

Billboard

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NEWSPAPER

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC



'Save The Music' Drive Blasts Off Via VH1

BY CHUCK TAYLOR
NEW YORK—It is a rare feat for a charity to gain willing support from all factions of the entertainment industry, to be so truly nonpartisan that President Clinton lends a hand and everybody applauds.

As VH1 gears up for the second year of its Save the Music campaign, a charity aimed simply and directly at improving music education by donating musical instruments for public school children, more than \$11.5 million has been dedicated to the cause, including funds raised, instrument donations, programming, affiliate air time, and media support, according to

GOOD WORKS

VH1. More than 90% of every dollar marked for Save the Music is transformed into a trum-

DVD Will Be The Spotlights At CES Show

BY DOUG REECE and EILEEN FITZPATRICK
LOS ANGELES—At the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), slated for Jan. 10-13 in Las Vegas, can expect to hear companies singing the praises of DVD and get a glimpse of the next-generation devices ready plain-vanilla DVD play quaint.

Toshiba America music VP Steve Nickerson, (Continued on p. 10)

Edel America Name In Tough

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTI
NEW YORK—Thanks to the success of Jennifer Paige's single "Crush" and Buddha Monk's hip-hop hit "Spark Somebody Up," 3-year-old Edel

Songwriters & Publishers

ARTISTS & MUSIC

Potts Lays Foundation For Career

PolyGram Songwriter Charts With Monica's 'Angel Of Mine'

BY DYLAN SIEGLER

NEW YORK—The name **Travon Potts** may not ring a bell with the biggest decision-makers in the music industry—not yet. But with the help of PolyGram Music Publishing, recently absorbed into the Universal Music Group structure, 28-year-old **Potts** is emerging as one to watch in the world of R&B songwriting and production.



POTTS

Almost 10 years ago, when **Potts** was still a teenager, he had an opportunity to work with legendary producer/songwriter Kipper Jones on a song for Jones' solo album.

"He was the first person who started teaching me the craft of songwriting," says **Potts**, who before that point had been merely experimenting in his older brother's home studio. "The song on Kipper's album was the first song of mine that was cut," says **Potts**, "and I guess from that point—I was 19 years old—I started to see myself as a songwriter."

Since then, **Potts** says, he has been steadily striving to develop a long-term and wide-ranging catalog. "I want to write songs that go on forever," he says. "I hope in 10 years I can be like Diane Warren, with a catalog that just keeps on going."

Says Nadine Baker, senior creative director at PolyGram Music Publishing, "In urban music, the marketplace is very producer-oriented, and it's easy to look at the short term, not at developing strong copyrights that have an afterlife."

In a concerted effort to build material and contacts, during the last few years **Potts** has completed production and songwriting projects with R&B act Public Announcement, U.K. act Eternal, gospel great BeBe Winans, and singers Angela Winbush and Christina Aguilera. His co-writing credit on Monica's current single, "Angel Of Mine," which is No. 33 on this issue's **Billboard** Hot 100, will greatly increase his visibility.

"Angel Of Mine," which **Potts**

played it for him, he went nuts. He loved it."

Potts' varied musical influences—from gospel to funk to rock—and the classical piano training he received from early childhood, inform his present aesthetic. While growing up in Los Angeles, says **Potts**, "I could listen to Jimi Hendrix and the Winans on any given day."

Potts began playing the piano with the gospel band at his church at age 12 and later with a high school jazz ensemble. With the encouragement of his music teacher, he began to consider a career in music—as long as it was behind the scenes. "You really don't want to hear me sing," he says with a laugh.

Currently, **Potts** says, it takes him an average of two days to complete a track. Baker says that "part of the excitement working with **Travon** is that I've been able to see him develop over the past two years. He's focused in and become such a prolific, dedicated songwriter."

Potts signed to Motown Music Publishing before it was absorbed by PolyGram, where **Potts** is now part of a 50/50 co-publishing venture.

"When you're at home writing songs, and you know that the publishing company is getting them, you know they're getting out there," says **Potts**.

"My role as his point person," says Baker, "is extending his reach, bringing him into places he wouldn't be able to go on his own. He's developed his craft to the point where he's writing good songs consistently, and he's starting to get consistent placements. Now we're at the point where we need to get consistent success. Then his life will be that much easier."

'I hope in 10 years I can be like Diane Warren, with a catalog that just keeps on going'

wrote with well-known R&B producer/songwriter Rhett Lawrence, is a rich, accessible love song arguably ideal for Monica's voice. "I was blown away the first time I heard her sing it," says **Potts**. "Rodney [Jenkins] did an incredible job on the production, and then Monica's interpretation, vocally, was incredible as well. She has such a big voice for someone so young."

The collaboration between **Potts** and Lawrence was a novel working environment for **Potts**, who says he is always eager to work under more established songwriters and observe their methods.

"It was a blessing working with Rhett. He gave me the freedom to start experimenting with things I hadn't before. With 'Angel Of Mine,' I just lit a candle and some incense and started this track—and when I

NO. 1 SONG CREDITS

TITLE • WRITER • PUBLISHER

THE HOT 100

I'M YOUR ANGEL • R. Kelly • Zomba/BMI, R. Kelly/BMI

HOT COUNTRY SINGLES & TRACKS

YOU'RE EASY ON THE EYES • Tom Shapiro, Chris Waters, Terri Clark • Hamstein/Cumberland/BMI, Sony/ATV Tree/BMI, Chris Waters/BMI, Polygram International/ASCAP, Terri-000/ASCAP

HOT R&B SINGLES

NOBODY'S SUPPOSED TO BE HERE • S. Crawford, Montell Jordan • Wixen/ASCAP, Famous/ASCAP

HOT RAP SINGLES

GHETTO COWBOY • S. House, A. Henderson, K. Greer, J. Burke, F. Lindsey, R. Antonio • Mo Thugs/ASCAP, Slet/ASCAP, Layzie Bone/ASCAP, EMI April/ASCAP

HOT LATIN TRACKS

DEJARIA TODO • Estefano • 1998 Deep Music/BMI

Indie Association Names Officers; John Barry Goes 'Beyond' Film Scores

INDIE ELECTIONS: The Assn. of Independent Music Publishers has elected its 1999-2000 officers and board of directors. West Coast officers are Alan Melina, president; Connie Ambrosch, VP; Thomas White, executive director; Guy Haber, treasurer; and Maureen Woods, secretary. West Coast board members are Michael Eames, Carole King, Brian Lambert, Steven R. Lowy, Linda Newmark, Brendan Okrent, Ronny Schiff, Chris Galotta, and Ernie Petito.

On the East Coast, the officer lineup is Bernadette Gorman, executive director; Steve White, treasurer; and Beebe Bourne,

activities. Effective Jan. 1, Alter became counsel to the New York law firm of Shukat Arrow Hafer & Weber.

NEW & IMPROVED: Three years after its launch, ASCAP's World Wide Web site has a new look with enhanced graphics and newly simplified navigation. The site—www.ascap.com—has almost 3 million hits per month, the society says.

EMI/IGLESIAS DEAL: EMI Music has entered into a global co-publishing deal with singer Enrique Iglesias, who is also the co-writer of "Esperanza," his No. 1 hit on Hot Latin Tracks.

That song falls under the deal, as does his album, "Cosas Del Amor" (Fonovision). His upcoming 33-city U.S. tour, sponsored by

McDonald's, includes a Jan. 23 date at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Words & Music



by Irv Lichtman

Debbie Rose, Mary Beth Roberts, and Jeff Rosen.

BEYOND THE MOVIES: London