



## A WINNING WAY

For BopStar-PR (launched in Toronto in 1988 as Be-Bop Communications Inc.), teamwork is the essence, the *sine qua non*, of a successful publicity campaign.

"From the beginning I've envisioned BopStar as a key component in a coordinated effort aimed at helping develop awareness of and interest in an artist's work," says BopStar-PR founder and president Mary Lenore Arsenault. "The point is to elevate the art above the pack, so that on its own merits the work, and the work the artist put in it, becomes a compelling story. For that to happen, the label, the artist, the management and the publicity firm need to understand that no one succeeds without the other's input, and that as a team we can make good things happen."

The past year has been one of great change for Arsenault and BopStar-PR, as the company's downtown office has been relocated to Manhattan's Upper West Side, and its focus has been sharpened to strengthen its roots in children's entertainment and alternative country, areas in which Be-Bop Communications thrived initially after being launched in Toronto, Canada, in 1986. For 15 years Be-Bop represented **Classical Kids**, an award winning family entertainment series from The Children's Group, including the Emmy winning movie from the series, ***Beethoven Lives Upstairs***. Arsenault also represented some of the top children's entertainers in Canada, including Barney, Fred Penner and Jack Grunsky. In a long-term pact with Walt Disney Records, Arsenault served as special projects publicist representing the motion picture soundtracks for ***The Lion King***, ***Pocahontas***, ***Aladdin*** and ***Nightmare Before Christmas***, as well as ***The Music Behind the Magic*** four-CD box set of songs from Disney movies, the **Annette Funicello** double-CD retrospective, and **MMC** (the new Mickey Mouse Club). Other major projects included the launch of the **Sony Kids** record label and a four-year relationship with the **Ontario Children's Festival**.

"This type of project is immensely more satisfying than running after the so-called A-List establishment and wasting my energy on making those acts part of the gossip world," observes Arsenault.

In 1994 Be-Bop was enlisted to represent Pete Anderson's Little Dog label in Canada. The label's first Canadian artist, newcomer **Jim Matt**, received the most media exposure ever accorded a debut artist/album in the history of Canadian country music, including the April 1995 cover of *Country Music News*, Canada's largest circulation country publication. In 1996, when Be-Bop opened its New York office, Anderson retained the firm as its U.S. publicist as well. On the singer/songwriter front, Be-Bop's client roster included critically acclaimed artists such as Canada's **Oh Susanna** and **Jonatha Brooke**.

Launching her company in Toronto in 1986 as **Be-Bop Communications**, Arsenault advanced an aesthetic akin to that of great team coaches. In the same way most successful coaches speak not of winning but instead of positioning their teams to win at the end of the game, BopStar-PR

( - more - )

positions its entertainment clients to realize dreams of success in a difficult industry. In the same way that coaches drill their players in basic fundamentals that produce triumphant results, BopStar-PR works aggressively to generate buzz on its clients, laying all the necessary groundwork so that the clients' only concern need be in focusing on what they do best, and doing it to the best of their abilities, all the while knowing their endeavors will not go unnoticed or unappreciated. For good reason was Be-Bop honored as "Best Independent Publicity Firm" at the Canadian Music Industry Awards in 2001.

"I am often told I do not act like a typical publicist," says Arsenault. "I take this as a compliment. I do love my profession, but I made the decision a very long time ago to be true to myself and not let the sometimes off-putting aspects of the business affect my personality or the way I work. I'm known for being honest, discreet and aggressive, but not overbearing--flamboyant, perhaps, and even eccentric at times, but I get the job done as effectively as possible. These traits have served me well in the PR field--my track record speaks for itself--and have earned respect for BopStar-PR in an often cutthroat, competitive profession."

From the outset Be-Bop had a wealth of top-drawer clients in the Canadian market. These included the **JUNO Awards** (Canada's GRAMMYS), **Roy Thomson Hall** (Toronto's counterpart to New York's fabled Carnegie Hall), **Massey Hall** (a Radio City Music Hall-like venue), **Walt Disney, People's Comedy Festival** (for which Be-Bop represented **George Burns** and **Jim Carrey**), among others. After only a few years in business Be-Bop Communications was representing the pinnacle of the Canadian music business--all the VIP, A-List events. Marshalling her energy and public relations savvy, Arsenault then opened a New York City office dedicated to working primarily with artists--but not just any type of artists.

