



RECORD of the DAY

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Record of the Week

Your required reading this week...

- ▶ Clear Channel Entertainment is one of America's most controversial media companies - so just what are its plans here? (Monday, Media Guardian p1-3)
- ▶ Kazaa wants to be the official online distributor for the entertainment industry. (Friday, Washington Post)

Gia Despina Vandi

Mach 1 (Germany)

So the ethnic/pop crossover continues with Kiss Kiss, the Turkish Eurovision winner, Panjabi MC, Wayne Wonder, and next this. The original version of this track was released last year in Greek and went five times platinum (more than 200,000 units in a country of eight million people). Her album yielded eight #1 hits in Greece. Gia was also #1 in Turkey and across the Middle East, was one of the buzz tracks at Midem in January and was played by several top DJs including Roger Sanchez at the WMC in Miami. Mach 1 is a Ministry Of Sound Germany JV, but is not tied to MoS outside that territory.

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Editorial

Salon.com ran an article this week – As songs are increasingly sold one by one online, the musical creativity and risk-taking associated with the album format will decline.

The premise of the feature was that now we can buy an individual tune as opposed to being forced to buy an album, chances diminish of finding a track on an album that was never a single or got radio play, but which becomes a personal favourite.

With albums or "bundled innovations," as the writer Sahar Akhtar calls them, the economics of production mean that after the fixed costs, extra tracks can be added at relatively low cost. The low marginal costs for additional songs on an album mean they can take a gamble on other, more original and creative tunes.

The writer cites once the 7" single straitjacket was broken by albums and cassettes, creativity and bundled innovations blossomed – now that other tracks could be 'more subtle, complex, varied in length, and even irreverent, offensive, or disturbing – all potential marks of innovation'.

So if consumers can buy exactly what they want, and no more, there's a good chance they will purchase songs they know from radio. Which means programmers, often influenced by more

commercial, as opposed to artistic, interests, are really holding the power.

OK, so we're years, if at all, from physical formats being completely replaced, but we could see a shift in attitudes fairly soon.

It's not unusual for an artist to have a collection of songs based on say, the different aspects of breaking up and finding someone new, which gives great solace to artist and listeners alike. There's no reason why that collection can't all be downloaded and listened to in succession but it certainly loses something definitive.

Whereas a singles chart has seasonal fluctuations and an artist may never know the true popularity of an album track, the idea that each track an artist makes will in future have a sales ranking over a period of time is fascinating.

How long before a label suggests an artist stops making 'slow ones' because they don't sell, or they discover actually the public much prefer remixes to the originals.

Tracking and micro-statistics are here to stay. Even lil ole Record of the Day monitors which articles you're reading. The fact that we know exactly what's read (sadly not by who) is a potent one which hopefully helps us to improve the service. We all benefit when technology is used wisely. PS

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