

Billboard

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but its cal contributions, and he was scheduled to perform at the event. The event is organized by Panama City Mayor Juan Carlos Navarro along with Perez, who is the festival's artistic director. Additional support is provided by Ruben Blades, the new cultural minister of Panama.

LEILA COBO

Weeks U.S. Break

er Alejandro Sanz says. "That simplicity" he utilizes appeals to a songwriter but he's completely different than, say, [Ricardo] There was a time when 'singer/writer' was a very narrow term used with the political song. But

The track is included on the film's soundtrack and has had repercussions in markets as far-flung as Brazil, where Drexler toured last year.

Drexler first gained global attention in 2002, when his album "Sea," on Virgin Spain, received a Latin Grammy Award nomination for best male pop vocal album. It was a surprising nomination, considering the album had not been released in the United States.

Prior to that, Drexler, who is also a medical doctor, had released two albums in Uruguay that did well locally. His break came in 1994, when he opened a show in Uruguay for Spanish singer/songwriter Joaquín Sabina.

In typical Sabina fashion, he invited Drexler "to have a few drinks" after the show. They were up until 10 the next morning, drinking and playing guitar, moving from one bar to another. Sabina enthusiastically suggested that Drexler move to Barcelona. Drexler followed that advice and, a year later, he signed with Virgin.

Although he did not win a Grammy, the nomination solidified Drexler's status in Spain, Argentina and Uruguay as an important composer and live performer.

"My career as a composer is an anecdote," says Drexler, who has written for Ketama, Rosario and Miguel Ríos, among others, and has also written Spanish versions of songs by Neneh Cherry and Italian superstar Jovanotti. "But the center of my career is as an interpreter of my own songs."

However, he adds, "My greatest weapons have been the songs themselves, and that's the only reason I'm still around."

According to Drexler's manager, Morgan Britos, Warner will release "Eco" in the United States, though a date has not yet been set.



HIGH HOPES FOR UPCOMING TOUR

a new generation of people ly have things to say. I always er know what my genre is, but er I do is 'my thing.' Drexler does his own thing." ler's "thing" has gained nional attention with the inclu-sion song "Al Otro Lado del Río" losing credits of director Wal-ses' "The Motorcycle Diaries."



INFUSION: AUSTRALIAN ACT'S ELECTRO-DANCE-ROCK NEEDS A U.S. LABEL

the trio's second album, was released last year in its homeland, with soft releases in Canada, South Korea, Japan and South America.

For the uninitiated, Infusion's electronic landscape sounds incredibly at home when played alongside the music of **Hybrid, New Order and David Bowie**. Indeed, it's electro, it's dance, and it's rock. It very much represents the here and now.

Because Infusion's deal with BMG Australia excludes vinyl rights, the band set up its own label, **Polaroid Recordings**, which is distributed by **3 Beat/Amato** in the United Kingdom.

The label debuted last year with "Better World," which featured remixes by **Josh Wink and Adam Freeland**.

Also in 2004, the band's "Girls Can Be Cruel" took home an **Australian Record Industry Assn.** award for best dance release.

Both "Better World" and "Girls Can Be Cruel" appear on "Six Feet Above Yesterday."

In an interesting twist, much-missed British imprint **Deconstruction**—once home to **M People, Kylie Minogue, Robert Miles, Sasha** and others—is relaunching, this year, with "Six Feet Above Yesterday."

All that's missing from the scenario is a U.S. label for Infusion to call home. But we're confident that a BMG affiliate here will rectify the situation. If not, we know of a few independent labels that would be more than happy to add Infusion to their artist rosters. Stay tuned.

CURTIS GOES CLUBBING: Sure, **Curtis Mayfield's** music has always

Impressions (of which Mayfield was a founding member): "We're a Winner" and "People Get Ready" are remixed by **Grandmaster Flash and Stonebridge**, respectively.

Arriving six years after Mayfield's death, "Remixed" will surely help

Beat Box

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keep the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee's legacy very much alive. Along the way, Mayfield will certainly be introduced to a younger generation—one that needs to know and care about this important artist.

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU: Kaskadee's "Steppin' Out," a top five hit on the **Billboard** Hot Dance Club Play chart last year, is the latest dance track to be used in a TV spot. The spirited, acoustic-laced jam forms the sonic backdrop of Budweiser's American Journey ad campaign, which began airing late last year.

"Steppin' Out" made its way into the ad by way of **Dave Curtin**, music supervisor at Los Angeles-based music design company **DeepMix**, who recommended the track to ad agency **DDB Chicago** (Bud parent company **Anheuser-Busch** is one of its clients).

Of course, this is fantastic news for Kaskadee and **Om Records**, which will receive additional exposure—as well as revenue.