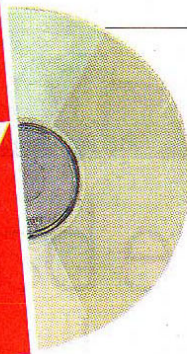


**INSIDE
STORY**



Rocking a

They're the people who keep the celebs in - and out - of the me



BARBARA CHARONE

Charone's fearsome reputation can be summed up in one word - Madonna. For years 'BC' has skillfully used her association with Madge as leverage to get coverage for whatever she wants. And it usually works, thanks to her combination of brash charm and insatiable persistence. She also counts Elton

John, REM, Elvis Costello and James Blunt among her clients. A former head of press at Warner Bros, the tiny but formidable American ex-journalist has built an impressive empire. Few hacks have not been reeled in with the vague promise of a Madonna interview and ended up plugging some hopeless new act instead.



ALAN EDWARDS

Head of the Outside Organisation, his clients include David Bowie, Paul McCartney, The Who, Usher, Craig David and Westlife. Currently rebuilding a strong client base after the desertion of big-name clients like Elton John, Robbie Williams and the Beckhams with a new emphasis on 'personal' clients like Naomi

Campbell, Jenson Button and Jamie Oliver. The George Clooney lookalike Edwards learned his trade during the punk era under music PR legend Keith Altham. A skilled networker, he rarely socialises outside of the music industry and likes to take contacts to his big passion outside work - Arsenal FC.



BERNARD DOHERTY

The head of LD Communications masterminded the publicity for Live8. Doherty's reputation rests with his associations with The Brits, The Rolling Stones and Tina Turner. Keeping a coterie of loyal cronies, he can share gossip, safe in the knowledge he will never be betrayed

and his clients will never hear. At least that was the theory until the 3am Girls stitched him up over some off-the-record remarks about Mick Jagger. Big-names are thin on the ground but he's still first on the list for any major event.



RICHARD WOOTTON

The king of country, blues and folk. Just about anyone who wears a Stetson is on his books, as are many of Britain's folk fraternity. A smooth networker who can usually be found either in a blazer and slacks or a blue denim cowboy shirt, depending on the company he's keeping, Wootton's mission is

to break through the seemingly impenetrable barrier between his clients and the British music-buying public. Clients include Dolly Parton (of course!), Steve Earle, Ryan Adams, Emmylou Harris, Robert Cray and folkie Kate Rusby.

It used to be a simple PR job to "break" a band. Not necessarily easy - but the strategy was straightforward. You'd dole out free CDs and gig tickets to your favourite music journalists, throw in a few freebies like T-shirts and tour jackets, take them on exotic foreign tours and give them VIP passes so they could hang out in the dressing room with the band, their drink, their drugs and their groupies. So keen were the young hacks to taste a bit of the rock'n'roll lifestyle, and so eager to enhance their coolness by being the very first journalists to spot new talent, that *NME* covers beckoned faster than you could say "Menswear" and mass exposure was just around the corner.

That, though, was in the days when the music papers led the way, when their influence - principally of the *NME*, followed by *Melody Maker*, *Sounds* and *Record Mirror* - was paramount. Today the last three are long gone and the *NME* is now a glossier radio stations and millions

but still plays a multifarious role as an aggrandised influence on the mass media, which devours its stance on the "next big thing".

These days, the tabloid press has a hunger for music-related gossip every bit as strong as its lust for stories about soap and sports stars. But back in the heyday of the "inkies", the music papers set the agenda. Today's *NME* has a relationship with television, radio and the national press rather like that of a foreign "feeder" club with a Premiership football side. It will unearth some useful talent, which will promptly be appropriated by the big guns.

The *NME* doesn't "break" anyone any more, it's merely a "cool meter". Today's big-name acts like Scissor Sisters, Franz Ferdinand, The Killers and Kaiser Chiefs start to reap rewards for their label via TV advertising, radio and the national press. There's just too much competition in our world of seemingly hundreds of music TV channels, thousands of digital radio stations and millions of magazines. And with

Music PR used to be easy - take the press on tour and let them hang out with the band, their drugs and the groupies

