



PHOTO BY MOSES ZARATE

# The next hunt

As Dimple plans to close, mom-and-pop shops thrive

BY MOSES ZARATE / [moses@newriver.com](mailto:moses@newriver.com)

**For the last decade, Dimple Records has been Neil Vann's hunting ground for classic rock and heavy metal CDs.**

"I have these lists I've been going through for years, and I just cross them off," Vann said inside the Dimple Records on Broadway, showing several crumpled papers lined back-to-front with album names. "It's been a hobby to rummage through all the stuff and see what you find."

Vann is one of many customers who professed a love for LPs and CDs and Dimple Records, the 45-year-old chain that announced on June 18 that it would close all seven locations after selling their inventory. Owners John and Dilyn Radakowitz told the Sacramento Business Journal that factors for their decision include declining sales and the increasing California minimum wage.

On a recent night, dozens of customers packed the aisles of the Broadway store and flipped through the racks, taking advantage of a 20% to 40% discount on all merchandise, which includes music, movies, video games, books, comics and nerdy trinkets.

"You don't want to see any local business close, no matter the reason," said Dal Basi, owner of Phono Select Records on Fruitridge Road. "It's not helpful for the overall economy. Having choices is important."

Basi says it's too early to tell how the Dimple closing will affect the regional market, noting the dearth of record stores in Folsom, Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova.

Music hunters, however, might find a new home in smaller music stores, many of which are thriving in Sacramento. While their selection and prices may not

always match Dimple, the owners pride themselves in community-gathering and expertise.

"I know every record in this store, I've touched every record in this store," said Marty DeAnda, who co-owns MediumRare Records & Collectibles/ Kicksville Vinyl & Vintage inside the WAL Public Market on R Street.

The indoor-mall boutique is a fraction of Dimple's size, but it packs about 6,000 hand-curated vinyls in near-mint condition, with prices from \$12 to hundreds of dollars for the rarities. First and second pressings of the Beatles' first song (before they were the Beatles) shimmer in a glass case for \$300 to \$350. For \$80, there's an original copy of Ritchie Valens' debut behind the counter.

DeAnda and co-owners Tim and Laura Matranga (who own the Kicksville half of the store) boast more than 75 years of collecting experience combined. DeAnda specializes in rock, classic rock, classic jazz, country and blues. The Matrangas know garage rock, modern genres and local music. The corner of Kicksville showcases local bands, with vinyls by Vasas, Drug Apts. and Th' Losin Streaks.

Eleven local independent shops have created a network to share their customer base and expertise, referring record lovers to each other. At Delta Broeze Records on 10th Street, co-owners Ben Johnson and Rick Duprato specialize in '70s and '80s funk, R&B, classical and deep-jazz records. They also repair and sell record players and parts.

"A really good record store is a place where it's ... more of a social experience, almost like going to your neighborhood bar and the bartender knows you," said Johnson, who predicts that he'll see more traffic and trade-ins after the Dimple closures.

At Phono Select, punk rock, neo-soul and rare imports meet the *Rambo: First Blood* soundtrack. The store is decorated with local art and occasionally holds live music shows.

The Matrangas and DeAnda all said they've noticed increasing sales of used vinyls and cassettes, their main products. But the larger industry shows a different reality. In 2018, the Recording Industry Association of America reported that the music industry made 75% of its revenue from streaming platforms.

Sell, DeAnda said he isn't worried. "It's all about the love, it's not about anything else," he said. □

# Labels: Tower made room for unknowns

► FROM PAGE A1

As the liquidation of Tower's 89 stores goes into full swing, hundreds of small record labels and independent distributors have gone into mourning.

Representing lesser-known acts, operating far from the spotlight, they often have had to scramble for shelf space whenever music is sold. And in an industry humbled by stagnant sales and massive store closures, they have looked to Tower as the last "real" record store—a nationwide chain that behaved like a mom and pop, going well beyond the hot hits and selling an unusually broad selection of music.

"It's not like a lot of other chains, which were not supportive of roots music and hard-to-find things," said Ken Irwin, co-owner of Rounder Records Corp., an independent label in Cambridge, Mass., whose musicians range from jazz saxophonist Branford Marsalis to blues-rock George Thorogood.

The plight of the independents is one example of how the Tower liquidation has ramifications far beyond the legendary retailer's West Sacramento headquarters. It also illustrates the stark divide between the independents and major record companies like Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group and others.

With their size and heft, the major labels have an easier time getting their products stocked at retail. They also are better insulated from the financial fallout of Tower's collapse.

After Tower's first bankruptcy protection case, in 2004, the big labels insisted on being treated as secured creditors, said their attorney Michael Bloom. That gave them a measure of insurance as they sold CDs and DVDs to Tower on credit. When Tower filed for bankruptcy protection a second time, on Aug. 20, they



Marty DeAnda, owner of the independent record label DIG Music, said he's saddened by Tower's demise. He said 35 percent of DIG's revenue has come from Tower. Unlike many big-box merchants, Tower has always stocked music by DIG's roster of singer-songwriters and musicians.

Sacramento Bee/  
Anne Chaback  
Williams

were second in line to get paid, behind Tower's banks.

Tower was sold for about \$155 million at the historic Oct. 6 bankruptcy auction in Wilmington, Del., and the first \$85 million will go to the banks. The record companies, owed a collective \$82 million, will take the rest. That's not enough to reimburse them completely—Bloom wouldn't comment on how the major labels will fare—but they've emerged from the bankruptcy in far better shape than the independents.

As unsecured creditors, the independents will walk away with nothing from Tower. They are collectively owed about \$15 million, according to court records, and the losses represent significant hardships for some.

"That could shut some doors," said Joel Oberstein, president of a consulting firm called the Almighty Institute of Music Retail. "It's part of the trickle-down that people just don't think about."

For instance, Select-O-Hits Inc., an independent distributor based in Memphis, Tenn., stands to lose \$524,000, court records show.

"It's not a devastating loss, (but) you never want to lose a half a million dollars, that's for sure," said co-owner John Phillips, a nephew of legendary record producer Sam Phillips. Select-O-Hits distributes music by Jimmy Buffett, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis, among others.

Phillips noted that he and others also got beat up financially by the bankruptcy earlier this year of Musicland Holdings, which owned the Sam Goody chain. "This has been a bad year for independents," he said.

