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OPINION

Bands make it big without help of record labels

By CHEN LIN
Online editor

200,000 albums sold, critical acclaim, and recognition by *Rolling Stone* as 2005's "Hot New Band" - all things that, until the advent of the Internet, could never have happened for the band Clap Your Hands and Say Yeah. The until-then unheard-of-group, whose success last year was attributed largely to attention from a handful of privately run MP3 blogs, made record earnings for a self-released debut album. While Clap Your Hands celebrated their success on tour, record industry

bigwigs shuddered, seeing its success as an omen of their imminent demise.

Not that's at all a bad thing. What, for example, might have happened if instead of mailing out copies of their album to reviewers, Clap Your Hands had instead relied on a major label for promotion and distribution?

To begin with, probably none of the Big Five - the major label companies that own about 75% of the market - would have picked them up. Clap Your Hands is not radio-friendly enough. Their music would hardly appeal to casual listen-

ers, used to expensively produced major-label pop, on a first listen. And if somehow Clap Your Hands had received a contract, they'd have to first crawl through the complex labyrinth of promotion, contract signing and management fees that would leave them eventually with what producer Steve Albini, in his article for *Maximum Rock N' Roll*, "The Problem with Music," estimates is about \$4,000 per band member. That's probably a very conservative guess, but most bands typically don't expect above a middle-class income with any deal. Needless to say, job security

is hardly guaranteed.

But Clap Your Hands, by using the Internet, became free of the overhead, making more money and granting themselves complete artistic freedom. The Net, with its freely available music, self-publishing critics and speed-of-light spreading memes is a medium for distribution of music that democratizes what once was the exclusive domain of commercial-oriented "talent" seekers. No wonder the music industry's scared.

For the last couple decades, since the cassette player came to prominence, the music industry

has undergone consolidation both horizontally and vertically. It is dominated today by a cartel of the Big Five, the OPEC of music. The largest companies, those who had the bankroll, began buying up smaller, independent labels and distributors, eliminating both family-owned record stores and independent chains. It also happened that these were the same distributors most willing to carry or help promote less well-known artists. In their place were retail giants like Tower Records and WalMart that cater only to the Big Five's
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Has America become safer since pre-9/11 days?

By ERIC DORMAN
Staff writer

Is America really any safer now than it was in the days leading up to Sept. 11? It's a question that's been voiced by many, and one that is always answered with a blanket "Yes"—and few reasons—by the powers that be. However, the most recent questioner just might make Washington sit up and take notice.

"Somehow American leadership managed to create a more dangerous world," wrote Kevin Tillman,

younger brother of Pat Tillman, who famously gave up a multimillion dollar NFL contract in order to serve in Iraq. "Somehow the most reasonable, trusted and respected country in the world has become one of the most irrational, belligerent, feared and distrusted countries in the world."

The younger Tillman has every reason to comment on this issue. Pat was killed on April 22, 2004, by "friendly fire."

Tillman is right to be indignant, because the simple answer to the "Are We Safer?" question is "No." We are facing more terrorist attacks per year than ever before—in

2005, worldwide terrorist attacks increased to 11,111, four times greater than the previous total, according to an April *Washington Post* article. We are detaining innocent civilians at airports for interrogation simply for having the same name as a suspected terrorist, while real threats—such as the men who bombed the London subway—are absent from the no-fly list. We let the NSA tap our phones—but have they foiled any plots, uncovered any evidence from their endeavors?

Gives you a real feeling of security, doesn't it?

Whether or not you believe invading Iraq was a mistake,

there can be no doubt that it has contributed to the rash of terrorist attacks worldwide. Of those 11,111 terrorist attacks mentioned, 30 percent occurred in Iraq. Our removal of Saddam Hussein, at a great cost of American and Iraqi life, has turned Iraq into a breeding ground for terrorists. Saddam, while without a doubt a tyrant and a dictator, was also a strong ruler and kept anyone he didn't approve of out of Iraq. After our invasion—ahem!—"Operation Iraqi Freedom" into Iraq in 2003, we've opened Iraq up to terrorists until we can get organized. And that organization, as you all know, is not

proceeding smoothly. But the problem isn't so much who we invaded—although that certainly is problem enough—but rather, who we didn't invade. These days, we almost never hear about U.S. troops combating terror in Afghanistan, the headquarters of Osama Bin Laden as well as the terrorists behind 9/11. So far, we have a grand total of 17,900 U.S. troops in Afghanistan: nothing to the approximately 134,000 soldiers America has deployed in Iraq. So, in short, the U.S. isn't safer today than it was on 9/11. We've squandered our resources in Iraq,
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CAMPUS COMMENT >>>

If you could legalize anything, what would it be?



ANTHONY MILLAN
Business

"Gay marriage-gay people are Americans; they have rights too."



SURJIT KAUR
Undeclared

"Financial aid for multiple schools for one person; now you can only get aid for one college."



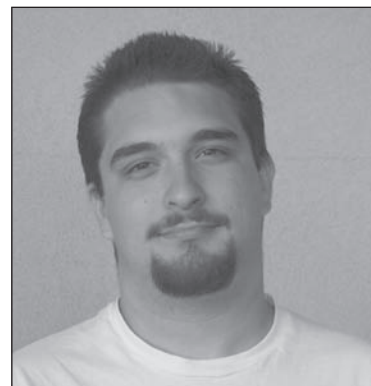
ANUM CHISHTY
Physiology

"I would lower the security measures for air travel and make them less selective."



STEVEN LOPEZ
Deaf Studies

"No speed limit on the freeway."



MAT WEBER
Undeclared

"I would lower the drinking age; if I can die for my country at the age of 18, why couldn't I drink?"