals with a way of coming to terms with the world we live in, and of the preciousness of that.”

The album also includes a cover of “Throw It Away,” a tune originally recorded by Wilson’s longtime friend Abbey Lincoln—but this time with a previously unheard third verse. “I always loved to hear that song on *A Turtle’s Dream* [Lincoln’s 1994 album] but there was a part of the lyric that I was not sure of. I called her to ask her about it, and she gave me the correct lyric and then said, ‘Wait a minute, there’s another verse which I never recorded,’ which she gave me over the phone. It was just a wonderful moment.”

As for what she imagines listeners will take away from *Glamoured*, Wilson says, “I hope that they’ll just tune into the music and allow it to take them away, to get inside it and be ‘glamoured’ by it. It’s good to have moments where you’re rescued from the cold harsh realities that we all face every day.” ★

# Jim BRICKMAN

## Songs in a Season of Joy

by Dan Kimpel

From the sparkling silver lights of celebration to the deep blue hues of solace, Jim Brickman radiates all the sonic colors of the holiday season through a prism of piano music on *Peace*, the SESAC-award-winning artist’s newest release on Windham Hill.

“The goal in instrumental music is to be able to take songs that are hymns, canons or carols, and perform them on instrumental solo piano,” Brickman explains. “You probably wouldn’t hear ‘Hark! the Herald Angels Sing’ on a pop album because most of the carols aren’t covered by vocalists. I tried to stay with the traditional songs rather than the pop songs. I’ve always been more interested in ‘God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman,’ a song you wouldn’t hear Linda Rondstadt, Barbra Streisand or Barry Manilow do as a pop vocal, yet it makes a really cool version as an instrumental.”

Brickman’s songwriting skills shine on the title track, “Peace” (Where the Heart Is), co-written with Nashville tunesmith Keith Follese and sung by country star Collin Raye. For “Sending You a Little Christmas,” the album’s leadoff single, Brickman teamed up in Nashville with two fellow SESAC songwriters, Billy Mann and Victoria Shaw.

“I’ve known Billy for six or seven years,” Brickman says. “Interestingly enough, the only other song I wrote with him that got covered was also a Christmas song. Victoria came up with this title. The three of us wrote it so fast that we looked at each other and wondered, ‘Is this really possible?’”

It seems Brickman has a penchant for accomplishing a variety of tasks with equal velocity. From his beginnings as a jingle composer to his celebrated career as an acclaimed song stylist with a string of gold and platinum releases, his knack for the thematic—coupled with his endearing trait for touching public sensibilities with very personal music—has made his recordings for Windham Hill some of the label’s best

selling releases ever. Most recently, his 2001 opus, *Simple Things*, and his 2002 *Love Songs & Lullabies*, have enthralled audiences worldwide.

He travels many miles to meet them. In December he embarks on his “Jim Brickman and Friends Holiday Tour,” and prior to this jaunt he will hit 20 locations for promotional appearances. The 125 U.S. cities he visits annually are matched by a huge schedule of concert appearances across Europe and Asia. Brickman has just returned from the Philippines, where audiences are enraptured by his melodic romanticism.

“It’s a wonderful experience,” he avows. “When I’m sitting there doing it, playing to these huge audiences, I wonder, ‘What is this? How did it happen?’ It’s so amazing that my career would find its way there. It’s such an adventure.”

Instinct and inspiration are two touchstones of Brickman’s songwriting craft. He explains his notion of creative immediacy.

“There’s not a lot of second guessing. I’m not the kind of writer who goes back and pushes myself to tinker all the time. I figure it is what it is, and if it came naturally, it’s what it’s supposed to be. I don’t believe in too much drama—it’s about the overall feeling and the message. My lyrics are conversational; like I’m talking to someone or sharing a thought.”

He’s emerged as a multi-disciplinary artist via a syndicated radio show currently heard in over 100 markets nationally. *Your Weekend with Jim Brickman* features interviews with celebrity guests including Jennifer Lopez, Tom Cruise and Collin Farrell. On the literary front, his book, *Simple Things*, was a self-help best-seller

“MY SONGWRITING PROCESS IS A CULMINATION OF THE THINKING IN MY MIND AS I WALK AROUND THE WORLD.”

He has another volume, tentatively titled *Love Notes*, due for publication next year.

Next up is *Today’s Superstar*, a talent competition hosted by *The Today Show*. Brickman will co-host with Katie Couric and Matt Lauer and serve as the show’s musical director when a stable of young singers performs in an on-air competition twice a week for six weeks. Instead of canned tracks, vocalists will be accompanied by Brickman on piano.

Brickman testifies that these contrasting arcs in his career lead to one destination. “It’s the same basic persona and concept of what I do,” he says. “None of it is real foreign; it’s all a natural extension of my music career, to be more well-rounded in a media way. I like to write songs, but I don’t envision myself like a lot of my friends where all they do is write. I’d go out of my mind because I’m not disciplined that way. But I feel I’m a good writer, and I enjoy the collaboration experience. I don’t have a lot of patience—I like to get with it. My writing happens more in my head while I’m living my life. My songwriting process is more a culmination of the thinking in my mind as I walk around the world.” ★







# BRAND New

## Major Evolution

by Kevin Zimmerman

**Brand New is on the verge of something big.**

On the strength of its two albums for indie label Triple Crown—*Your Favorite Weapon* and *Deja Entendu*—not to mention a relentless touring schedule that continues to win new converts to a rapidly growing base of rabid fans, the group has taken the next big step in what has already been a booming career.