Beyond the financial hit, the independents are scrambling to replace lost opportunities. Tower wasn't merely generous with shelf space, Phillips said. It was far more accommodating than most in selling space to independents on its "listening stations,"

the kiosks that allow customers to preview CDs, he said.

And Tower recently had agreed to sponsor in-store concert appearances around the country for a Select-O-Hits rock musician who goes by the name of Goat. Select-O-Hits pulled the plug on the tour when Tower's financial crisis heated up in August, Phillips said.

Consultant Oberstein said independents probably will work to strengthen relationships with the 2,500 or so remaining independent music retailers. It's also likely that small labels will push harder to distribute their music through Internet downloading—although about 90 percent of music is still sold at retail.

But as far as big national record chains, Tower's exit leaves only one company to speak of, the 1,100-store Trans World Entertainment Corp.

Trans World's stores include FYE and Wherehouse. Christopher Knab, a Seattle

consultant to independent labels, said Trans World focuses mainly on current hits and doesn't cater much to the independents, the way Tower did. Trans World tried to buy Tower at the bankruptcy auction and says it would have kept about two-thirds of its stores open. It was outbid by liquidator Great American Group.

"Tower is ... the last real chain," said Knab, a co-founder of the old 415 Records label in San Francisco. "If Tower Records would take your stuff and it sold, it was symbolic that this was a label that had good product. It opened the door to other stores and other chains and distributors."

In recent years, as its finances deteriorated, Tower scaled back on some of its more obscure musical offerings, which tended to sell more slowly. Though it remained a favorite among independents, executives at some labels had begun preparing for the possibility of a Tower shutdown.

DIG Music already had begun diversifying. It started offering musicians management and promotion services, such as designing press kits, business plans and CD cover art. The Sacramento company signed a distribution contract with an affiliate of Warner Music. DeAnda remains Greene's personal manager, although the rocker has signed with a major record label.

An unsecured creditor like the other independents, DIG will lose some money because of the bankruptcy, although DeAnda wouldn't say how much.

"Cash flow's going to be impacted for a bit," DeAnda said. But he said his 6-year-old company will ride it out.

"We'll have to become more savvy," DeAnda said.

■ ■ ■

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# DeAnda: Strong feelings on Radiohead

FROM PAGE K1

straight, guttural rock 'n' roll kind of stuff. Elvis Costello and the Beatles, too. I probably have one of the largest Beatles collections in this part of the state – and that's all vinyl.

**What do you have that might surprise somebody?**

(Laughs). My most secret love – I have "Muskrat Love" by the Captain & Tennille. I'm sorry, but I do. I don't know why. A sad, croaky old vocal song called "Old Rivers" by Walter Brennan is another one of my secret passions – it always made me cry as a kid.

**What do you not like that everyone else seems to love?**

Radiohead! I was just saying this to someone the other day. I see why people think they are good but I don't get it – the



**Marty DeAnda** bench-presses free weights. He sometimes likes to hear the Ramones while pumping iron.

Courtesy of Marty DeAnda

bigness of it all. I'm a big Snoop Dogg fan, but I don't get most of the rap artists that are out right now. It all sounds very homogenized to me.

**What song played at your wedding?**

"Storybook Love" by Willy DeVille and Mark Knopfler from "The Princess Bride"

(soundtrack). It was my choice (but) it was our song.

**Do you and your wife ever disagree on music – like over what gets played in the car?**

We disagree all the time; we're like polar opposites. She's not an experimenter, and a lot of what I play drives her

crazy. When we're in the car it's got to be Jackie Greene (playing) for her and I'm like, "OK, let's listen to something else."

But we don't fight over music. It's sort of my world and we keep those worlds separate.

It's safer that way.

*Call Bee pop music writer Rachel Leibrock, (916) 321-1176.*



MICHAEL ALLEN JONES mja@saab.com

Marty DeAnda is a heavy lifter in the Sacramento-area music scene, and he brings a variety of tunes with him to the gym and elsewhere.

## Marty DeAnda likes music for the (muscle) masses

By RACHEL LEIBROCK  
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**D**ig Records co-founder Marty DeAnda is best known as the guy who brought singer-songwriter Jackie Greene to Sacramento and, then, the rest of the world. These days, his label boasts the likes of Chris Webster, Sal Valentino and Kate Gaffney, but DeAnda's got another love, too: Fitness.

On his workout schedule: Lifting weights three times a week, running 12 miles a week and the occasional grueling bike ride.

We talked to DeAnda, 55, about how he merges these

passions, guilty listening pleasures and how he avoids fighting with his wife, Marci, over what gets played in the car.

**What do you listen to when you're working out?**

It depends on what moves me. My favorite band in the whole world is the Rascals, so they get played probably at least a couple of times a week. But yesterday I had (local singer-songwriter) Christopher Fairman on. And sometimes it's the Ramones – they're up-tempo, but it's not hard and it's not overly complex. And because the lyrics are so funny you also get

a chuckle once in a while in the middle of a bench press.

**What do you work out to that might surprise people?**

Probably Asleep at the Wheel. And I play a lot of Bob Wills in the gym. Bob Wills is this kind of Western swing that can motivate you, but you don't have to overthink it – you can just let it take you somewhere. When you're in a gym, you're there to exercise and not focus on music, so it fulfills both things for me.

**What was the first record you ever bought?**

I'm a middle-aged guy now,

and most guys my age have an Elvis Presley story, but I was totally in love with Rick Nelson. He was my first god and the "Young World" was the first record I owned. I wanted to be him so bad. I used to watch the "The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet" and just wait for it to be over so that he'd come out and sing.

**What makes up the biggest chunk of your CD collection?**

There's a group of (artists); there's Tom Waits, Bruce Springsteen, Van Morrison, the Rascals and all (their offshoot) bands. Mostly just

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# Tapes: Royalties from bootlegs generally elusive

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themselves were just so damned good."

The recordings capture a band that, while past its brief commercial prime, had grown in skill and depth in the six years since it had broken up in 1968. The songwriting of Ron Elliot had not produced another hit along the lines of "Laugh Laugh" or its follow-ups, but songs like "Lonesome Town" and "Rootless Soul" are good examples of the folk-rock style that would come to dominate California rock in the early '70s.

The recordings were made over four nights in February 1974 at the Shire Road Pub in Fair Oaks, a popular club where the band was preparing to record an ill-fated, spontaneous reunion album that would be released the next year to widespread indifference.

