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Clockwise, from top left: 'Addams Family' actors KEN WEATHERWAX, TED CASSIDY, CAROLYN JONES, LISA LORING and JOHN ASTIN; LUCY SIMON; 'Sesame Street' actor BOB McGRATH with Muppets Big Bird, Telly Monster and Placido Flamingo; JAN JOHNSTON; GROOVE COVERAGE; 'Everyone Says I Love You' actors WOODY ALLEN, GOLDIE HAWN and ALAN ALDA.



HARRY BELAFONTE, left, and Friar of the Year STU CANTOR at the Friars Foundation dinner in October 2000.



Next Decade client HARRY BELAFONTE playing the guitar.

NEXT DECADE AT 20

INDEPENDENCE EQUALS EXCELLENCE FOR BOUTIQUE PUBLISHING COMPANY

The songs are classics, each commanding a special place in American pop culture—"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?," co-written during the Great Depression by E.Y. "Yip" Harburg and Jay Gorney; the "Addams Family Theme" and the "Green Acres Theme" from the hit TV shows of the '60s, composed by Vic Mizzy; and Boston's rock anthem "More Than a Feeling," written by Tom Scholz.

These songs today, and many others, share the same home: Next Decade Entertainment. Founded 20 years ago by company president Stu Cantor, Next Decade is a boutique-style independent, music publishing firm with an international reach and a reputation for personal attention to its rich and varied catalog.

As Next Decade marks its 20th anniversary, Cantor aims to maintain the high level of publishing administration services it has provided to its clients, while exploring additional admin deals and catalog acquisitions.

"People would want to put their songs here for the same reasons that clients with us now do—personal care and expertise

in promoting and accuracy of accounting," Cantor says.

Cantor was introduced to the publishing business by his father-in-law, veteran music publisher Murray Deutch. Cantor became president of Next Decade's predecessor company, founded in 1977. That company represented the publishing catalogs of Orion Pictures, Orion Pictures Television and Judy Collins' music publishing companies. It also "owned a 3,000-song catalog including songs recorded by the Beatles, Elvis Presley and Ted Nugent," Cantor recalls.

Cantor went on to gain experience in film music, acting as a music supervisor for Columbia Pictures films like "The Big Chill," "Ghostbusters" and "Against All Odds." He also served as music supervisor for other films, including the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" series.

Cantor's experience led him to believe there was an opportunity to create a niche music publishing company that would give personalized attention to songwriters and copyright holders for their catalogs.

One early client was Harry Belafonte. "I started working with his father-in-law and watched him work his way in the publishing business from a teenager, practically," Belafonte says of Cantor. "He's done a really remarkable job in a world that's so ever-shifting and complicated and full of ups and downs, and he really pays attention to the appropriate exploitation of the

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work I've done. That's a particular task, because I'm most mindful of where the material I sing goes, and I always make sure that he makes sure of an ethical relationship in what I do."

Other clients thriving under the Next Decade banner include Bob McGrath, longtime "Sesame Street" host and kids' music songwriter; prolific country songwriter Ray Griff; German dance music duo Groove Coverage; singer/songwriter Nora York, who emerged from the Knitting Factory jazz scene in New York in the '90s; and songwriter/co-writer/jazz artist Lucy Simon, who shared billing with sister Carly as the Simon Sisters and went on to write the music for "The Secret Garden" on Broadway.

Catalogs administered in the United States by Next Decade include those of Jean Doumanian Films ("All the Real Girls," "Everyone Says I Love You," "Sweet and Lowdown"); Roba Music Verlag in Germany, including songs recorded by the likes of Sarah Brightman and Dokken; and Gaucho Music and Sandbox Music, including songs performed by Millie Jackson and Joe Simon and artists signed to the Spring Records label.

Next Decade's catalog is "extremely eclectic," in the words of creative affairs and licensing VP Monica Corton. "Over the years it allowed us to branch into different licenses," she says. "We could go to one type [of licensee] and bring something totally different because we had a wider range of music that we represented."