After a couple of false alarms, Brand New has finally signed the proverbial big deal with DreamWorks Records.

“It was a hard decision,” says singer/songwriter/guitarist Jesse Lacey. “When our contract with Triple Crown came to an end, we started having discussions with several of the majors, and DreamWorks was definitely at the top of the list.”

Lacey says it’s the kind of hard decision that an artist welcomes: “It’s not just the attention from the labels themselves, but from the people involved at the labels. These are people whose names you know, you’ve seen them on MTV, and you’re going to their house to have dinner. It’s like, ‘Wow, this guy really wants me to be on his label.’”

That attention is thanks mainly to *Deja Entendu*, which has sold nearly 100,000 copies since its release in June, and the track “The Quiet Things That No One Ever Knows,” which has been enjoying its share of play on more adventurous radio outlets. Song titles like “Okay I Believe You, But My Tommy Gun Don’t” and “The Boy Who Blocked His Own

says the other members—Vinnie Accardi (guitar), Garrett Tierney (bass) and Brian Lane (drums) also play a major part. “A lot of the time when we come together in the studio, the songs get completely reinvented and take on a new life. Basically we keep writing for ourselves—that’s what we did on the first album and we felt that was the best way of approaching this one.”

The material on *Deja* proves that “we’ve grown, not just as musicians and as songwriters but as people as well. It represents an older and more mature band. A lot of the material was written six years apart, so it’s pretty evident how much we’ve grown.”

Brand New’s roots go back to suburban Long Island (indeed, several members still live with their families in the Levittown area), with Lacey, Tierney and Lane first forming as rock act The Rookie Lot. Accardi later joined from a local hardcore band.

Currently the group is supporting Dashboard Confessional on tour. “We’ve known them for awhile—we did our first tour with them about

### “WE’VE GROWN, NOT JUST AS MUSICIANS AND AS SONGWRITERS, BUT AS PEOPLE AS WELL.”

Shot” reveal the band’s roots in the emo scene—angst, bitterness and introspection are all accounted for—while the heartbreaking “Guernica” delves into deeper ground. Written in part after Lacey’s grandfather was diagnosed with cancer, the song includes the lines, “If I could I would shrink myself and sink through your skin to your blood cells and remove whatever makes you hurt, but I am too weak to be your cure.”

Meanwhile, songs like “Me vs. Maradona vs. Elvis” and “Jaws Theme Swimming” reveal a sly sense of humor that sometimes goes missing with other emo acts, while “Good to Know That If I Ever Need Attention,” with its key line “We prey as wolves among the sheep and slit the necks of soldiers while they sleep,” should serve notice to those major label execs that Brand New will not go quietly.

The group’s sound has also evolved, as the group has widened its sonic palette by adding textures and expanding its song structures. Lacey says the pressure of living up to its acclaimed debut album was very much on the group’s mind. “We’d definitely heard all the stories about facing the sophomore album problem, but we went into it pretty much the way we do everything—unprepared,” he laughs.

While Lacey handles the lion’s share of Brand New’s songwriting, he

10 months ago,” Lacey says. “Chris [Carrabba, Dashboard’s leader] came to us and said he really liked this album, and we’d been listening to his new record too. The guys in both bands have been hanging out together a lot, and we’ve all really grown close.

“The best part of this whole thing for us is playing the songs live,” he continues. “We just feel we’re a much better band when we’re doing that, and we reach a much broader audience. There have been a lot of new people coming to our shows who never even heard the first record. We really don’t know of a better way to get our music out to the people. To go to the cities and play the songs for them is really the best way of getting through.”

Brand New will embark on its own headlining tour of the U.S. in late October, break for the holidays, and resume in January in Europe, where Dashboard will join the group on some dates.

The near-cessless touring “can get very wearing, very fast,” Lacey says. “We’ll be out for one or two weeks and I’ll be thinking that I’m ready to go back home. But we can’t complain about it—once we go out onstage we feel that whatever we’re complaining about all goes away, and that that’s what we’ve been put here for.” ★

# Robert JOHNSON

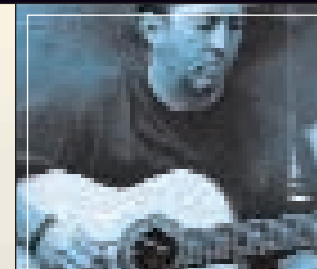
## Long Live the King

**HE’S THE UNDISPUTED KING OF THE DELTA BLUES**, a man Eric Clapton refers to as “the most important blues musician who ever lived.” Clapton is only one of the many rock legends who cite the great Robert Johnson as one of their most important influences. SESAC is proud to represent his timeless catalog of blues classics. Johnson lived a short hard life, but the music and the mystery he left behind were a driving force for some of the most exciting music of the subsequent decades. Born in 1911 in Hazlehurst, Mississippi, Robert Johnson recorded only 29 songs before his untimely death in 1938. But his spirit is very much alive today in the countless artists still absorbing his influence and playing those amazing songs. SESAC spoke to few of those artists to hear first hand why Robert Johnson’s music remains so utterly contemporary.