**T**he Shire Road Pub gigs caught the band at a point where the members were rediscovering their internal chemistry after six years apart, but had not yet gotten caught in the Los Angeles machine that would squeeze the energy out of the songs by the time they got to vinyl.

"It's a great band," Hughson says. "They've matured into the material, they're coming together with enthusiasm — they're having a ball, and you can hear it. The songs that ended up on the 1975 album sound better on our CD."

As an additional selling point, the 20-song CD features 10 songs that were never released by the band, making it the long-lost Beau Brummels album.

Plus, for sheer novelty value, how many CDs open with the words, "Good evening and welcome to Fair Oaks?"

The local setting of the performances makes sense, since the Beau Brummels, while from San Francisco, were well-known in Sacramento and had a unique relationship with the capital city.

"We did our first big concert gig here, at the Memorial Auditorium, with Gary Lewis and the Playboys," says Sal Valentino, the lead singer of the group. "Sacramento has always been good to us."

In fact, after he left Los Angeles, where he worked for record labels after the Brummels' demise, Valentino relocated to Sacramento, where he has lived since.

Now 58, Valentino has seen a lot of unauthorized releases of his band's material.

"I've fought these things for years," he says of the unofficial releases. "It's wrong to release stuff that wasn't meant to be released. Song demos that were done on the way to an album have been released as records, which really seemed unfair."

"I'd love to go back and redo them as real records," he says, "but that isn't going to happen."

"So I was suspicious when Jeff and Dennis came to me. But they turned it into a real deal; it's more than just another bootleg."

Because the record was put out more for love than money — Hughson says they'll be happy with sales of about 5,000 copies on their \$10,000 investment — Dig



The Beau Brummels as they appeared in March 1974. A month earlier, the band members played several gigs at the Shire Road Pub in Fair Oaks.

Music came up with an unusual proposal for paying the band: a 50/50 split.

In an industry notorious for leaving most musicians with virtually no money for their efforts, this is remarkable.

"It gives us credibility with the band," Hughson says. "They stand a chance to make more money than they'd normally make. It's the ultimate fair deal."

Valentino agrees. "I'm happy with it," he says.

But oddly enough, he says he still hasn't actually listened to the finished CD.

"My wife thinks it's real nice," he says softly. "I haven't heard the final disc yet. I like to sit and be able to listen by myself, and I haven't had that moment yet. I've tried a few times, but I haven't gotten through more than a quarter of it."

This may be surprising, but it is not so unusual to anyone who knows musicians, who are often more interested in the next show than in the last album — particu-

larly when it was recorded 26 years before.

"Mostly, I've been getting ready for the show," Valentino says of his gig Oct. 7 at Constable Jack's in Newcastle. "I have to play a second set, and I'm not a player. I'm a singer, so I've got some rehearsing to do. But I'll get to it."

At that upcoming show, Valentino will do two sets, the first one featuring Beau Brummels material, backed by area retro-rockers the Surf Dukes. The original members of the Beau Brummels themselves — in addition to Valentino and Elliot, there were John Petersen, Ron Meagher and Dennis Mulligan — are unlikely to

## AT A GLANCE

### Sal Valentino

Will perform at 8 p.m. Oct. 7 at Constable Jack's, 515 Main St., Newcastle; \$12.50 advance, \$15 at the door, (916) 663-9385.

perform together again, because of some members' health problems or lack of interest.

But in the second set of the October show, Valentino will focus on material from his second group, the early '70s nine-piece ensemble Stoneground, which released a few albums that are now out of print.

Stoneground recordings will be available again if Newhall and Hughson have their way. They say Dig Music probably will release sometime next year a live Stoneground album recorded at the Memorial Auditorium in 1973. And they have other tapes they're looking into, and hope to release more CDs in the future.

"We're not going to be able to touch early Santana or Jefferson Airplane," Newhall says. "But there were so many bands that got FM radio play who recorded in this area that there's plenty of quality to release."

"At this point, it's a hobby. But if we can put out half a dozen titles, it could become something more substantial. It was a lot of work, and a lot of fun, and now we're a record company."

For his part, Valentino is still a bit surprised at the enduring interest in the band that started his career.

"If you'd told me in 1965 that I'd still be singing 'Laugh, Laugh' nearly 40 years later," he says. "I'd have said you were crazy."





Oh, the horror  
"Urban Legends: Final  
edges got 'The Exorcist  
might superiority at the  
office."  
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## LAST 'LAUGH'

Lost tapes of the Beau Brummels inspire more rock archaeology

By David Barton  
Staff Writer

**D**espite all the records Jeff Hughson has bought, sold, traded, reviewed, promoted and loved in his lifelong career in the music business, "Beau Brummels Live!" is special.

That's because this is his record. No, Hughson is not, nor has he ever been, a member of the Beau Brummels, the classic Bay Area group best known for its 1964 hits "Laugh Laugh" and "Just a Little."

But he always has been a fan, and for the first time in his career, Hughson's love of music and business experience have come together in a particularly concrete way.

The same can be said of his friend and business partner, Dennis Newhall, a former Sacramento DJ and knowledgeable music lover.

"We're both music collectors and music lovers," says Hughson, 45. "And we knew there was this great music that had never come out. We had access to these tapes of the Beau Brummels, and we'd seen what Alec Palat was doing with these archival tapes of Northern California bands (including the recent "The Sound of Young Sacramento" compilation), and we thought, 'This is credible stuff.'"

"So we decided to become a real record company," he says. The two formed Dig Music, a name Newhall came up with that plays off the archaeological slang of "dig" and underlines the archaeological nature of the work they plan to do.

Dig Music - which also includes third partner Martin DeAnda, who Hughson and Newhall say has the business savvy they lack - has as its mission the unearthing and restoration of previously unissued recordings by Northern California rock bands from the glory days of the 1960s and '70s.

The tapes that inspired their initial release may not have seen the light of day were it not for the duo's enthusiasm for the Beau Brummels. Certainly, there is little public outcry for a live album from a band that folded nearly three decades ago.

But, Hughson says, "the tapes

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See photograph Michael A. Jones

Sal Valentino, foreground, the lead singer for the Beau Brummels, is fully behind the efforts of Dig Music's founders, from left, Martin DeAnda, Jeff Hughson and Dennis Newhall, who have compiled a CD from tapes of the band's gig at the old Shire Road Pub in Fair Oaks in 1974.