"Also, each of our catalogs is special in the genre it represents," Corton adds. She cites the Gaucho and Sandbox catalogs "that get sampled a lot in hip-hop. The Belafonte stuff is unique—there's nobody like him. We have the 'Addams Family Theme' and the 'Green Acres Theme' from Vic Mizzy, which are two of the most-loved TV themes ever written. And now we have the first two Boston albums. It makes it very fun and easy. People normally want to do business with us because the music is very special and not replaceable."

"We're doing a lot of merchandising now for Belafonte and Boston," Cantor says, citing a full gamut of commercial copyright usages including videogames, ringtones, greeting cards and sports videos.

Additionally, the company is focusing on multimedia licenses and digital licenses for Web sites, not to mention "solid print agreements with the best people tran-

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'Cantor has done a really remarkable job in a world that's so ever-shifting and complicated and full of ups and downs, and he really pays attention to the appropriate exploitation of the work I've done. That's a particular task, because I'm most mindful of where the material I sing goes.'

—HARRY BELAFONTE

STARS SPECIAL FEATURE

NEXT DECADE

INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF BRINGING ICONIC MUSIC TO AMERICAN CULTURE

BY JIM BESSMAN



scribing and arranging their books," Cantor says. Corton previously worked in music publishing at Boosey & Hawkes and Cherry Lane before coming aboard in 1991, "a crucial addition to our growth and success," Cantor says.

"Nobody's just a Social Security number here, but part of family," Corton says, "and it's basically word-of-mouth that helped us grow under the radar, because we never took out big ads or handed out business cards at conventions. We just worked hard with great dedication to our clients."

Corton, a flute performer and music educator, cites another special Next Decade attribute.

"I have a degree in music," she says, "so music is just as important to us as the business aspect."

She adds that director of copyright and licensing Jennifer Lash likewise has a degree in music in addition to extensive previous music publishing experience.

Composer Mizzy, like Belafonte, originally met Cantor through Corton's father-in-law, Murray Deutch.

"I decided to give Stu and Monica a shot for two years, maybe 15 years ago," Mizzy quips. "And since then I've renewed every two years because my income became very big because of those two working in tandem."

Mizzy notes that he is one of the few composers from his era in Hollywood that owns the publishing on his theme songs and cue music.

"They looked at my catalog to see if they could get commercials, because the business changed for people who write themes and you got to make extra money

from commercials," he says. "And they got me [placements in ads for] Ford Explorer and Shakey's Pizza and M&M's. Not only that, but their statements are highly detailed—I've never received statements like that."

Then there are legendary songwriters like Harburg and Gorney who are represented by Next Decade via their estates.

"Harburg was one of the greatest lyricists of all time," Cantor says, "and what's wonderful about his catalog is that his styles are all over the place because of the many songwriters he collaborated with, [including] Jay Gorney, Harold Arlen, Burton Lane, Ira Gershwin. We have many of his great songs like 'April in Paris,' '(It's Only) A Paper Moon' and 'Last Night When We Were Young,' and we got the Gorney catalog because of it."

Harburg's son Ernie, president of the Yip Harburg Foundation, recalls being referred to Next Decade by a leading lawyer in musical theater.

"He'd heard of a guy who increased some royalties for Belafonte and the guy who wrote the theme for 'The Addams Family,'" Harburg says. "I met Stu and Monica and felt that they understood what I wanted, namely, more funds and a little promotion on the side."

"But equally important was to collect all the royalties and make sure people paid them and we got a check every month. Now, after recap-

turing all our copyrights and Stu and Monica notifying agencies in Europe about our publishing company, where everybody else's income is going down, ours is going up."

