

NFE Records

Music is an art form, a sensory experience that connects the musician to their instrument and their art to society at large. That simple, honest connection between the creator and the listener is the core of the musical experience. The fostering of that very connection that forms the basic foundation of N Focus Entertainment, the six-year-old, full-service record company that hits 2006 with a new crop of exciting artists.

NFE is an independent entity based in the up-and-coming artistic haven of Orange County, California. It's focus is indeed on an organic, creative vision and a back-to-basics business approach that has already met with success. Supporting a full range of artistic expression -- including rock, alternative, pop, folk, Latin, and urban -- NFE is committed to celebrating and promoting acts that demonstrate a strong live performance standard as well as a distinctive creative voice.

The company was co-founded and is currently headed by President and CEO Mark Hill. Himself a veteran musician, producer, music business consultant, and artist manager, Hill has some 30 years experience on the inside of the music business. His observations about business practices, performing standards, the changing climate within the industry; as well as what acts are able to survive and how; led him to create the label in 1998.

Hill was determined to create a label that would serve as an alternative to the strictures of the hit-driven commercial music marketplace and encompass a range of musical genres. "I started thinking about doing my own company because I saw how the industry was going, it was too synthetic in the music and I felt that the industry was making a mistake," he recalls. "Rap music is cool, but I always thought it should have real musicians, real instruments behind it to keep the organic sound with it that was real unique."

As a former working musician himself, Hill is firm in his support of a talent pool that plays real instruments and sings naturally without gimmicks or mechanical aids. Raw talent, he believes, is the key to building loyal audiences not only nationally but around the world.

"A lot of groups have to survive on live performance," says Hill of the current musical climate, where some of the most talented artists can build a fan base through touring without necessarily having a big-charting record and many of the current crop of hit-makers are studio creations that must later learn basic stagecraft.

HISTORY

Hill's belief in real musicianship led him to found NFE with an emphasis on rock bands. "I decided not to do the R&B side," he explains, adding that he was inspired by his brother Clyde Hill, an artist manager who had met with success managing Canadian rock acts--including a fledgling Nickelback. Says Hill, " I decided to go to the rock side because rock is more original, there are more organic groups right now, because they can tour and go out and make some money and sell product through awareness."

The company's first signings were the San Diego rock band 34 Below, which was managed by a friend of Hill's; a Canadian band called Gladys Patches that was one of his brother's clients; and Canadian singer-songwriter Steely. Through EMI Music Distribution, NFE released 34 Below's debut set *Is It You?* as well as Gladys Patches' debut *A Wish This Simple* in late 2001.

The label followed up with the release of Steely's first album, *Mood Shifts*, in 2002. A track from the album, "Simple Girl," turned into an Adult Contemporary hit, charting nationally and being featured on the some of MTV's edgy reality shows.

Hill says that the reason these rock acts are eager to work with N Focus Entertainment is the level of industry experience Hill has, paired with his sense of honesty and integrity. "I tell them the truth about things, because big record companies won't tell the truth," Hill states. "Also, we don't have a lot of acts like a lot of the labels where somebody's going to get left out."

ROSTER

A small roster means that NFE can give direct, personal attention to each act and its CD releases. With a small staff, Hill personally oversees every stage of the act's development, from the studio to the stage to the retail outlet and everything in between.

NFE will make a new splash this year with four new album releases. Back again for her follow-up CD will be Canadian artist Steely, whose new project will appear in the first quarter of 2007.

Also due in 2006/07 are projects from:

- California rock band Rayzing Sons
- Utah teen girl power-rock trio Taja

Hill stresses that one of the hallmarks of NFE's artists is their basic relatability, their "realness." It's this every-day appeal of the company's acts that stands in stark contrast to the glossy, sexualized glamour of the commercial record world. "They're real artists that can relate to everyday people, not like some fantasy world," Hill states. "They make real music, so they are real on all levels. To me, real people is really what brings sex appeal, it's the way you carry yourself and the way you go about doing things."

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