Arts & Cultural Roundtable

# Critiquing the Scene

By Anne Gonzales



Arts mavens gather at Mulvaney's Building & Loan to turn the spotlight on the current state of local culture.

**Y**ou don't have to know your way around an art museum to know that a lively cultural arts mix translates to a vibrant business landscape. But when it comes to such fine arts

as theater, film, dance, music and the culinary world, it's no secret that Sacramento is playing catch-up as a top-tier cultural destination.

What is the status of the regional arts and culture scene? How does it affect business and the quality of life? What can be done to make it more robust? *Prosper* queried leaders in the business and cultural arts fields at midtown hotspot **Mulvaney's Building & Loan**. The lunchtime banter was laced with constructive criticism about past missteps, but the outlook was undeniably bright. Participants agreed population growth, especially among ethnic groups, downtown redevelopment and increased sophistication in the arts sector will enhance the region's future.

The culture gap doesn't stem from a lack of talent or resources, or from lack of demand. Instead, much of the trouble can be chalked up to poor marketing, a sagging self-esteem and a can't-do attitude. Young people at their creative peak typically leave

the region in droves for the cultural meccas of New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, and even Portland and Phoenix.

The roundtable was spurred, in part, by a

recent survey showing that college graduates believe they'll have several jobs in the first decade of their careers. They aren't looking just at where jobs are but at what kind of culture and entertainment a metro area has to offer. What is the Sacramento area doing to attract or hold its young, creative, inspired and inspiring types?

### **Marty DeAnda:**

"Sacramento hasn't branded itself to make these kids want to stay. They don't feel like it's hip enough, or cool enough, to stay here in that real creative part of their lifetimes. Sometimes it doesn't work out wherever they go, and they come home to be safe. So, we get a community of safety; there's never any desire to be here because we're on the cutting edge, whether it be in the culinary arts, music or entertainment."

### **"Bonge" Bob Smith:**

"I actually encourage people to leave. And I encourage them to come back. We need people to go out there, experience the world and bring that culture back to us. The more they can learn from the world, what's right or great, what's quality art, the more they bring back to enrich the culture here."

**Rich Baum:** "Regarding the motion-picture industry and TV, I too recommend going to Los Angeles or San Francisco or to New York, if you're



**LeAnne Ruzzamenti**

in the theater. Unfortunately, I don't have any reason for them to come back at the moment. I came to Sacramento with hopes of building a studio that's been talked about three or four times in the 12 years I've been here, and nothing's been done."

**Scott Hervey:** "I disagree with (Baum's) assessment of the motion-picture industry. I think Sacramento has a very nice little industry of independent filmmakers. It's not as big as Los Angeles or New York, but there are a number of independent filmmakers here who shoot film; and one of my clients, one of the larger independent filmmakers, just finished making a \$3.5 million film and built a studio in Locke. You don't need a studio to have a film industry. What you need are vibrant, energetic, dedicated, talented filmmakers. They don't have to be in any one place, and with the advent of digital video, it's going to be a lot easier for independent filmmakers to get their films out."

**Kim Cipriano:** "The core reasons that are marketed to live here are affordability and a great outdoor life. So historically the value proposition has not been that this is a cultural epicenter.



**Dore Ruppel**





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From a competitive standpoint, we have some markets very close by that have spent their lives creating that value proposition. It's difficult to compete, and the region needs to decide what it wants to be. Are we just state employees?"

**Richard Rojo:** "There's no doubt there's demand here. The Mondavi Center is a great, glaring example of the demand in this market. People are willing to jump in their cars and

drive 18 miles to Davis to go to these events. And they're pretty sophisticated audiences."

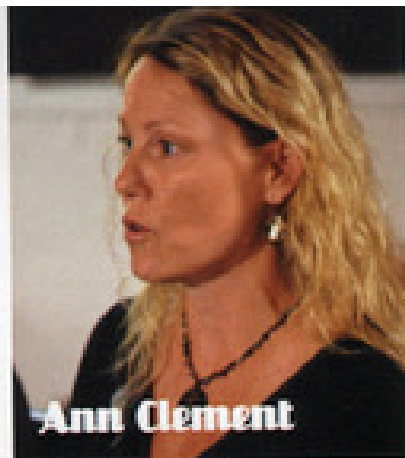
**DeAnda:** "The young crowd is where the creative juices are. For people between 18 and 25, it's all things indie. Indie is cooler, and now it's hip to quit a major label and go indie."

**Smith:** "What we're losing are the creative people who usher in the new creative wave: the producers, the directors, the ones who know how to make a movie or a record. Right now, we're in a little vacuum here. Having the tools doesn't make us a record industry or a film industry. We need to somehow attract or be a magnetic force to those kinds of people."

**Jan Seiger:** "I think we all know the creative class, younger people, want a vibrant downtown. That's what draws them to a Portland or to a Denver."

**DeAnda:** "Look at Portland. It's no more sophisticated than Sacramento. It's not as large as Sacramento. But it's got the vibe. Kids are going there because it's got the vibe, and it's been marketed as having this cool, creative feel, sort of the soft, white underbelly of New York. It's about creating a vibe, and it's all about marketing."

**Cipriano:** "Or look at Phoenix. It's a desert, there's really nothing attractive about the place, but they've created a vibe, an entertainment venue, a phenomenal restaurant scene with five-star restaurants around a desert, a bowl of sand."



**Ann Freeman-Clement**

Events such as the Friday night shows at Cesar Chavez Plaza put on by the Sacramento Downtown Partnership are cited as having great promise. Participants get a wristband that gives them discounts at downtown entertainment and food venues. But it was noted that the "powers that be" in Sacramento's arts and culture scene need to put their differences aside and craft a unified marketing plan.

**Ann Freeman-Clement:**

"Promoters, artists and venues don't seem to want to collaborate. I've got major venues that won't even share information with me, because they don't like the fact that we promote for several other major venues in the area."

In 2003, the Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce launched a three-year project, the Strategic Regional Arts Initiative, to find funding for arts and culture in the region. That project ended last year, and, so far, hasn't been resurrected.

**Hervey:** "Part of the Strategic Regional Arts Initiative included a back-room organizational component where smaller theaters could share services and reduce costs. But it didn't work. Everyone was very proprietary, very protective of their information."