"I've been fortunate to develop a relationship with key clients who I have been working with for years. My first priority with the move to the United States was to continue these long-term client relationships and develop even more here," says Arsenault, citing as examples her lengthy tenure with **The Children's Group** and **Frank Marino and Mahogany Rush**, the latter being a 20-year relationship.

Be-Bop's first national client, signed in June 1989, was the Canadian alternative music awards show, the **CASBYs**. Also signed that same year was the **El Mocambo** nightclub, which has been the site of acclaimed performances by the **Rolling Stones** and **Bruce Springsteen**, among other prominent artists. Soon the client roster was bulging with prominent names and important projects: Toronto's highly regarded concert venues **Roy Thomson Hall** and **Massey Hall**; **Walt Disney Records**; and **Little Dog Records**. **Walt Disney Records** also benefited from Arsenault's tenacity, charting its most successful period ever in Canada during its association with Be-Bop: Gold certification for *The Nightmare Before Christmas* soundtrack; four times Platinum for the *Pocahontas* soundtrack; triple platinum for *Aladdin*; Diamond for *The Lion King*.

On the pop music front, Be-Bop assumed responsibility for all publicity for the fledgling **Toronto Music Awards**. The following year the JUNO Awards called on Arsenault's services to publicize its star-studded, prestigious ceremony. During a four-year tenure with the JUNOs as a springboard, Be-Bop worked with top Canadian artists such as **Robbie Robertson**, **Alanis Morissette**, **kd lang**, **Celine Dion**, **Bryan Adams**, **Blue Rodeo** and **Leonard Cohen**. Also as a result of its

( - more - )

JUNO involvement, Be-Bop landed assignments from the **Government of Canada** and the **Province of Quebec**, the latter hiring the firm to promote its JUNO nominees at an annual reception that was soon regarded as the "hot ticket" during the annual Canadian Music Week conference.

This set the stage for Be-Bop's expansion into the U.S. market. One of the company's first assignments was with the Canadian Consulate General to promote a reception for noted children's entertainer **Fred Penner**, at which Arsenault secured what proved to be one of the last public appearances by the legendary American pop songwriter **Sammy Cahn**. The company then represented the fledgling People's Comedy Festival, now a major event for standup comics worldwide, and Arsenault found herself responsible for steering interviews for George Burns, **Sandra Bernhard**, **George Carlin** and a virtually unknown but promising newcomer named **Jim Carrey**. These successes led to Be-Bop being retained to publicize the brilliant Canadian classical guitarist **Liona Boyd** on the occasion of her history making New Year's Eve performance at the Kremlin on the last official day of the former Soviet Union's existence.

The Roy Thomson Hall and Massey Hall projects illustrate the range of Be-Bop's expertise, as the bookings ranged from avant-garde composer **Philip Glass**, **Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan**, the acclaimed operatic soprano **Cecilia Bartoli**, the off-Broadway smash **Stomp**, **Le National Ballet du Senegal**, the venerable crooner **Joe Williams** and everything in between, all of which received high-profile coverage in the appropriate vehicles, whether those be celebrity columns, rock magazines, newspaper lifestyles sections or specialized ethnic publications. Another Canadian project publicized by Be-Bop, the "**Unique Lives and Experiences Series**," featured speakers such as Playboy Enterprises president **Christie Hefner**, the poet **Maya Angelou** and British Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher**, and was a rousing, sell-out success.

The proof, ultimately, is in the pudding. *The New York Times* heralded the opening of Be-Bop's New York office in an article headlined "The True North Comes to Town," and praised the company for promoting interaction between the American and Canadian music industries. Arsenault herself was singled out for praise on "The Best-Pressed List of 1998" by *Inside Connection* publicity columnist/media critic Anne Leighton, who cited Be-Bop's founder for the "Most Successful Independent Campaign" on behalf of the Canadian vocal group V.I.P.

It all comes back to results--positive results that accrue from believing in a project and a client, and communicating that enthusiasm to a predictably skeptical media. As a result, BopStar-PR clients always find themselves in a position to win. And winning is a good habit to acquire.

Contact BopStar-PR

421 Summit Ridge Place  
Nashville, TN - 37215 - usa  
tel : 615-460-7485  
fax: 615-460-7486

email: [info@BopStar-PR.com](mailto:info@BopStar-PR.com)