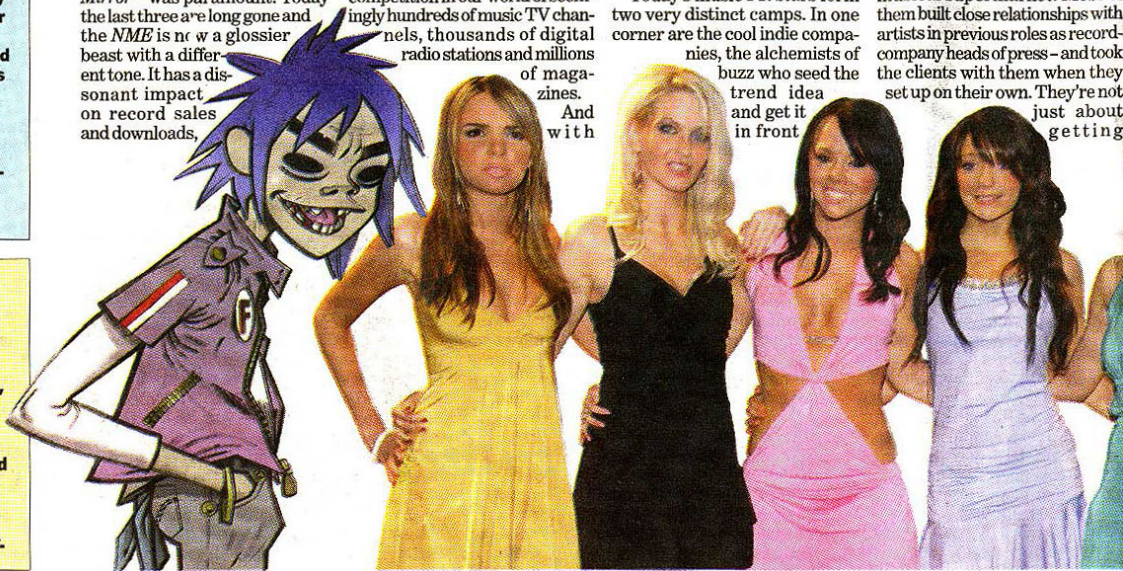
record companies increasingly demanding instant success over longevity, the mass media is the driving force of the business. All of which is why the PR movers and shakers behind the music industry are not groovy young indie-kids but veterans who have been at it for decades. In PR there's no substitute for high-level contacts, and getting hammered on snakebite with *NME* staffers or sharing lines with *Kerrang!* won't get you past the door, let alone into the corridors of power at the BBC or News International.

Today's music PR stars form two very distinct camps. In one corner are the cool indie companies, the alchemists of buzz who seed the trend idea and get it in front

of the cognoscenti editors for the first time. Staffed by bright young things who live and breathe music, they tend to represent clients because they are passionate about their music - something which is not always true of the big players.

The indies are the ones with their ears to the ground, who predict and foresee trends, generate the buzz, set the margins of cool and watch to see if a cult becomes part of the culture. And they do it through the underground - the online media, word of mouth and the few remaining bastions of counterculture (*I-D*, *Dazed*, *Jockey Slut* and, yes, *NME*).

Then, in the other corner, are the mainstream power brokers who've seen it all, who as legends has it are just as rich as their clients and who know how to handle performers when they've become established brands in the crowded aisles of the worldwide musical supermarket. Most of them built close relationships with artists in previous roles as record-company heads of press - and took the clients with them when they set up on their own. They're not just about getting



REGINE MOYLETT

Moylett is a key player because she has represented the world's biggest band, U2, for as long as anyone can remember. Being Irish (and being the sister of a Boomtown Rat), she's cornered the market in acts from 'across the water' ranging from Sinead O'Connor to The Corrs, as well as Avril Lavigne, Blur/Gorillaz, PJ Harvey and Dido. In common with Charone, she's adept at using her biggest client for leverage.



KAS MERCER

Mercer's company Mercenary promotes the kind of racket that 12-year-old boys love,

including Metallica, Def Leppard, Motley Crue, Stereophonics and... Jamie Cullum. Universal farmed out the jazz prodigy to Mercer in the hope of getting coverage in the 'cool' music press. It worked.



RACHEL HENRY

Her Darling Department brought The Killers to prominence. And who would have predicted

that a second-hand Duran Duran would become our new favourite band 20 years later? She also gets extra points for setting up offices in Denmark Street - the original 'Tin Pan Alley' for rising talent.



their bread and butter like Foo Fighters moment Kaiser Sheffield quarter who everyone in dict are the Nex

round the clock

media spotlight. **Mark Borkowski** showcases the best PRs in the music business

headlines - they're equally focussed on suppressing bad news. When you're Madonna's publicist, you don't need to worry about getting her INTO the papers; you just need to make sure it's not for the wrong thing and form the interview-seekers into an orderly queue.

The indies still have a crucial part to play but it's no longer a leading role. It's no coincidence that the creative and commercial heyday of the "inkies" was in the punk era. Here you had a club that was cool only so long as it remained underground, because being underground was what separated Us (the youth) from Them (society). But the old underground is the new mainstream. Today's consumers have been sold on the myth of celebrity for so long that they all want to be rich and famous, if only for a moment. As long as it's now.

Of course, all this change means the fun publicity stunt is a thing of the past, and that's a shame, recalling the brilliance of Malcolm McLaren or even lesser

Today's PRs have to make sure their clients are under control and not seen in the wrong clothes or wrong crowd

known Glen Coulson's efforts on behalf of Ian Dury's album *Do It Yourself* on Stiff Records, which involved him secretly getting into the NME's offices, Watergate-style, and redecorating them. OK it wasn't that cool, but it's a damn site cooler than the contradiction of claiming coolness while your music's flying off the shelves in Tesco rather than Virgin.