**Rojo:** "There's a flip side to that, especially for smaller organizations, like the little theater companies that are struggling to survive. They are so under-resourced and undercapitalized; it's a pretty scary thing to give up your database and share it with others. I think there's such a fear for your very survival when you're in the trenches. The SRAI was perceived by arts organizations as a business initiative and was hobbled from the start."

## Sights of the Roundtable

**"BONGO" BOB SMITH**, POST

CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOR BONGO POST & MUSIC

[BONGOPOST.COM](http://BONGOPOST.COM)

**DAVE RUPEL**, TV PRODUCER, WRITER

AND MEDIA CONSULTANT [DAVERUPEL.COM](http://DAVERUPEL.COM)

**JAN SEIGER**, CHAIR, SACRAMENTO

METROPOLITAN ARTS COMMISSION [SACDANCE.COM](http://SACDANCE.COM)

**LEANNE RUZZAMANTI**,

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS,

CROCKER ART MUSEUM [CROCKERARTMUSEUM.ORG](http://CROCKERARTMUSEUM.ORG)

**MARTY DEANDA**, OWNER,

DIG MUSIC [DIGMUSIC.COM](http://DIGMUSIC.COM)

**BARBARA TORZA**, OWNER,

HARLOW'S RESTAURANT & NIGHTCLUB [HARLOW.COM](http://HARLOW.COM)

**ANN FREEMAN-CLEMENT**,

OWNER OF [ENUSKIDCONNECT.COM](http://ENUSKIDCONNECT.COM)

**RICH BAUM**, PRODUCTION DESIGNER

FOR THE MOVIE PICTURE AND TV INDUSTRY NOW

COORDINATING THE SACRAMENTO WORLD MUSIC

AND DANCE FESTIVAL [SACRDM.COM](http://SACRDM.COM)

**RICHARD ROJO**, DIRECTOR OF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR SACRAMENTO STATE

[SACSTATE.COM](http://SACSTATE.COM)

**SCOTT HERVEY**, ATTORNEY

SPECIALIZING IN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND

ENTERTAINMENT LAW [WESTRAIL.COM](http://WESTRAIL.COM)

**KJM CIPRIANO**, VICE PRESIDENT OF

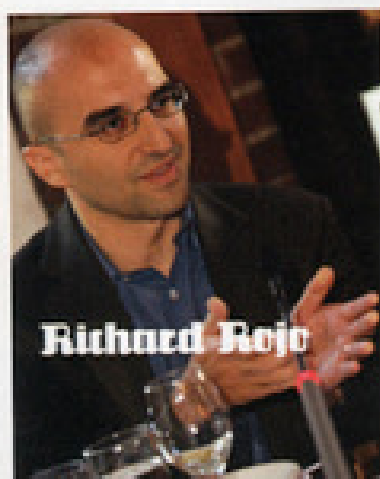
CORPORATE SERVICES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR

LYON REAL ESTATE [KJLYON.COM](http://KJLYON.COM)

**ANDY EPPINGER**, GENERAL MANAGER

OF SACRAMENTO SPEAKERS SERIES, MODERATOR

[SACRAMENTOSPEAKERS.COM](http://SACRAMENTOSPEAKERS.COM)



**Richard Rojo**



## What is Viral Marketing?

Viral marketing and viral advertising refer to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks to produce exponential increases in brand awareness through self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of a computer virus. It can often be word-of-mouth delivered and enhanced online; it can harness the network effect of the internet and can be very useful in reaching a large number of people rapidly.  
— from Wikipedia.org

**Cipriano:** "I think we've done a wonderful job of creating obstacles, whereas other regions have turned their obstacles into unique, risky selling features. It's all about the package. We've got a great waterfront community. Many places don't have half the beauty or resources, but you look at what they've done to spin it, and I feel like, why are we sitting on our hands?"

**Smith:** "We also have to look at what the city is doing to promote our downtown area. I don't know if K Street has found its identity. Everyone's talking about coming downtown, but I don't know if there's a downtown to come to yet. I believe K Street is the key. We have to be a partner with the city on making K Street a viable entity and not let it become a place for people to go to Target. There has to be something vibrant, where the indie film community is represented, and night-clubs and retail. It seems that the ball keeps getting dropped."

But how do we get people from the suburbs to come downtown at night? Even with light-rail extensions and expanding bus lines, many residents in Granite Bay, Elk Grove and Folsom don't want to deal with driving and parking in downtown Sacramento.

### LeAnne Ruzzamenti:

"That's definitely a big issue. We're constantly getting calls about traffic and parking. Once (people) get home from work and they're in the suburbs, the motivation to get them to come back (downtown) is really hard to generate."

**Rojo:** "If people really want to show up for an event downtown, they will. Plenty of things are thriving downtown. And in a funny way, the idea about parking and driving is strange, because people do drive into San Francisco. I really do think this is more of a marketing issue, a perception issue. We just need to make the argument that it's worth the time and effort to get here."

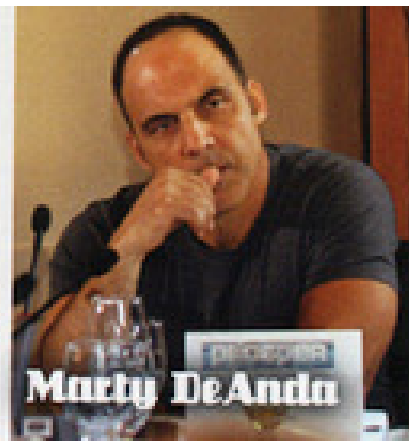
**Hervey:** "This is the age of viral marketing. There are so many opportunities for viral marketing; we have alternative papers in this town, and there's the internet and word of mouth. Maybe it's time to stop looking out and looking in. Time to put on the self-promotion hat and sell whatever it is you have to sell."

Sacramento has been named one of the nation's most culturally diverse cities in the country. In Sacramento, 41 percent are non-Hispanic white, 22 percent are Hispanic, 17.5 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander and 15.5 percent are black, according to a study done by Harvard University in 2002.

**Dave Rupel:** "It's inevitable that our ethnic diversity will spur arts and culture. With all the people coming to Sacramento, there need to be things for them to do. Quality and accessible events."



