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## Street Talk®

### Black Wednesday Arrives At EMI

March 20 proved to be an unpleasant day at EMI Recorded Music, as the company embarked on a hefty global restructuring program that is expected to save it \$140 million per year. In a memo issued March 14, EMI Recorded Music head **Alain Levy** and executive **David Munns** confirmed that the company plans to lay off close to 1,500 employees worldwide. The memo, obtained by *Financial Times*, also states that the job cuts will be done gradually "in order to lessen the shock." When all is said and done, as many as 15% of EMI's 9,000 employees will have departed the company. There are also unsubstantiated rumors that EMI Distribution will be folded and that the company will enter into a distribution agreement with another label, such as Warner Bros. or BMG.

Meanwhile, Schroder Salomon Smith Barney issued a report March 15 stating that **Bertelsmann** has once again emerged as the most likely candidate to take over EMI, which operates Capitol and Virgin, among other labels. EMI has previously failed in attempts to merge with AOL Time Warner and Bertelsmann.

In other record news, **Loud Records** has dismissed half of its staff (20-25 people) and will soon cease to operate as a standalone label. Columbia Records is set to take over marketing, promotions and sales for Loud, and sources tell **ST** that Steve Rifkind had been seeking a buyer for Sony's stake in the label, believed to be 75%.

**Thom Ferro** resigns as VP/Programming and GM/Culver City, CA for Westwood One after 22 years with the company and its previous incarnations. VP/GM 24/7 Formats and Country Programming VP Charlie Cook takes Ferro's duties in the interim.

#### Middlebrooks Back At 'BBM-AM

On March 14 it looked like the 18-year tenure of WBBM-AM/Chicago morning news anchor **Felicia Middlebrooks** was over. The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that Middlebrooks had exited the Infinity news station after failing to receive the \$600,000 multiyear deal she had been seeking. WBBM-AM VP/GM Rod Zimmerman had even remarked that his station was "moving forward" after Middlebrooks rejected an offer presented to her last week. On March 18



Middlebrooks was back on the air at 'BBM-AM — thanks to the efforts of the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Middlebrooks had been off the air since March 5, when her previous two-year contract ended. That deal gave Middlebrooks \$350,000 in salary and bonuses in 2001, making her

the highest-paid anchor at any News station in the U.S. According to the *Sun-Times*, Jackson helped persuade Zimmerman to return Middlebrooks to the station's lineup. She will be retained at WBBM-AM's "final offer" rather than the salary she was seeking.

KRLD/Dallas News Director **Jack Hines**, who joined the station in 1995, departs the Infinity News/Talker to pursue other interests.

KHTS/San Diego Asst. PD/midday host **Rick Vaughn** joins Clear Channel CHR/Pop

sister WKSS/Hartford as PD. Vaughn succeeds Tracy Austin, who is now PD at KRBE/Houston.

The nation's only commercial Jazz station turns out the lights after two years of broadcasting. On March 21 Mt. Wilson FM Broadcasters' **KJAZ-AM/Los Angeles** flipped to Adult Standards as **KSUR (K-Surf)**. **Lawrence Tanter** remains as PD.

Meanwhile, Entercom's **KWSJ/Wichita** will drop Smooth Jazz after five years in the format on Sunday and will begin simulcasting Talk sister KFH/Wichita. KWSJ ranked near the bottom of Wichita's fall 2001 ratings with a 1.3 share 12+.

In **ST's** Dec. 21, 2001 installment we told you about Clear Channel's latest move in its quest to assert its right to the "Kiss" moniker, in which **WAEV/Savannah, GA** flipped to CHR/Pop as "Kiss 97.3." The change created an immediate challenge for Cumulus' Urban Oldies **WSIS (Kiss 104)/Savannah, GA**, which claims that it's been using the Kiss nickname longer than Clear Channel has owned stations in the market. A March 11, 2002 court order barred Cumulus from calling 'SIS Kiss, but an Atlanta appeals court granted a stay of that decision three days later. The court then ordered a full trial, set to begin later this summer, that will determine who has the ultimate right to the moniker in the Georgia city.

#### From Metro Traffic To Major Mansion!

Wonder what founder and former Chairman/CEO of Metro Networks **David Saperstein** has been up to? Look no further than the April 2002 issue of *Vanity Fair*, which profiles the Saperstein family and their new home, dubbed Fleur de Lys. The 45,000-square-foot *ubermansion* in L.A.'s Holmby Hills cost upward of \$100 million and contains such features as a Hall of Mirrors bedroom, a fountain with Carrara-marble horses and a 5,000-square-foot pool house that contains his-and-her spas and a pizza parlor! Saperstein sold Metro to Westwood One for \$1.2 billion in 1999 and is now moving into high-tech farming in California, Texas and Florida, the magazine reports. **ST** in particular enjoyed the family photo spread and the story of how Saperstein met his current wife, Suzanne, who has been seen sporting a 40-carat canary diamond at Paris couture collections.



David Saperstein

In other L.A. real estate news, the *Los Angeles Times* reports that KNBR/San Francisco

Continued on Page 29

#### Rumbles

- **Terry Foxx** exits the PD post at KHYL (V101.1) Sacramento.
- **Ron Roberts** joins KQID/Alexandria, LA as PD.
- **Glen Turner** takes the PD post at WMRV/Binghamton, NY.
- **WLNK/Biloxi, MS** drops CHR/Pop in favor of Classic Rock.
- **KIIS-FM/Los Angeles**, which already simulcasts on KVV5/Lancaster-Palmdale, CA, begins simulcasting on KIIS-AM/Santa Clarita, CA.