### ERIC CLAPTON

“Robert Johnson to me is the most important blues musician who ever lived,” declared Eric Clapton in the liner notes to the 1990 collection *Robert Johnson, The Complete Collection*. “He was true, absolutely, to his own vision, and as deep as I have gotten into the music. . . I have never found anything more deeply soulful than Robert Johnson. His music remains the most powerful cry that I think you can find in the human voice, really. I know when I first heard it, it called to me in my confusion; it seemed to echo something that I had always felt.”



soundtrack to those songs. . . it still amazes me today. I think his music will always be relevant and outlast fads that come and go. I don’t mean to overshoot the mark, but I don’t know that you can when you look at what Robert Johnson did. It is deep and it’s timeless. I’m always going to go back and get inspired by those incredible tracks. That’s all we have, but man, what a legacy.”

### BIG BILL MORGANFIELD

“There ain’t no doubt about it, Robert’s definitely got something going on in his soul,” says SESAC’s Big Bill Morganfield, the son of blues legend Muddy Waters. “He’s definitely the greatest delta player, and if you were a delta player along with him, he was a pretty scary guy. With my daddy it was always ‘Robert Johnson this’ or ‘Robert that’ or ‘Robert Johnson wrote ‘Walkin’ Blues,’ that whole reference. He didn’t know Robert as far as them being friends, but he knew of him. I remember reading something where he had heard Robert Johnson playing live and he was really stopped in his tracks; he was really struck by this powerful stuff. It was so powerful that it made him afraid and left him in awe of this guy.”

### KEITH RICHARDS

“To me Robert Johnson. . . was like a comet or a meteor that came along and, BOOM, suddenly he raised the ante,” said the Rolling Stones’ Keith Richards in those same liner notes. “Suddenly you just had to aim that much higher. You can put the record on now, and it’s as fresh and interesting as the first day you heard it. Everybody should know these twenty-nine titles. Everybody should know about Robert Johnson. You want to know good the blues can get? Well, this is it.”

### SONNY LANDRETH

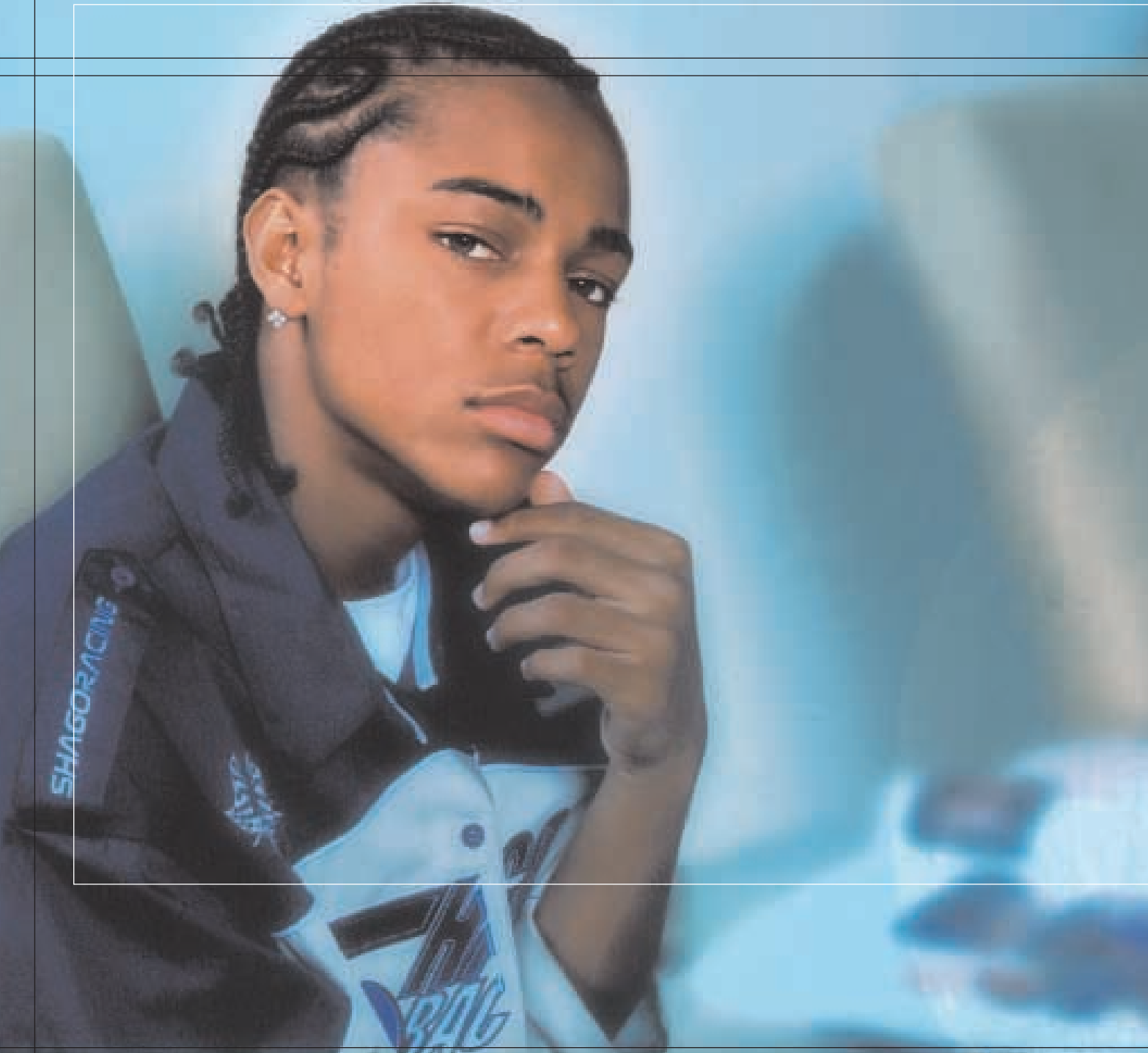
“The thing that’s always touched me about Robert Johnson was that combination of mystery and mojo. He had an extraordinary technique that embodied his tradeoff with guitar and vocals to tell those story songs with such passion. It’s like the cry of the human soul. The way his guitar emulated the human voice and the way he would support the lyric of the song to tell those stories, little sound effects, creating atmosphere as if it were its own