Kim Cipriano



Marty DeAnda

Rupel came to Sacramento recently after living in Los Angeles for 20 years. He finds that in a smaller city, such as Sacramento, people may have to search a little more for their culture, and it may be on a smaller scale, but it's here.

**Rupel:** "In the last two months, I've gone to the Second Saturday Art Walk, attended the Taste of Land Park, heard local songwriters sing their music at the Fox & Goose pub and saw movies at the Gay & Lesbian film festival at the Crest Theatre. Culture is definitely here, you just may have to do a little more research."

**DeAnda:** "We have all the tools here to connect, to develop, not pander, but to develop events for ethnic markets. We could make Sacramento a cultural melting pot."

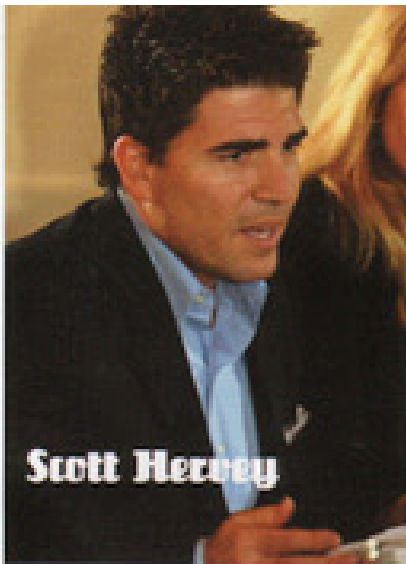
**Clement:** "Latino music has taken off here. Arco Arena has put on five or six solid Spanish-speaking artists in the last six months. And they sell out the shows. Just going to some of the area's R&B shows, I know we've got a multicultural city."

**Cipriano:** "We have to talk about the culinary aspect when we talk about ethnic diversity. I would like to see some more diverse ethnicity in restaurants at a higher level. I think the palate sophistication is here, the desire is here, but are we making it friendly for that to occur?"

**Hervey:** "If anything is going to be responsible for rejuvenating downtown, it will be the restaurants. Within a mile radius (of 19th and J streets), you have 20 fantastic restaurants."

**Clement:** "The restaurants are the anchor, and then expanding from there, people need to know what to do after they eat."





**Scott Hervey**

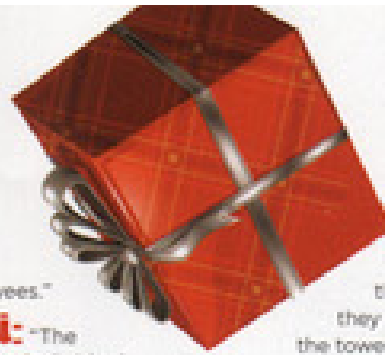
Some of the participants say invigorating arts and culture in the region hinges on corporate investment.

**Seiger:** "I've been involved in raising money for a lot of the nonprofits and arts organizations, and there are the usual few suspects. A lot of corporations that don't have the CEO presence here won't give here. People have kind of a small mindset. Companies need to support arts and

culture to be able to recruit top-level employees."

**Ruzzamenti:** "The Crocker Museum lives on individual donors, and we have a really hard time getting corporate donations. Individual donations have grown in the last decade, and we're doing better. We attribute it to the changing community, people moving in who've traditionally supported arts in the past. Look at the impact that a business can have. We had GenCorp come in with a \$225,000 sponsorship at the Crocker, the largest corporate gift in our history. We've been able to do so much in our schools and mobile museum program because of that. While every \$55 family membership makes a difference, it's the businesses that can really make the long-lasting impacts."

**Hervey:** "I think 10 years from now, it will be different downtown.



I'm reminded of that every day as they drive the piles for the towers on Capitol Mall coming up across the street from my office building. Once people start paying \$700,000 to a \$1 million for their flat, you can guarantee they're going to demand entertainment nearby. In five to 10 years, it's going to happen." ☺



**"Benge" Bob Smith**

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# Better Start Believin' Sacramento Can Rock

By Anne Gonzales



**Itch Koulouris is on a simple mission. He wants to make Sacramento the center of the digital music universe.**

"People ask us all the time, 'Why Sacramento?'" says Koulouris, whose Digital Musicworks International is a leader in digital downloads.

"I say, 'Why not?'"  [digitalmusicworksinc.com](http://digitalmusicworksinc.com)

This city has great people making things happen."

Koulouris is at the forefront of a new surge of business people envisioning a lively music industry just on the horizon. While the local business has been struggling to gel for years, die-hard area music lovers — and even the harshest critics — say the levee definitely isn't dry.

The music business begins with the artists and bands, and there's no shortage of raw talent in Sacramento. But what happens after that is sometimes not in sync. Critics of the music scene cite a shortage of properly sized venues in the city, paltry wages, Sacramento's notorious low self-esteem as San Francisco's country stepcousin and a recording industry that doesn't take the time to cultivate talent.

"Sacramento just has this... thing. I can't really put my finger on it," Joe Johnston, owner  [puscaverns.com](http://puscaverns.com) of Pus Caverns Recording Studios, says about the disharmonic momentum of Sacramento's music industry.

For a number of years, Sacramento was considered a top city for signing talent, but now most record companies have pulled out, complaining that the market is dry. One of the last bands to sign was Die Trying, which apparently did just that. After signing with a major label, the band recorded one album and was shelved.

### Can You DIG It?

Still, many in the industry are upbeat about Sacramento's music business opportunities. Dreams of molding Sacramento into a Seattle or San Diego flicker in the hearts of local music fans as recording studios and independent labels pop up and stay afloat.

Marty DeAnda disputes the staleness of the Sacramento market, and he should know. This is the guy who caught Jackie Greene at an open mike night at a midtown nightclub, heard two songs and told his wife he was quitting his job to manage the skinny kid from Placerville.

DeAnda walked away from a six-figure salary as a corporate suit with Firemen's Fund to put his complete energy into DIG Music, a local recording label and management firm.



He now manages Greene, a singer/songwriter who signed with Universal and spent the summer headlining at major big-city venues. He also manages another singing phenom, alternative country artist Chris Webster, the lead singer for the popular Sacramento zydeco band Mumbo Gumbo.

"I do my homework. I'm out four to five nights a week looking at bands around the Sacramento area, and pound for pound, we have as much talent as Nashville, New York or San Francisco," says DeAnda.

