

## iPad Albums?

The Future Of The LP May Just Be A Multimedia App

Larry Rosen has always kept his finger on the pulse of new music formats.

In 1982, he and composer/jazz pianist Dave Grusin founded GRP Records, one of the first labels to release music on CD. In 1996, he launched one of the first labels to sell music online with N2K. Now, he's betting on what he feels is the next music format of the future—iPad apps that provide material about an album.

Rosen and his partners from those past ventures have teamed to form ROBA Interactive, a production company designed to create iPad album apps for artists.

"I'm always looking at new technology and where consumers are going and where the music industry should go," he says. "I really see this as the future of the music business from a product point of view."

Although some media outlets have taken to referring to such apps as "iPad albums," "companion apps" might be more appropriate. What Rosen, ROBA CEO Larry Miller and veteran record producer/ROBA adviser Phil Ramone are doing is compiling all manner of extra content not typically found on an album—such as behind-the-scenes video of the recording sessions, live performances and interviews with the artists and producers—and combining it with more standard album booklet fare like lyrics, liner notes and photos.

The result is an app that

serves as an interactive booklet that Rosen and crew hope will be compelling to fans who miss the added information that digital downloads usually lack.

ROBA's first iPad album app will be "An Evening With Dave

Grusin," which will be released April 26 in conjunction with the Concord Music Group live album and Blu-ray disc of the same name. The recording features Grusin conducting an orchestra playing selections from his film scores for "Tootsie," "On Golden Pond" and other movies, as well as pieces from "West Side Story."

The Grusin app, which will cost \$10, will include high-resolution concert shots and

backstage photos; interviews with Grusin, Jon Secada, Patti Austin and others involved in the recording; audio clips of the performance; and other multimedia material.

ROBA Interactive isn't the first company to offer album-themed apps. In March, Universal Music Group and video production firm Eagle Rock Entertainment released iPad apps featuring video documentaries and other material about Nirvana's "Nevermind," Rush's "2112" and "Moving Pictures," and the Rolling Stones concert movie "Ladies and Gentlemen: The Rolling Stones." A week later, EMI designed and built an iPad companion to Swedish House Mafia's "Until One" release.

Only "Until One" contains all the music from the album. The others contain just snippets of songs. That's because music included in any iPad app sold at iTunes' App Store—such as songs downloaded to games like Tap Tap Revenge—can only be played from within that app. If users want to listen to those same songs on an iPod or iPhone, they will have to buy them separately.

Ironically, this disconnect is providing the music industry with an opportunity. Most music purchased at iTunes lacks the lyrics or liner notes often found in CD booklets. Apple's feature-rich iTunes LP digital album format does

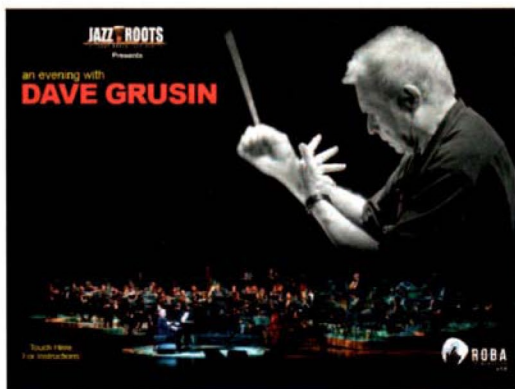
provide some added bells and whistles, but it still isn't fully compatible with the iPad. Because an album of music and an album of related content must remain separate thanks to the wall placed between iTunes' music store and app store, labels now have two different products to sell.

But there are still questions about how these new iPad album companions can scale. ROBA Interactive plans only five or six more apps by the end of the year, with Pitbull being the next artist on deck.

According to Rosen, it can cost upwards of \$50,000 to create these apps, which is why he selects albums that have the right components, such as an album with multiple guest artists contributing, an artist with a deep history or an album created in conjunction with a concert or special event.

But that's for the more in-depth companion apps ROBA has planned. Labels can easily create less-robust companion apps that cost less to produce but still carry value for the fan who wants more out of a digital album, or even an individual track.

After all, Rosen says, "if you can sell a million records, why can't you sell a million apps?"



Here come the strings: ROBA Interactive's app *An Evening With Dave Grusin* will include photos, interviews, audioclips and other multimedia material.

### Digital Domain

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