### JOHN MELLENCAMP

“You got three different things going on at once. . . one guy. He’s got his thumb doing one thing, he’s got his fingers doing something else, and then there’s that voice doing something else. When Robert Johnson wrote these songs he was a black man in the south in 1920 or ‘30. It’s all about the honesty and plainspoken presentation. But can you imagine what that would be like, playing in those juke joints with just a guitar?”





Teenage life for the average All-American kid can be difficult enough, but factor in two multi-platinum albums, a hit movie, hordes of screaming young girls, and millionaire status, and you've just described the ubiquitous rapper/actor/entrepreneur Bow Wow. That's right; it's just Bow Wow, now! He has shed the Lil' in front of his name to represent an older and more mature artist—a maturity that far belies his mere 16 years of age.

SESAC's Bow Wow is no longer the cute kid that first hit the charts back in 2000 with his debut *Beware of Dog*—which scanned more than 3 million units domestically—only to follow with the double-platinum *Doggy Bag*. Bow Wow has grown into a young and handsome mega-talent that has become a virtual one-man enterprise. So, those expectations that come with being 16 have forced him to evolve. Bow Wow is driving now (It's no secret that he's been sporting a

Maserati about town, among other vehicles that he currently owns), his voice has changed, and his music is targeting a more mature and mainstream hip-hop audience. His current album, *Unleashed*, hit the streets this past August. The project is already Gold and is closing in on the coveted platinum mark. Bow Wow's participation on this effort is more than just rapping. What's different about this album is that he is no longer being fed the lines.

This time he is composing the rhymes and is transforming himself into an authentic MC. "It's all a growing experience right now," Bow Wow says. "It's interesting. . . I get a chance to write." Nearly all of the thirteen songs featured on *Unleashed* were co-written by Bow Wow. "I'm getting a chance to do things that I wasn't able to do, which is not just interesting but also fun. I'm loving it! I love going to the studio knowing that it's up to me to write and come up with the

dopest rhymes, the craziest lyrics that I can possibly come up with. It's all about transition. . . that I progress as an artist. Basically I get all my ideas from real life experience, but when I write I do need to be listening to the beat. I can't write without the beat."

Bow Wow says that he's more comfortable than ever in the recording studio. This time around he has recruited some of the biggest names in the business to collaborate with him. The list of producers includes some of the hottest names on the charts: Swizz Beats, Jazze Pha, Lil' Jon, The Neptunes, Bam, LT Hutton, and fellow SESAC affiliate Bink.

Noticeably missing from the production roster is Bow Wow's mentor—the individual who pretty much brought him into the limelight—producer Jermaine Dupri. The So So Def Records founder has been quite adept at spotting young talent.

Edge appears on the songs "My Baby" and "Hey Little Momma." Fellow teen-king Mario is on the track, "I'll Move On"; while songstress Amerie is featured on the poignant "To My Mama," which is a tribute to Bow Wow's mom, Teresa Caldwell, who, alongside Bow Wow, is executive producer of *Unleashed*. Caldwell also manages him.

Born Shad Gregory Moss and a native of Cleveland, Ohio, Bow Wow makes his home both in Atlanta and Los Angeles. He got his first hint of the actual music business when he joined Snoop Dogg on stage during the much-ballyhooed *Chronic* tour. Bow Wow was only six at the time. "That was definitely a highlight in my career," he recalls, "because that was what gave me the oomph. That right there was the reason why I'm here today."

Within that period, Bow Wow has gotten used to the promotional and concert tours that have

"It's the ghetto version," he exclaims. "It's hilarious. I had a lot of fun doing this one. It is definitely funny."

The other scoop is that Bow Wow is hoping to gear up for another big arena tour for next year. "That's in discussion right now," he says. "Me and B2K are going back on tour, and we're deciding on how to do the Bow Wow/B2K album right now."

It doesn't stop there, though. The rapper/actor launched a clothing line this past summer by the name of Shago. The gear currently targets young men, with a young women's division launching in 2004. "That whole [clothing] thing came about when they came to us," states Bow Wow. "We felt like it was a good idea so we just blasted it and I have my own clothing line: Shago! The Sha part—that's my first name—and my middle name is Gregory—so that's the 'G' and we just threw the 'O' in there."

# BOW WOW

## Unleashed

by David Mitchell

Through his Atlanta-based label he discovered the likes of Kris Kross, Da Brat and Xscape. Dupri ended his long-term deal with Sony Music last year and So So Def is now distributed through Arista Records, where Dupri holds the post of Executive Vice President. Bow Wow remains on Columbia/Sony Music.