DIG Music started in 2001 as a part-time gig for DeAnda. His partner, Dennis Newhall, finds unreleased songs from the 1960s and '70s, then remasters, packages and sells them. DeAnda projects revenues to hit seven figures this year and expects continued growth for DIG Music.

Johnston started Pus Caverns 14 years ago, partly because he "thought it would be cool," he admits. The studio didn't pay his bills for the first six years, and he kept his day job. Now business is good for him and co-owner, wife Lesa Johnston, and two employees. "I work more than I want to," Johnston says. "Sacramento's always been good that way. There are lots of young bands that keep coming. I'm always waiting for the bottom to fall out, but it doesn't happen."



Jackie Greene

Critics cite a shortage of properly sized venues in the city, paltry wages for bands, Sacramento's notorious low self-esteem as San Francisco's country stepcousin and a recording industry that doesn't take the time to cultivate talent.

Brian Wheat, bassist for the nationally known band Tesla, built Sacramento's J Street Recorders in 2002 to fill a need for a state-of-the-art, quality recording studio at cheaper rates. Chris Cary, studio manager for J Street, says the studio



jstreetrecorders.com

doesn't really make money off local bands but stays successful by drawing big bands from "indy" and major labels.

"We wanted something in Sacramento that could handle major labels and local stuff," Cary says. "We have several big producers, including Michael Rosen, who won a Grammy for working with Michelle Branch, and we work with Papa Roach and the Deftones. We can give the same quality as studios in Los Angeles and San Francisco, but cheaper." Now Wheat is looking at starting up his own independent label.

### Some Dreams Do Come True

Cake, Tesla, the Deftones, Papa Roach and, now, Jackie Greene. Like the pluck of a single guitar string, about once every decade, an artist or band rises from the cacophony of more than 300 bands rehearsing, performing and recording in Sacramento. And

that's not even counting cover or tribute bands. Cary figures there are 2,500 bands within a 50-mile radius, and 70 percent of them are rock.

Most of these budding musicians are young and naive and don't have a lot of accumulated business experience. Just cutting a CD can cost more than \$2,000, with recording studios charging \$50 or more an hour. "A lot of them put it on their credit cards," says Mark Gilmore, a DJ for



krxq.net

98 Rock (KRXQ). "Merchandise sales pay for getting to shows. Sometimes their gas bill can be higher than the cost of cutting CDs."

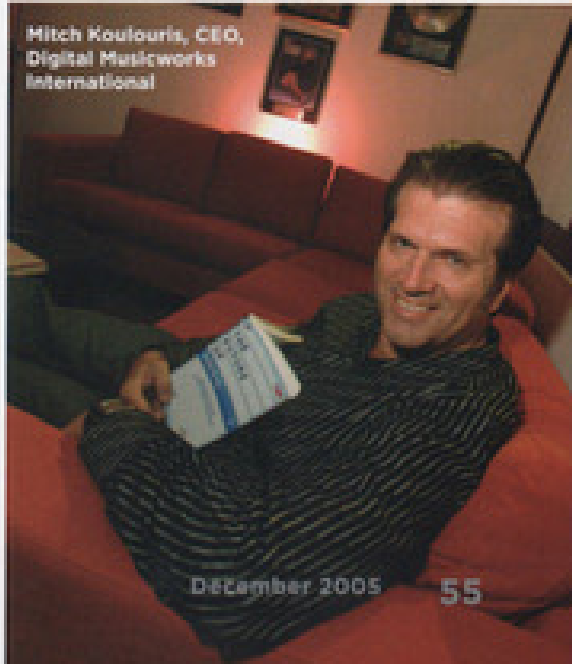
Then there's rehearsal time. Some bands still practice next to the lawn mower, but many are participating in a more sophisticated trend taking root in Sacramento. Empty warehouses are retrofitted to house 60 to 100 cubicles, sound-proofed and climate-controlled. Bands rent out the 20-foot x 30-foot rooms for around \$380 a month.

With names such as SketchPad, Pyramid and the House of Hits, the warehouses are outfitted with security cameras, card keys and guards, so that bands can leave equipment and come and go 24 hours a day. Bands often share a rehearsal cubicle, splitting the rent cost, says Cary, who used to rent a spot at House of Hits for his band, Call Box. Now he says there's a six- to eight-month waiting list to get back in.

### How to Create the New Grunge

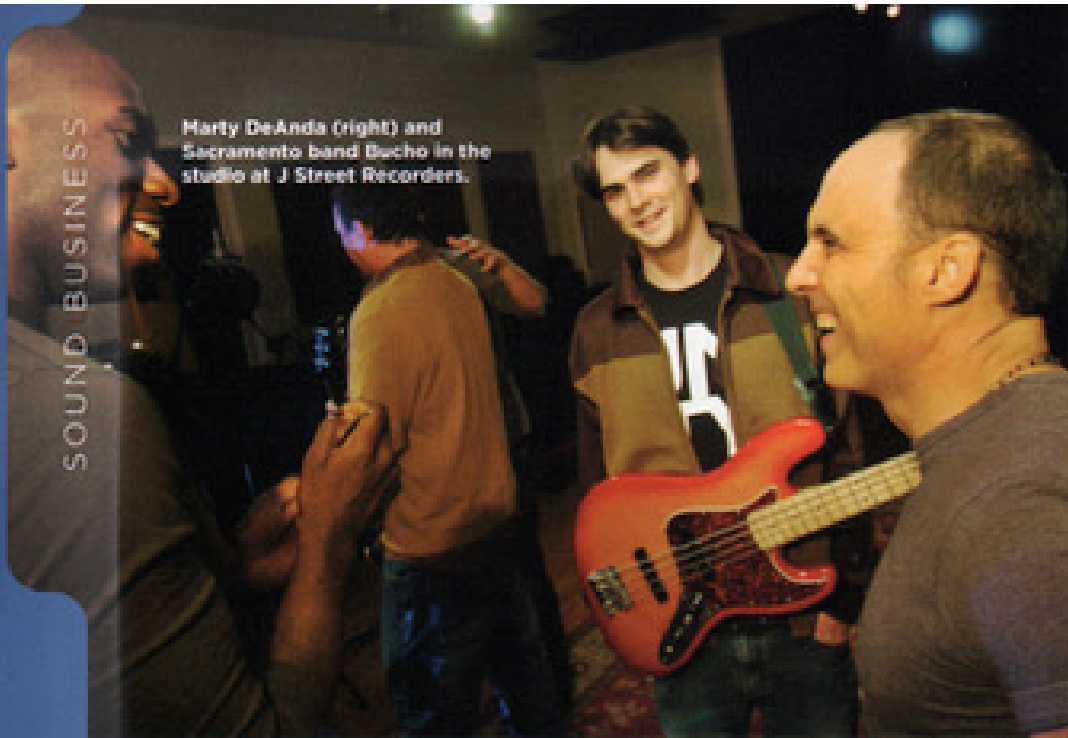
Gilmore wants Sacramento's music industry to follow Seattle's lead of the early 1990s, when a few garage bands spurred the grunge sound. A group