Harburg continues: "Before my father died, we created Glocca Morra Music [named after Harburg's song "How Are Things in Glocca Morra?"] from "Finian's Rainbow" and the Yip Harburg Foundation to take money coming in from publishing and put it into the foundation. And over the years Stu and Monica have indeed fulfilled their promises. Not only that but they're nice people. And as Stu is an officer of the Friars Club [in New York], we got a few free meals in."

The substantial estate segment of Next Decade's catalog "grew by accident," Cantor says, "from having Harburg to Gorney to Milton Gabler"—the record producer who also wrote songs including "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie," "L-O-V-E" and "Danke Schoen."

"The interesting thing is that we're sort of like the place for heirs who inherit these great works but have no idea what to do and need a home and place where they know their songs will be taken care of," Cantor says.

Harburg's estate, for instance, has more than 800 songs, so there's plenty to do, Corton says.

"A lot goes into administering songs that age in their copyright, like overseas renewals and recapturing U.S. rights," she says. "So you have to watch each year and oversee notifications and take any other necessary steps, and it's a huge job that not many people do."

But the key to Next Decade's success may well be the chemistry between Cantor and Corton.

Cantor says, "We've been working together for 17 years and have a unique working relationship: I let her do what she wants."

Corton adds, "Our skill sets complement each other. Stu's definitely more diplomatic than I am. I'm the 'bad guy,' being passionate about fighting for the rights of our writers and getting the most money for them, and when I feel backed into a corner because the industry has so few voices right now, I get very feisty. People expect the guy to be the bad guy."

Joking aside, "it's a really interesting time for independents right now," Corton says. "A lot of things are going on like new licensing opportunities and price structures, and as artists get more disgruntled with major companies not paying them attention, they'll be looking more toward independents," she says.

"We took over publishing for Boston's first two albums a year ago in April and increased their net publisher's share by 34% the first year," Corton says. "We're doing [everything] to make sure every penny is collected and that all opportunities to maximize exploitation of songs are being looked at, and that's because of our care and the attention we pay to our clients' music." ♦♦♦



'People want to work with us because the music is very special and not replaceable.'
—MONICA CORTON, NEXT DECADE



THE PERSONAL TOUCH

NEXT DECADE'S STU CANTOR REFLECTS ON HIS INDIE PUBLISHING SUCCESS

New York-based Next Decade Entertainment is celebrating its 20th anniversary as a successful independent, international music publisher providing a full range of music publishing administrative services. ♣ The company boasts an impressive and varied roster of clients, including Harry Belafonte, Vic Mizzy, Boston's Puresongs catalog, Lucy Simon and the estates of Yip Harburg, Milton Gabler and Jay Gorney. ♣ Founder/president Stu Cantor recently spoke to Billboard about his company and the state of music publishing.

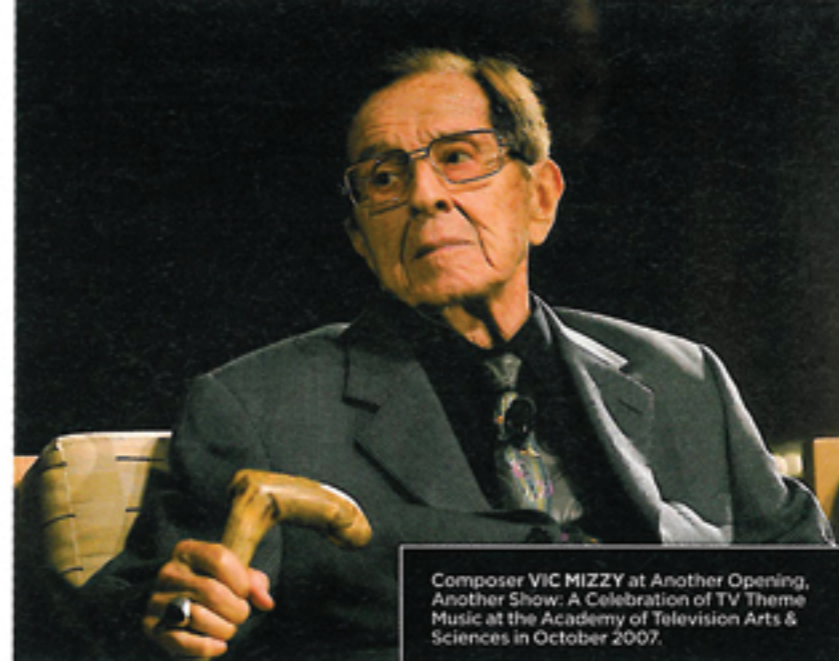
Why did you start the company?