According to *XXL* magazine, a somewhat distraught Bow Wow talked about the split, saying, "Jermaine was my producer. He wrote all of my lyrics. I was heartbroken at first because nobody told me what was going on. . . There's no beef or anything. . . It wasn't that he didn't want to work with me. . . It was a label feud. So I understood."

Bow Wow has definitely moved on. In addition to the all-star collective of producers, several guest stars make cameos on the *Unleashed* album. The first single, "Let's Get Down," features Cash Money star Baby. The video was in top rotation on BET's *106 & Park* for weeks. Atlanta's premier four-man vocal group Jagged

taken him from countless urban and pop radio stations to the literal hysteria caused by screaming girls at shopping malls and concert venues around the world. Bow Wow headlined the *Scream Tour 2* in 2002, which was one of the highest grossing concert tours of that summer.

He has also tried his hand—and quite successfully we might add—at acting. His first starring role was as a youngster who possessed magical sneakers in *Like Mike*. The movie took in more than \$65 million in the U.S. and *Entertainment Weekly* named Bow Wow its "hottest young star of 2002." He is currently preparing to star a new movie called *Mr. Prez*, produced by Will Smith, and in a yet-to-be-named WB sitcom. There are upcoming commercial campaigns for Campbell's Soup and Kraft Foods. Bow Wow recently wrapped up production on *Johnson Family Vacation*, co-starring Cedric The Entertainer, Vanessa Williams and Solange Knowles. The family comedy is set for release in April.

With all that is going on with Bow Wow, one would be led to believe that there was never a moment's rest.

"I'm focusing on the acting and getting ready to do my sitcom," he says. "We started filming for the WB in November and I believe it comes out next year. Right now I'm in my off-season with the rap until the tour comes. Honestly, I like to sit around the house and play games all day, man. That's all I like to do. I'm a real boring guy."

Aside from music, film, and sitting around the house, Bow Wow is a diehard Lakers and Sixers fan. If he had his way, he probably would spend every waking spare hour out on the basketball court.

"My thing really is—when it comes to work or anything I do—I just love putting all my hard work and effort into it. I'm just having so much fun right now. I'm getting the opportunity to do things that a lot of people aren't fortunate enough to do. It's a blessing!" ★



# SESAC developments

## DEVINE

### Intervention

by David Mitchell

Electrifying and in-yo-face, the Ruff Ryders camp has released some of the most highly-charged Hip-Hop music ever to make its way onto the airwaves. At the core of the company's powerful musical roster are household names like DMX, the Lox, Drag-On and Eve. On the brink of mainstream success are breakout artists like Infa-Red & Cross, Sheek Louch, and SESAC's own Jin.



Instrumental in creating the sounds that millions of hip-hop heads have come to love are the Ruff Ryders staff producers—Swizz Beats, The Matrix, the Tune Headz, Elite, and Mr. Devine—who have become nearly as recognizable as the artists themselves.

SESAC's Mr. Devine, whose birth name is Loren Lunnon, has been working with the Ruff Ryders camp just over three years. He came to the attention of Ruff Ryders CEOs Darrin "D" Dean and Joaquin "Waah" Dean through his dynamic production work with Infa-Red. The Dean brothers took note of Devine's passion and drive and signed him on to work in-house at the company's Yonkers, NY headquarters.

Devine hails from Jamaica Queens, NY, and began his career as a DJ during his teens, mainly compiling mix-tapes and spinning at local parties. He took an interest in music production and worked closely alongside one of his mentors, noted DJ Ayatollah (Mos Def/Rawkus Records). Devine went on to produce an array of records for Ruff Ryders, including several cuts on Styles' last album, among them the "Get High" remix featuring Redman and Method Man; tracks on the *Ruff Ryders Vol. 3* compilation; and additional

production work on the recently released DMX CD, *Grand Champ*.

These days Devine is busier than ever working on a variety of projects. By mid-2004 his production credits will be seen on nearly a dozen different full-length projects. In the works are new releases from Jin, Styles, Jadakiss, Infa-Red & Cross, and Drag-On, as well as three recent song placements on Sheek Louch's record.

"I've been very busy of late," says Devine. "I'm pretty much working with all of the Ruff Ryders' artists, and I've also got two songs coming from Full Surface/J recording artist Mashonda, who is being developed by Swizz Beats. Her album is scheduled for the first quarter of 2004."

Devine is adamant about not being pigeonholed as just a Hip-Hop producer. To that end, he's currently working with Ruff Ryders' first female R&B artist, Aja.

"I'm really looking to venture into the R&B side of things," Devine says. "I would like to one day work with Mary J. Blige or Faith Evans as a producer, and I wouldn't mind doing something for Puff [P. Diddy] and one of his artists as well."

Puff Daddy is one of the many producer/artists who have influenced Devine. He cites a string of producers in both Hip-Hop and in R&B who have inspired him; people like Pete Rock, DJ Premier, Buckwild, Teddy Riley, and Rodney Jerkins.

### "MUSIC HAS BEEN IN MY LIFE FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER."

"I take different pieces from all of them and incorporate it into what I do," he says. "It's people like them that made me want to really do this. Music has been in my life for as long as I can remember. Honestly, I have no idea what I would be doing if I couldn't do music. I probably would have kept on DJing if I hadn't broken in as a producer."

When asked to reflect on his accomplishments, Devine simply states that he likes all of the songs he's recorded. But if he had to pick one that really stood out, "It would have to be the 'Get High' remix, and the songs I just did with Infa-Red & Cross. The guys like to party and I gave them a lot of party beats. Party beats are my favorite."