Make no mistake, the PR professionals behind the world's top music names hold the key to huge fortunes. Why? Because they are charged with creating, maintaining and looking after the

image of an act, praying that Holy Moly or Popbitch doesn't leak an item of sordid gossip. And nowadays, nine times out of ten "image" is all a new act (call it "a product" - they do!) possesses.

The big names like to stay with tried-and-trusted PR people - after all, they know their secrets inside-out thanks to weeks of touring, hanging around backstage and partying in hotel rooms. These are the people who carefully feed in the journalists, methodically controlling the key to it all - access - and earn their living being the interface between the megastar and the outside world.

Once upon a time it was deemed a privilege for pop stars to enjoy exclusivity and privacy: it was one of the perks of wealth. Today there's no option: it's essential to keep your products under control and not let them talk when they shouldn't, or be spotted in the wrong company, or in the wrong clothes.

Now it's no secret that giving a journalist a good time - especially a good time in a sunny foreign country, with some very famous people, some beautiful company, fabulous food and

drink and (in the old days, at least) a ready supply of whatever else they might fancy - is a good start for a publicist.

But take the spontaneity out of it and all you're left with is "bribery", which is a somewhat crude instrument.

Still, if you want to live like a pop star, eat, drink, travel and shag like a pop star, and spend other people's money (unlike a pop star, who has to spend his own - even if many of them don't work that out until it's too late) then music PR is the job for you.

The secret to success is to have at least one super-famous flagship brand that draws the other products - sorry, "artists" - into your stable for a share of the action. So who are the key PR players who make it happen? Some record companies give their big acts to in-house heads of press but more farm them out to specialist music/celebrity PR companies - the most powerful movers and shakers in the record industry...



TERRI HALL

Terri has built her late great husband's company Hall Or Nothing into a major force, with a roster that could generally be summed up as indie bands that have gone mainstream - Radiohead, Muse, the Manics and Feeder. Plus Oasis, who Terri took on from Creation PR Johnny Hopkins - now looking after Kasabian and Primal Scream - at the height of their career. Adding to Terri's clout is her long association with promoter, venue owner and festival organiser Vince Power.



ROB PARTRIDGE

Not even a heart attack could knock Partridge off his perch as the boss of Coalition, whose clients range from old-timers like Tom Waits and Marianne Faithfull to young turks like The Strokes, Kings of Leon and The Libertines. Not to mention the Mercury Music Prize and a number of reggae labels; a legacy of his previous career at Island Records. A genial character with an inexplicable dedication to Queens Park Rangers, Partridge's enthusiastic team are almost universally well liked. His young turk Tony Linkin manhandles the vagaries of Pete Doherty

LINDA VALENTINE

Valentine coined the phrase 'Band Aid' for Bob Geldof 20 years ago and, after switching from pop to classical and jazz, virtually single-handedly invented the 'classical crossover' hybrid. Adroitly used the mainstream press and television to break huge-selling acts like classical babes Bond, Russell Watson and jazz prodigy Jamie Cullum, and then came up with the masterstroke of farming out her own client - Cullum - to groovy rock PR Kas Mercer to make him credible among the youth market.



PADDY DAVIS

Paddy's Ba Moon company first came prominent promoting Nirvana and rock remains butter, with clients band-of-the-Chiefs and Arctic Monkey the business pr t Big Thing.



HEATHER FINLAY

The former head of Virgin press left in 1998 to start her own company, Sainted, and still has the three big names she took with her - Massive Attack, Air and Daft Punk. Roster of clients, mostly reflecting her own tastes, also includes Basement Jaxx, The Streets, Embrace and Travis.



SUNDRAJ SREENIVASAN

This popular Polydor press officer can't stop winning PR awards for his work on acts ranging from Eminem, Scissor Sisters and Girls Aloud. The fact that a failed TV show act went onto receive rave reviews from otherwise snobby music critics demonstrates that he deserves them.



MURRAY CHALMERS

Parlophone's head of press bucks the trend for putting big acts 'out of house' by controlling access to two of the biggest names in pop - Kylie and Coldplay. He's now spreading his influence further through music consultancy Infinite, with Yoko Ono and Siouxsie Sioux already on the books.



ROLAND HYAMS

Roland rides a huge motorbike, dresses almost exclusively in black leather, smokes like a chimney, drinks like a fish (when he's not riding the bike, obviously) and sports a long pony tail. No surprise then that he's first port of call for the 'Kerrang!/Metal Hammer' generation of bands. The head of Work Hard PR is not likely to take journalists to five-star hotels or Michelin-starred restaurants. But he'll always buy the first pint of Snakebite. Clients include Motorhead, Sepultura, Hangface, Brides Of Destruction and just about anyone else loud and heavy.