

Artists & Music

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Push's Kidney Thieves Rise With Swelling Fan Support

BY LARRY FLICK

NEW YORK—As underground support for Kidney Thieves' first single, "S+M (A Love Song)," picks up steam, Push Records is taking a grass-roots approach to marketing the Los Angeles-based act's forthcoming full-length debut, "Trickster."

Since the single's release this past May, the edgy industrial-rock jam has sold 6,200 copies, according to SoundScan, and has garnered airplay at the college radio level and in left-leaning dance clubs.

"It's a reactive record," says Glenn Orenstein, VP of market-



KIDNEY THIEVES

ing/creative services at the BMG-distributed Push. "We've been able to move respectable units without a video or a lot of radio
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WB Comedian Schimmel Aims For Radio Hits

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—Comedian Robert Schimmel's expletive-laden 1996 debut album, "Robert Schimmel Comes Clean," stood out for its



SCHIMMEL

uproarious, self-deprecating honesty on all matters sexual and earned the Bronx, N.Y.-born comic exposure on such broadcast outlets as "Late
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The 'Devil' And Chris Isaak

Anticipation High For Crooner's Reprise Set

BY CARRIE BELL

LOS ANGELES—Chris Isaak has made a career out of his velvet voice and the tortured love song. He isn't about to end his 15-year reign as king of lonely hearts with "Speak Of The Devil," hitting stores worldwide Sept. 22 on Reprise Records.

"I love to sing romantic ballads. It's what I'd do after work if it wasn't my full-time thing," Isaak says from the set of a video shoot at the Santa Monica (Calif.) Pier. "Actually, it is still what I'll do tonight when we're done filming. I love my job. Life is going swimmingly."

Label executives second that

emotion.

"His albums always go gold or platinum, and there is no reason to suspect this one will perform any differently," says Gary Briggs, VP of artist development/creative marketing at Warner Bros./Reprise. "It is a huge priority for our fourth quarter, so we'll pull out all the stops. Of course, Chris is his own best weapon. He's handsome, personable, intelligent, talented, and witty."

Isaak's video co-star, "Red Corner" actress Bai Ling, agrees. "He has a sensitivity in his eyes and has been singing all these beautiful
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ISAAK

Midler Makes Warner Bros. Debut With 'Bathhouse Betty'

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

NEW YORK—Only Bette Midler could take a frightening run-in with an overzealous fan and turn the experience into an album title.

"I was in my house down in Orange County [Calif.]. I was all by myself, and I was nervous because I don't like to be alone. It's kind of scary," recalls Midler. "Somebody knocked on my door, and it was a fan. He started shrieking, 'Bathhouse Betty! Bathhouse Betty!' And I thought, 'Oh my God! How mortifying.'

"It was pretty scary, but I said, 'I'm going to call the cops, I'm going to call the cops!,' and he ran away. But he left me with 'Bathhouse Betty,' and how could I forget that? He was giving me an homage to my days playing the bathhouses."

Indeed, "Bathhouse Betty," Midler's first album in three years and her Warner Bros. debut, harks back to Midler's earlier days, with a strong diversity of songs ranging from the bawdy "Big Socks," to the 1930s classic "I Sold My Heart To The Junkman," to a wistful cover of Ben Folds Five's "Boxing," to the touching ballad and first single "My One True Friend." The song is featured in the new Meryl Streep film "One True Thing." There is no soundtrack release planned.

"Bathhouse Betty," slated for release Sept. 15, is in sharp contrast to 1995's "Bette Of Roses," a collection of ballads.

"[People] said to me, 'That last record was a good record, but it only had one kind of music on it... We waited for all the different kinds of



MIDLER

music, and it was only one kind of music," she recalls. "And I said, 'You missed all that?,' because I

thought people got tired of that, and they said, 'We wanted something funny, we wanted something upbeat, we wanted something only you do.'

For Warner Bros., the idea was to create an album that represented all sides of Midler's formidable music talents. "Working closely with [Warner A&R exec] Gregg Geller, [Bette's] selection of songs reveals not just her tremendous depth and range of talents but also her genuine sense of humor and her unique ability to touch your heart," says Russ Thyret, of Warner Bros. Records.


For the label, part of the challenge is getting the word out on how wide-ranging the album is. "We're focusing on the diversity of the album," says Ted Templeman, executive VP of Warner Bros. Records Inc. and one of the album's producers. "I

know if I weren't working at WB, even if I were working at retail, I'd think it's going to be another 'Bette Of Roses.'

To make sure retailers understand otherwise, Warner will be servicing them with advance copies of the entire album.

Even without that information, retailers expect the album to have a strong showing. "She has a good adult following," says Eric Keil, buyer at Plainfield, N.J.-based Compact Disc World. "Royal Crown Revue is on one of the songs ['One Monkey Don't Stop No Show'], and I think that will increase the appeal to younger fans. I think her fans are pretty loyal in the New York area. It helps if the movie is a big hit."

Internationally, the album will
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KID ROCK

Devil without a cause

the new album featuring
"I AM THE BULLGOD"

"Kid Rock joins rap and metal with love for both and reverence for neither."
THE VILLAGE VOICE

"I love listening to Kid Rock while laying down on the job."
JENNA JAMESON

"I find his music disturbing and a terrible embarrassment."
KID ROCK'S MOM

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