The way things are going, Devine's beats will soon become a major part of the sonic landscape. And while he's thrilled with the success he's seen so far, Devine is careful to keep things in perspective and keep his focus where it needs to be.

"The goal is to get the Ruff Ryders in the position they were in three or four years ago," says Devine. "They were on top at one time, and when they're on top, then we're on top. Right now, my commitment is to making good music for the artists we have." ★

SESAC is proud to announce the signing of multi-genre songwriter/producer Billy Mann. With a hit list that already includes country artists (Deana Carter, Jessica Andrews, Martina McBride) R&B stars (Monica, Kelly Rowland, Chaka Khan), jazz musicians (Grover Washington, Jr., Kenny G) and some of the biggest names in pop music (Celine Dion, Ricky Martin, Hall & Oates). Mann has been busy lately working with pop star Pink. His song, "God is a DJ," is featured on *Try This*, Pink's new release.



Pictured at Mann's signing in New York are (Back, left to right) SESAC's Dennis Lord, Trevor Gale, Pat Rogers and Bill Velez; (Front, left to right) SESAC's Linda Lorence and Billy Mann.

SESAC held a dinner reception at The Palm Restaurant in Nashville recently for Claud Johnson, son and heir to legendary Mississippi bluesman Robert Johnson, whose timeless catalog was recently affiliated by SESAC. Johnson's family accepted the prestigious *Pride of SESAC* award on behalf of the late singer at the event. The award honors Johnson's inestimable contribution to American culture and to the world of music.



Pictured from left to right are Robert Johnson's grandson Mike Johnson; SESAC's Hunter Williams and Bill Velez; grandson Greg Johnson; Claud Johnson; publisher Billy Meshel; and SESAC's Pat Rogers and Trevor Gale.

SESAC affiliate J.R. Ewing has finalized his deal with A&M/Interscope Records and is currently in the studio recording his debut album for the label. Fellow SESAC affiliates Greg Curtis and Al "Big Al" Dixon are co-writers on the project.

Nashville's Two Doors Down was the scene of a recent showcase featuring some great SESAC songwriters. Hitting the stage for a rowdy in-the-round set were SESAC songwriters Shane Decker, Arlos Smith, and Tony Marty, along with recording artist Mark McGuinn.



Shown from left to right are Mark McGuinn, SESAC's Tim Fink, SESAC songwriter Shane Decker, SESAC's John Mullins, publisher Cole Wright, SESAC songwriter Arlos Smith, SESAC's Shannan Neese, and SESAC songwriter Tony Marty.

SESAC band Finch is featured on the soundtrack for the new Screen Gems/Lakeshore Entertainment film, *Underworld*. The track is called "Worms of the Earth."

SESAC writer Bruce Miller has three of his songs on Mary J. Blige's #1 R&B album, *Love and Life*.



SESAC's Stephanie Urbina Jones, who recently scored her first #1 on the TEXAS MUSIC CHART, opened this year's Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic in Houston by singing the

National Anthem. She then broke right into Nelson's "Crazy," with the man himself accompanying her on his beat up guitar. Afterwards, Nelson and Jones embraced as he took his hat off to her and threw it into the audience. "It was one of those moments in your life that you only dream about," Jones says. "It was like we were in a world alone and I focused all my energies on him and sang with my heart to this legend who stood before me."

The new Reba McEntire album, *Room to Breathe*, is loaded with SESAC songs including the hit leadoff single, "I'm Gonna Take That Mountain," written by Jerry Salley. SESAC writers Roxie Dean, Burton Collins, and Annie and Sam Tate have all contributed songs to what is sure to be a smash hit project.

Nashville's Exit-In was the scene of a recent SESAC rock showcase featuring the bands Stroller, Plumb, Unknown Hinson, del giovanni clique and Waiting for December. The event was part of the 2NMC New Music Conference. SESAC staffers hooked up with members of Stroller before the gig.



Pictured standing from left to right are SESAC's John Mullins; bassist Dean Tomask; drummer Tommy Williams; and SESAC's Shannan Neese. Seated from left to right are guitarist Adam Schoenfeld and singer/keyboardist John Nicholson.

Fresh off his success with the David Spade comedy, *Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star*, SESAC composer Christophe Beck has a big hit on his hands with *Under the Tuscan Sun*. Beck composed the music for the Touchstone Pictures film, which starred Diane Lane. SESAC recently celebrated Beck's success with a dinner reception at LA's Café Med.



Pictured from left to right are Christophe Beck; *Tuscan Sun* director Audrey Wells; *Tuscan Sun* star Raoul Bova; Mitchell Leib, Executive VP/Music Soundtracks for BVMG; and SESAC's Pat Rogers.

Continuing with a long held tradition, SESAC joined its friends in the radio community at this year's NAB Radio Show, once again hosting the SESAC Networking Lounge for thousands of radio industry attendees from around the country. The NAB Radio Show took place October 1-3 at Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Convention Center.



# SESAC ROCK-N-ROLL CALL

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# Steve TAYLOR

## Keeps His Cool

by Lisa Zhito

Steve Taylor is something of a mythic figure in Christian music circles, a man so unfailingly hip that the mere mention of his name automatically conjures an image of cool.



