

ABC OF LATIN AMERICA

CHILE'S WARM-UP

Continued from page 60

be because of an exhibition problem in a store or a problem with the knowledge of the music by the store personnel."

BMG managing director Edgardo Larrazabal comments that his label is trying to jumpstart record sales by exploiting the label's local rock talent, noting that "[We] are expecting great sales at the end of the year from our local artists. We have started an underground label, Culebra, that, like its BMG Mexican counterpart of the same name, will offer 'heavy' rock acts that we think will be strong sellers."

Culebra not only has released product by homebred rockers Los

Piores De Chile ("Síndrome De Camboya") and EntreKallez ("La Fiesta De Las Bestias"), but the label has also issued albums by rock acts from Mexico (La Lupita) and Argentina (Los Caballeros De La Quema).

BMG's headlong plunge into alternative rock underscores the growing sentiment among Chilean record executives that youth-directed alternative rock and pop/rock are the musical waves to ride in the future. "Alternative bands are going to hit," predicts Warner's Mundaca.

Says Sony's Valdivia, "Pop ballads are very strong here, but I think local rock acts are doing well."

Among the domestic pop-laced rock acts striking it big in Chile are La Ley (recently inked to Warner Mexico), Sony's Los Tres, EMI's La Sociedad and Culebra/BMG's Los Piores De Mexico.

RADIO'S DRASTIC ALTERATION

The label executives point out that the radio station most responsible for fueling interest in rock is Santiago-based Rock & Pop, which also has an affiliate outlet in Valparaiso. Though the station shares the same name as Argentina's multi-media outfit run by Daniel Grinbank, the two entities are separately owned.

EMI's Nieto asserts that the emergence of Rock & Pop earlier this year drastically altered—and improved—the radio landscape in Chile.

"It's giving a new dynamic to Chilean radio," states Nieto. "Apart from adding healthy competition, the guys there are more accessible with respect to the record companies. The programming is different: It's live, the on-air personalities talk to their youthful listeners and play music they want to hear."

Interestingly, EMI's biggest local seller, Andean folkloric crew Illapu, may not have benefited from exposure on Rock & Pop, but the band's last two albums have sold a whopping 237,000 units—a truly stunning figure considering that in Chile gold records are awarded for sales of 15,000 units and platinum discs are handed out for 25,000 units sold.

Other EMI acts that have sold well are Argentina's reggae ensemble Los Pericos, whose 1993 release, "Big Yuyo," sold 70,000 units, and opera star Plácido Domingo, whose pop effort, "De Mi Alma Latina," is nearing 22,000 copies sold. Nieto has strong hopes for Frank Sinatra's recently released "Duets II," as well as product by local artists Upa, Alberto Plaza and Dulce Y Fatal.

The best-selling domestic album at Sony is "Sin Limite" (26,000 units) by talented pop-vocal trio Ariztía. Gloria Estefan's 1993 blockbuster, "Mi Tierra," hit 30,000 units. Michael Jackson's 1992 album, "Dangerous," which sold 100,000 units, is the largest English-language seller of the past two years. "And with [Jackson's] new 'History' coming out," says Valdivia, "we probably will sell even more units."

KING AFRICA

Though the label has not landed notable sales tallies from its local artists, BMG has popped huge numbers with such international-star releases as Eros Ramazzotti's "Todo Historias" (160,000 units), Whitney Houston's "The Bodyguard" (100,000 units) and Ace Of Base's "The Sign" (60,000 units). Product by Latino artists that scored big numbers are Los Mier's "Pura Sangre" (40,000 units) and Raúl Di Blasio's "El Piano De América 2" (40,000 units sold). King Africa's "El Africano," a licensed disc from Argentinian dance imprint Oid Mortales, has sold 26,000 units.

PolyGram and Warner, the relative newcomers to the Chilean market, have racked up robust sales figures as well. In particular, PolyGram's international artists have notched large aggregate sales of total product, led by Greek songstress Nana Mouskouri (300,000 units), U2 (250,000 units), Metallica (200,000 units) and Sting (150,000 units).

PolyGram's Latino albums reaching platinum in 1994 were Pimpinela's "Hay Amores Que Matan" and Dyango's "Morir De Amor." Marta Sánchez's "Mujer" struck gold this year.

LUIS MIGUEL'S MONSTER

Warner's Mundaca is anticipating a jump in market share for his company this year, thanks to Luis Miguel's monster hit, "Segundo Romance," which he claims has sold 120,000 units less than two months after its September release. Also selling impressively (100,000 units) is "¿Dónde Jugarán Los Niños?" by Mexican superstar band Maná. Reaching platinum with her eponymous Spanish-language premiere was Italian star Laura Pausini.

Other foreign, non-Latino artists who are beginning to move product are alternative acts Stone Temple Pilots, Collective Soul, Green Day and Candlebox. Mundaca is



Green Day

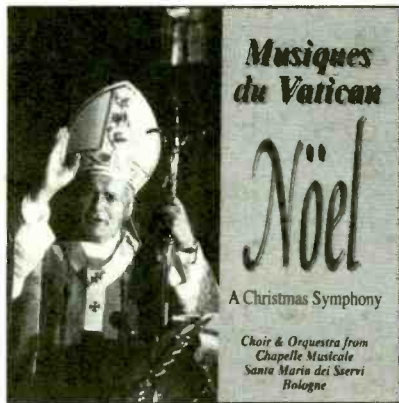


Stone Temple Pilots

expecting lofty sales numbers from the recently released albums by R.E.M., Madonna and Eric Clapton as well.

Mundaca acknowledges that Warner has no hot product from local artists, but adds that he is anticipating a strong showing from the just-released album by Chilean songstress Myriam Hernández, currently signed to Warner Mexico. ■

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