

# Head-Bangers Dressing Up For Awards

Head-bangers in black tie? Why not, asks Bob Chiappardi, head of Concrete Marketing, whose fourth annual Concrete Foundations Forum is in town today through Saturday with 3000 headbangers and wanna-bes in tow.

This year, the Forum offers the first of what it hopes will become an annual event, the Concrete Foundations Awards, which aims to become the hard rock/metal version of the Grammys. The black-tie ceremony caps the Forum's first-ever industry-only day on Thursday.

In case you can't make it down to the Los Angeles Airport Marriott, Concrete plans to issue its first

## ON MUSIC

homevideo of the event later this year. Last year's stab at a videocassette release was mired in a mass of red tape, and the video was never issued domestically.

Thus, Concrete took the project in-house and will release a compilation on A&M Home Video, which it hopes to use as a kind of "calling card" to gain broadcast rights next year.

Chiappardi, who has been approached before on starting his own record label, says he has put the idea on the back burner for a while.

"With all the small labels out there, it's a bad climate to introduce a new one," he says. "What I am interested in is doing a publishing deal with someone to develop into a production deal. We find out about bands long before other companies, and I can list a whole line of bands that I could have developed before the bidding wars started."

\* \* \*

In the rumors department is word that **BMG** had ordered its labels to cut back their budgets 5%, which usually spells layoffs and/or bands being dropped from rosters. "We certainly have been asked to cut back," said BMG spokeswoman Trish Heimers who also denied the 5% figure. "But there's no talk of

By **BRUCE HARING**

lowering the head count, no bands being dropped. It's no secret that the hard times have hit, but the hard times are all over."

Last week in this space, we took the media to task for swallowing without question the numbers issued by **Geffen Records** in the wake of its midnight sales on Guns N' Roses' "Use Your Illusion" albums, which were widely reported at 4 million shipped and 500,000 sold from 1000 stores, all numbers generated by Geffen.

Well, Geffen president Ed Rosenblatt invited me up to his Sunset Boulevard office to discuss the matter.

After throwing me around the

room — and while the branding irons were heating — Rosenblatt admitted that the euphoria of the spectacular midnight event might have goosed the store and sales counts a bit.

But he was adamant that the company had shipped 4 million units. In fact, "by Tuesday morning, shipments to stores totaled 4.3 million units," he said. That number, by the way, included 20,000 vinyl copies.

Rosenblatt emphasized that those numbers were actually pressed and shipped. So why all the industry skepticism? "Jealousy," Rosenblatt said. And with SoundScan verifying that 1.5 million copies of the albums have been sold by the time you read this, who's to argue?