

BRANDING BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

## DECK THE MALLS

### Brands Partner With Bands For The Holidays

For ad agencies and their clients, this is, to quote a holiday chestnut, the most wonderful time of the year. With consumers in need of gifts for family, friends and lovers, brands are working overtime to capture the attention—and dollars—of as many people as possible in the 31 days between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

“There is pressure to make campaigns pop throughout the year,” BBDO New York executive creative director Susan Credle says. “But this time of year, with everyone looking at fourth-quarter numbers, you want to kick it extra hard. And when it fits, music gives a campaign that extra kick.”

To be sure, music is a passion point for consumers—especially much sought-after young adults. Which helps to explain the thinking behind the new TV commercial created by BBDO New York and BBDO Atlanta for Cingular Wireless to introduce the Samsung Sync.

The spot features Ludacris and the Pussycat Dolls, and the sounds of Jamiroquai. The fast-paced clip also playfully references Korn, Vanilla Ice, OK Go, Uncle Kracker, Kiss and Salt-N-Pepa.

Cingular is far from alone this holiday season in partnering brand and band. Consider the following:

- Gap features Common, Seal, Bow Wow and other celebrities in its Holiday in Your Hood campaign. In his TV spot, Common’s original rap “Holiday in Your Hood” is placed over a sample of Madonna’s “Holiday.” Black Eyed Peas member Will.i.am produced the track.

In the campaign, developed by Gap’s creative agency Laird + Partners, the retailer wanted to emphasize the significance of peace and love, Gap VP of marketing Kyle Andrew says. “We thought what better way to do that than by featuring some of our favorite musicians and style icons with the ones they love.”

- Hallmark tapped Country Music Hall of Fame inductee George Strait for its

2006 Christmas CD “Fresh Cut Christmas.” The disc is available exclusively in the more than 4,000 Hallmark Gold Crown stores and sells for \$7.95 with each purchase of three Hallmark cards. Released Nov. 1, the CD sold 1 million copies in its first seven days, according to Hallmark VP of strategic music alliances Ann Herrick.

- Nokia is hosting a New Year’s Eve celebration in five party capitals of the world: Hong Kong, Berlin, Mumbai, Rio de Janeiro and New York. Scissor Sisters, the Black Eyed Peas and others are confirmed to headline the global event, which will be broadcast via TV and the Internet.

- The Rolling Stones’ “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” forms the musical bed in the Simon Malls campaign for its Simon Visa debit gift card.

- Bloomingdale’s partnered with jazz trumpeter Chris Botti for a multiplatform campaign. Botti, who appears in the retailer’s holiday catalog, performed at its holiday window unveiling Nov. 21 in New York. This was followed by an in-store signing of Botti’s newly expanded Columbia Records seasonal CD, “December,” which is being sold in Bloomingdale’s stores nationwide. Net proceeds from the CD sales are being donated to AmeriCares. “Usually, brands want to tie in with the latest pop or rock star. So, I appreciated the initial pitch from Bloomingdale’s and how jazz—as well as a charity—was at the forefront of their holiday campaign,” Botti says.

Bloomingdale’s senior VP of PR Anne Keating acknowledges it is a challenge, each year, to

find the right holiday campaign partner, “but Chris is sophisticated and has a whole style about him.” That said, Keating adds that Bloomingdale’s would never enter into such a partnership unless “consensus between our creative and marketing departments says that the fit is right—for our customers, brand and company.”



Campaigns we have heard on high, clockwise from below: **GEORGE STRAIT** for Hallmark; **CHRIS BOTTI** for Bloomingdale’s; **SEAL** for Gap.