I had served as a music supervisor for movies like the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" series, and it provided a basis for me to start a business where I knew there would be income—this combined with the fact that I saw a niche for independent music publishing administrators.

At the time, it appeared to me that a lot of people were reluctant to give copyrights to majors and that people liked the boutique-type operation where they knew who was working for them and could pick up the phone and talk to them. They would not be just a number on a check and they would get their royalties paid on time.

Like Harry Belafonte?

Harry Belafonte could have got bigger advances elsewhere, but he came to Next Decade because he knew he'd get the attention that he and his catalog deserved as opposed to getting lost at a big company. **continued on >>p50**



Composer VIC MIZZY at Another Opening, Another Show: A Celebration of TV Theme Music at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences in October 2007.

So we provided a home for their family—their children, so to speak, their jewels. These Harry Belafonte jewels, Vic Mizzy jewels that they created and wanted to put in a place where they felt they'd be secure and taken care of and properly looked after.

That's what we did and that's the genesis of the company.

What happened next at Next Decade?

From there the business grew because of the fact that we did what we promised to do. Our clients had friends and entertainment attorneys who saw what we did for them, and they were more than willing to recommend us to their business associates and clients.

I've never been one to do overt networking or take out ads—it's not within my budget being a small business—I just did what I needed to do and the company grew through hard work and word-of-mouth.

What kind of challenges did you face?

Like all publishers we needed to address issues going forward as technology presented us with special challenges.

And being indie, sometimes we didn't have the same voice as bigger publishers with more clout. So we had to work hard at trying to get our voice heard so that our clients' interest could be ultimately pursued.

What about the changes brought by new technology?

Technology constantly provides us with challenges, and the industry in the past has sometimes been kind of slow in keeping up.

We're doing a good job now with downloading and the Internet to maintain a foothold in the royalty structure that we're entitled to as owners of intellectual property. But we need to be aggressive and stay on top and stay in tune with technology.

It's also important to understand that when you're trying to optimize your clients' interests, you have to know what the new technologies are, along with the nature of the financial structure: What's the royalty? What's the advance? What's the charge? All these things that we've taken for granted with rights in the past we need to educate now going forward.

But the "Guitar Hero" [videogame], the downloading, videos—everything's just un-

believable. The Boston catalog [found a new] great outlet with "Guitar Hero." So it's a whole new thing.

I've been in the business 30 years and I know about print and mechanicals and quoting synch fees for commercials, but now there are all these other things you have to stay on top of.

How does this affect your business philosophy?

I think sometimes that the business has become so financially oriented that sometimes we lose sight of why we're in the business. If not for the songwriter we wouldn't be here, and we have to make sure we forever protect them and their creations and works and honor them by doing our utmost to optimize the value of their creations, not only for them but for their heirs.

Considering the fact that I've been in the business 30 years, I've seen it change from a time when publishers were more involved in the creative process than they are today. It seems to have become more of a numbers game and about finances and deal-making than about the music. We must never lose sight of who we are and what we represent and understand that music is the bottom line and the reason we exist.

What is your view on the health of the indie publishing business today?

The role of the indie publisher is coming back around. [Indie publishers] have proved their value, and I think a lot of the mergers and acquisitions of the majors have helped independents forge a new kind of presence.