Part of the reason for this Midas touch is that Taylor has done just about everything there is to do in entertainment—and been extremely successful at it all. The ultimate hyphenate—“producer/recording artist/Grammy nominated rock ‘n’ roller/label executive/songwriter/filmmaker/screenwriter/video director”—Taylor is a creative juggernaut who just can't seem to find his “off” switch.

Now Taylor has another new title, having been named SESAC's 2002 Christian Songwriter of the Year. His publishing company, Soylent Tunes, was named SESAC's 2002 Christian Music Publisher of the Year.

It's ironic that Taylor would find his success in the often prickly Christian music scene, because this music maverick has long operated on that industry's fringe. Having started as an artist on Sparrow Records in the 1980s, by 1990, he recalls, “I actually retired from Christian music and decided to start the [mainstream rock] band Chagall Guevara with some friends.”

Taylor was lured back when the manager of up-and-coming Christian rock band Newsboys asked him to help the band with some lyrics. Taylor went a step better, producing the band's debut, *Going*

*Public*. The result: Newsboys were an instant hit, and a long association between the two was born. Still, the pull between the mainstream and Christian music worlds has remained a constant of his career.

“When I was in Chagall Guevara I was having a really hard time with that straddling question,” Taylor says. “We were there to be a mainstream rock band, but we had a lot of Christian fans who were interested in what we were doing, so we were having huge fights over playing Cornerstone Festival, as an example. It was wearing me out, frankly.”

In many ways, this friction has propelled him to his greatest success, giving him an understanding of what so many artists face as they try to simultaneously live their faith and their art.

“Because you're a Christian, you want to write from a Christian worldview,” he says. “But that doesn't necessarily mean you want to write all salvation songs.”

Indeed, it was this understanding which prompted Taylor to form the fence-straddling venture Squint Entertainment in 1997. Squint was home to what became known as the “roaring lambs” set—Christian artists like Sixpence None The Richer, Chevelle, and L.A. Symphony, who had a desire to step beyond the narrow box that too often confined Contemporary Christian artists.

“A lot of artists that signed with Squint

came to us because they weren't interested in signing with the traditional Christian world,” he says. “But they didn't necessarily feel the right home for them was mainstream.”

Squint's first project was Sixpence None The Richer's self-titled third release, which contained the international smash hit “Kiss Me,” a track Taylor produced. The out-of-the-box success was both a blessing and a curse, propelling the Squint name into the stratosphere but forcing Taylor to put his other plans for the fledgling company (like a

**“BECAUSE YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN, YOU WANT TO WRITE FROM A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW, BUT THAT DOESN'T NECESSARILY MEAN YOU WANT TO WRITE ALL SALVATION SONGS.”**

film division) on the back burner.

“It was just never anything I ever intended to have happen, that much success that quickly,” he observes. On the upside, Squint's biggest legacy might be the way it introduced the notion of Christian artists operating in the mainstream.

“It seems like now there are a number of great situations where coming from some kind of Christian music background doesn't carry the same label that it did before,” Taylor notes. “Now, mainstream labels are on the lookout for Christian bands because they tend to come pretty fully formed. They've been out playing for a few years, they know how to play, and they know how to perform.”

On the downside, Taylor saw Squint sold out from beneath him, a victim of the spate of reorganizations and consolidations that swept through the music industry in 2001. Taylor doesn't miss his label executive days, and in fact now focuses on the film industry, with two film projects in development. It's a return to his roots of sorts, in that Taylor, a film school grad, got his start directing music videos.

“I tell people that I'm getting into the movie business because I was looking for something more stable than music!” he quips.

Taylor says his own recording days have waned, though fans shouldn't give up hope. “I always feel like the only reason to do another record is to top the last one,” he says. “The *Squint* album in '94 was the closest I ever got to an album where I was really happy.”

When he's asked to offer some advice for aspiring songwriters, Taylor doesn't hold back. “Most writers aren't hard enough on themselves,” he says. “The artists at Squint would sometimes get frustrated with me because I would challenge them if I didn't feel their lyrics were good enough, or if I felt like they just finished them in a hurry.”

Taylor is sure to attack his nascent film career with the same eye for excellence that has marked his previous projects. And that, of course, is cool. ★



"Music is emotion," Mark Wills says matter-of-factly. "Whether it makes you happy or makes you sad, whether it makes you think, whatever it is, that's what music should be. It should be about feeling."

Wills knows all about songs that stir the emotions. He's made a career of singing them. From empathizing with the mentally and physically challenged to those grieving to those yearning for their days of youth, the SESAC affiliate has scored hit after hit by expressing in song the feelings of others.

During his seven-year career, Wills has released six albums on Mercury Nashville, resulting in a long list of staples at country music radio, including: "Don't Laugh At Me," "Wish You Were Here," "Back At One," "I Do (Cherish You)," "Jacob's Ladder," and his mega-hit of the spring of 2003, "19 Something," which stayed at No. 1 for seven weeks.

sudden I hear myself singing 'And The Crowd Goes Wild,'" he says. "I don't have it on (cable's) CMT or GAC. And I turn around and it's ABC and a promo for Titans football and they've set the whole TV commercial to my song."

Wills likes to think that his latest single might develop into a stadium classic.

"That's what's been so cool about 'And The Crowd Goes Wild,'" Wills says. "Songs like 'We Will Rock You' and 'I Want To Rock and Roll All Night' seem to have stood the test of time and it's exciting to think that I might have one of those songs that in five years, or whatever, you'll still hear in a stadium. That's pretty cool."

