



BRANDING BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

MUSIC BEFORE MOVIES

National CineMedia Taps DMI For Audio

On average, 600 million people visit the more than 14,000 National CineMedia movie theater auditoriums each year.

"That's a lot of earballs," says Tena Clark, founder, CEO and chief creative officer of DMI Music & Media Solutions, which has been tapped to be the exclusive audio provider for NCM, operator of the AMC, Cinemark and Regal brands.

The partnership provides record labels and artists—newcomers and veterans—another avenue to connect with an attentive audience in an entertaining way, Clark adds.

For NCM, it offers a "great opportunity" to entertain people beyond the feature film, says Cliff Marks, president of sales and marketing at NCM.

Though the partnership is fresh, it's already resulting in audio "screen time" for Michael Bubl , JoJo, KT Tunstall, Nickel Creek, Carbon Leaf and others.

Stephanie Hopson, senior manager of marketing and advertising at Vanguard and Sugarhill Records, speaks of the positive effects of this promotional tool, which labels must buy into.

"I've seen comments from fans on artists' MySpace pages where they write, 'I bought your record after hearing your song



while waiting for the movie to start.' That's the kind of reaction you want."

Under the terms of the deal, DMI—specifically its Private Label Radio division—will create exclusive preshow music programming for NCM cinemas nationwide. Additionally, Private Label Radio will produce music and video content for the lobbies and other common areas (restrooms, for example) of NCM's affiliated theaters.

In each scenario, the artists are front- and back-announced, says Andy French, VP of media services and label relations at Private Label Radio.

Prior to partnering with DMI, Marks says NCM's music strategies were "scattered" at best. "At one point, we worked directly with labels," he says. "At other points, different brands brought us music programs. With DMI, we have a company that knows the brands and the bands."

At press time, DMI was in the process of lining up a corporate sponsor for its NCM program. ●●●