But I'm also somewhat concerned in terms of overall business, about the development of artists. Years ago when we were younger, we waited for the next album when we liked an artist. But I don't see the support for artists now like it used to be. So many artists get "one and done"-type deals and I think the industry is hurting itself in the long run by not supporting artists and grooming artists and creating longer-term shelf life for artists.

Now it's like a quick fix. But for the most part our clients are people who have been in the business, who have already survived in the long term—like Harry Belafonte. He's a legend, and all we're trying to do is keep the legend alive. **continued on >>p52**

But isn't someone like Belafonte self-sustaining?

To an extent. There will always be people who use Belafonte songs. But like we do for all our clients, we're looking for new ways to promote his music.

With Belafonte we got merchandise using his songs, like a plush toy parrot singing and dancing to "Jump in the Line." Same with Vic Mizzy's "Addams Family Theme," which is used in a spooky plush, animated tree toy. We're even taking a classic song like Yip Harburg's "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" and using it in a videogame.

So we're thinking outside the box. When you're an independent and smaller company, these are things you need to do to create income.

What do you see in the future for Next Decade?

Obviously one goal is to continue servicing all our clients and doing a good job for them—and of course, getting new clients and more clients.

Also part of our business plan going forward is to acquire rights whenever possible, doing administration deals but also acquiring rights from existing copyright holders and people whose rights may be reverting to them in the future and are looking for a new home for their songs or for someone to acquire a catalog that they may be recapturing.

They know [at Next Decade] they have someone to talk to, they know they'll get paid on time and that we're looking at every penny that comes in to make sure they get paid correctly. ♦♦♦

PERFECT PLACEMENTS

FILMS, ADS, TOYS AND VIDEOGAMES ALL BOAST NEXT DECADE'S SONGS

'ADDAMS FAMILY THEME' BY VIC MIZZY

The theme song about the creepy and kooky '60s TV family has been licensed recently for use on "American Idol," "America's Got Talent" and in an M&M Dark Chocolate ad, as well as merchandise including a plush animated tree, "spooky eye" toys and a musical children's book.

"I call [Next Decade] the No. 1 outfit for commercials," says Vic Mizzy, who has seen similar success with the publisher's placements of his "Green Acres Theme."

Singing the distinctive ascending four-note opening phrase of the "Addams Family Theme," Mizzy notes that at sporting events "every once in a while the organist goes 'ba-ba-ba'—and I get paid for that. You got to get somebody to prolong the life of your catalog, and they're doing it."



'MORE THAN A FEELING' BY TOM SCHOLZ

When developers of the "Rock Band" videogame came to Next Decade to license "More Than a Feeling," creative affairs and licensing VP Monica Corton recalls pitching them Boston's "Hitch a Ride," "Peace of Mind" and "Foreplay/Long Time," which, she says, they also used. "One of the reasons we're successful is that we maximize exploitation."

Paul Ahern, former Boston manager and owner of the band's Puresongs catalog, likewise notes Next Decade's success at placing songs from the first two Boston albums, in-

cluding the appearance of "More Than a Feeling" in a Nestlé Nestea Singles spot, TV shows "Carpoolers" and "Criminal Minds," and the "Singstar Rocks 2" videogame.

"We felt that a small, attentive company would actively exploit rather than passively warehouse an important catalog such as Puresongs," Ahern says. "and Next Decade has identified new income sources such as videogames."

'JUMP IN THE LINE,' BY HARRY BELAFONTE

Harry Belafonte recorded "Jump in the Line" on his 1961 album "Jump Up Calypso," and more than four decades later Next Decade has licensed the song to the "Samba de Amigo" videogame, the "Little Mermaid 3" movie and a Sara Lee Bread commercial and placed it in merchandise including a plush parrot toy and musical palm tree.

"There's a level of ethical scrutiny that they're required to use in association with my material," Belafonte says. "I have a list of what businesses I think are appropriate for me to be associated with and which ones to shy away from in exploiting my songs for financial gain. So we have these parameters, but they pay very careful attention to them, and I really and truly enjoy working with them." —JB