Wills worked himself into the lead singer spot for the house band at the Buckboard, a popular Marietta, Georgia honky-tonk where Travis Tritt was discovered.

"I started singing Tuesday through Saturday, three or four sets a night," Wills says about his Buckboard days. "It was a weird way to grow up, because I was in a bar where everybody else was at least 21 and I was just 18. But I didn't feel out of place at the time. I was right in the middle of everything. I made a lot of friends and had a lot of fun. I was getting to do what I wanted to do, plain and simple. And I absolutely loved it!"

Wills' single-mindedness led him to

by Crystal Caviness

# MARK WILLS

## Goes Wild

With his sixth album recently on the shelf and another hit record at radio, "And The Crowd Goes Wild," Wills continues to deliver music that causes listeners to react. While many of his past singles have resulted in more somber moods, his new song elicits enthusiasm.

"It was meant to be fun," Wills says. "It was meant for people who are NASCAR fans, football fans, music fans, whatever, to enjoy and have a good time. And there's nothing like sitting in a stadium with 80,000 people and your home team is running out on the field and you hear the announcer say 'And the crowd goes wild!'"

Wills has been caught off guard by the immediate popularity the single has found both on country radio and at other media outlets.

"I was here in Nashville the other night cleaning my apartment and all of a

If Wills' song "And The Crowd Goes Wild" finds another life outside of country radio, it won't be the first time. Several of his previous singles have been used as anthems for various causes. "Don't Laugh At Me" is the theme song for the National Institute of Stuttering and is often tapped by various programs combating homelessness and bullying. Wills has heard from fans that "Wish You Were Here" has helped grieving family members, as well as those missing loved ones in the military. "I Do (Cherish You)" has become a wedding classic.

Seven years after his debut, Wills finds himself a veteran in an industry where longevity and consistent success are becoming increasingly rare.

Wills knew at a young age that he wanted to be a singer, and by the time he got his driver's license he had a large collection of talent show trophies. When he was 18,

Nashville from time to time to sing demos for publishing companies. When executives at Mercury Nashville heard Wills' music, they traveled to Marietta to hear him in person.

Five years after he started at the Buckboard, Wills signed a record deal with Mercury Nashville. His debut album, which produced his first hit, "Jacob's Ladder," came out in 1996, "the same week that LeAnn Rimes debuted," Wills says. He's been stacking up hits ever since.

For a singer who has built a career by recording highly charged emotional ballads, his new single may garner question marks from devoted fans.

"'And the Crowd Goes Wild' is a song that's been different for me, because in the past with 'Don't Laugh At Me,' 'Wish You Were Here' and 'Back At One' and songs like that, I was sort of hemmed up in a box as



being just a ballad guy," Wills says. "That's not a bad thing, but once you get people calling you 'the ballad singer,' it's sort of hard to accept a song like 'And The Crowd Goes Wild,' because it's so out of context.

"I have really set forth an effort with the *Greatest Hits* record and now with this newest record, to break that mold. I'm a singer. I love to sing. We've got a couple of wonderful ballads on this album, but we definitely set forth in this project to come up with a good mixture of music."

Indeed, the new project blends ballads with uptempos, some tasteful fiddle playing and plenty of rock-tinged guitar solos, a direct result of Wills' role as co-producer.

"I grew up listening to a lot of Ronnie

### "WHEN YOU LISTEN TO THIS RECORD, YOU'RE GOING TO HEAR A TOTALLY DIFFERENT SIDE TO MARK WILLS."

Milsap and Kenny Rogers and Alabama," Wills says. "But I grew up listening to a lot of 80s rock and roll, as well. So when you listen to this album, you're going to hear some Eagles-sounding guitars, some rock and roll sounds. But you're going to hear a lot of country stuff too. I'm trying to bring my influences into my sound and trying to give the country music fan an idea of where I come from."

Wills does more than divulge his musical influences on the new record. Whether he's

singing "Prisoner of the Highway," a stunning duet with his musical mentor Ronnie Milsap, the flirtatious "Suntan" or the spunky "Married In Mexico," Wills displays a maturity and confidence that comes only with years of honing his voice night after night on the road.

Wills knows he's got a good record on his hands.

"I'll go on record saying this is the best album I've ever done," he says. "Most singers say that, but I think when you listen to this record, you're going to hear a totally different side to Mark Wills. You're going to hear a different sound that you've never heard in the past. . . and I think that's really cool." ★



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**FOCUS Calendar**

NOVEMBER	02	Nashville Songwriter's Foundation Hall of Fame Dinner, Loews Vanderbilt Hotel, Nashville, TN
	05	37th Annual CMA Awards, Nashville, TN, 7-10pm CBS
	06	SESAC Country Music Awards – (by invitation only)
	13	SESAC R&B Showcase, SOB's, NYC
	16	American Music Awards, Los Angeles, CA
	19-20	Second Annual Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference, Renaissance Hollywood Hotel, Los Angeles
DEC.	10	Billboard Music Awards, MGM Grand Hotel, Las Vegas
	25	Christmas Day
	31	New Year's Eve
JANUARY	01	New Year's Day
	15-25	Sundance Film Festival, Park City Utah
	25-29	MIDEM International Music Market, Cannes, France
	27-	
	02.01	10th Annual Country in the Rockies; Crested Butte (benefits TJ Martell Foundation)