Mitch Koulouris, CEO, Digital Musicworks International





Marty DeAnda (right) and Sacramento band Bucho in the studio at J Street Recorders.



called Mudhoney is credited with starting the revolution. The movement spawned megabands, including Nirvana and Pearl Jam. But most observers agree Sacramento's music bands, clubs and managers would have to be more supportive of one another and less competitive to

create a phenomenon like Seattle's.

"When one of these bands got famous, they brought others along with them," Gilmore says of Seattle's grunge movement. "All these bands hit the airwaves about the same time. There was camaraderie, friendships."

Some bands recognize the concept. Papa Roach emerged from the Vacaville area and adopted Sacramento as its hometown, and after the band members secured a hit record, they went to their label and told it about friends. They helped launch Alien Ant Farm from San Bernardino and Die Trying from Sacramento, says Gilmore. "Any time you've got a band that's made it up that curb, they've got to come down and help others up," he says.

#### No Money in Live Music

Sacramento could take a cue from Seattle's Pioneer Square and San Diego's Gas Lamp District when it comes to live music, says Ann Freeman-Clement, who runs a community-based website on regional Sacramento music, eMusicConnect. About 60 clubs have live music between



[emusicconnect.com](http://emusicconnect.com)

30th Street and Old Sacramento, including restaurants, nightclubs and bars. From Auburn to Davis, 157 places offer live music or karaoke.

But there's no money in live music, Freeman-Clement says. Many bands walk away from a night's work with

## Digital Distribution Revolution

**T**he popular punk folksinger Ani DiFranco never signed with a big record company, yet she sells 100,000 albums a year, keeping the profits — and the song rights — for herself. The band Train sold 30,000 albums before negotiating with a record company, thus coming to the deal table sure-footed. With the Internet bursting with sales opportunities, bands can market their music — either as CDs or downloads.

Download services are a great way for independent artists and small labels to get exposure. Digital Musicworks International, based in Sacramento, is a major next-generation music label focused on the digital-download format.

CEO Mitch Koulouris is banking on the explosive growth of digital downloads to put Sacramento on the music map. DMI is about two years old and has 100,000 tracks under management. Revenue growth from May through

June was 40 percent, and from June through July, it topped 70 percent. With an IPO in the offing, DMI is looking to be an international player in the \$32 billion worldwide market.

"Consumers are at the very beginning of the adoption of digital downloads, much like the transition 20 years ago to CDs," Koulouris says. DMI aggregates and acquires musical tracks from artists and small, independent labels that don't have the bandwidth or clout to get their music on heavyweight digital download services such as iTunes. The company acts as a distributor to the digital channels.

Forty percent of all music sales will be digital by 2009, according to industry experts. Last year, digital downloads made up 2 percent to 3 percent of all music sales. This year, digital will be 5 percent of the total sales, with next year's sales projected at 10 percent.

Through a digital-only music distribution model, artists have creative control and can release more songs, more frequently. In addition, artists are able to benefit from optimal distribution



[radioio.com](http://radioio.com)

and promotion relationships. The result is higher artist royalties with improved business transparency. iOTA and Napster



[live365.com](http://live365.com)

are other popular digital-download services, and online worldwide satellite radio services such as radioio and Live365 are taking off.

"The Internet has been a disrupting force for the whole industry, in a good way," says Scott Hervey, a Sacramento intellectual property lawyer in the entertainment sector and shareholder at Weintraub Genshlea Chediak. "It enables individual musicians and small independent labels to compete in the marketplace and deliver their product directly to the consumer."

\$200 or \$300 to split, as restaurants and nightclubs rely on cover charges to pay the band. DeAnda calls it "criminal," and a blow to bands' self-confidence.

"I think one of the biggest reasons we don't have more Jackie Greenes is low wages for performers," says DeAnda. "When venues in this town choose to invest in these artists, pay a respectable wage and stick with them, business overall will improve." DeAnda advises good bands that are making paltry wages to pull back on the number of performances, leaving crowds and venues a little hungry.

Gina Azzarello can tell you exactly why the music business is not building momentum: too much competition among clubs and not enough cooperation to create synergy. As owner of SuperGiant Productions, she promotes



[supergiantproductions.com](http://supergiantproductions.com)

and books local

bands but sometimes finds it difficult to take a cut when she finds out how much the musicians make. She gets frustrated with clubs that won't allow her to promote performances at other venues.

"Everyone's really scared of competition," Azzarello says. That lack of support hurts business instead of moving the industry forward as a whole. Pointing to an underserved market, she also bemoans the lack of quality underage, or "all ages," clubs in the Sacramento area. "The all-ages crowd is insane right now," she says.

#### Underage Clubs

The Sacramento music scene is dying for underage clubs and for more mid-sized venues that could serve as a link for local bands between dives and the big time, says Jerry Perry, a local promoter who used to run the Cattle Club. He's excited about Marilyn's recent move to 9th and K streets and its increased capacity (to 350



[marilyns.com](http://marilyns.com)

patrons), providing a good, mid-sized venue in the downtown area.

"We need tiers," Perry says. "We have the lower-level venues, but we need a crown jewel that bands can stair-step to."

The music industry is steeped with legends of no-name kids hitchhiking to The Big City with nothing but pocket change, a guitar strapped to their backs and dreams of stardom. The reality is, making it to the top typically requires a business plan, investment capital, set rehearsal times, recording sessions, calculated concert tours and a savvy manager. Fortunately for budding talent in this region, it's all available here for the asking. ☺



Pus Cavern's legendary recording engineer, Joe Johnston, mixes tracks during a recording session with Sacramento's Victim Effect.