

produce because he shoots mostly on location, and rents a D.C. cable studio for \$5 an hour when it's needed; the rest of the cash goes to pizza and beer for the bands.

And he did have some semblance of a strategy: to broadcast the show on public access and then sell DVDs and merchandise based on the show. Stuckey posted clips from the show on YouTube to build viral buzz. Sure enough, an early clip of Ian MacKaye, singing a song called "Vowel Movement" became a hit on the *Pancake Mountain* site, and links began coming in from around the world. "The Web has been our best friend," Stuckey says. Though cable access doesn't provide viewer numbers, Stuckey felt a gain in viewership based on anecdotal feedback and DVD sales.

The show is now broadcast on public-access channels in nine cities across the country, including Atlanta; New York; Arlington, Virginia; and "somewhere in Massachusetts," Stuckey says. He estimates that he has sold 8,000 DVDs at \$15 each, and companies in Australia and Japan have licensed rights to rebroadcast the show in their respective countries at \$10,000 for the first four episodes for a three-year period.

Despite the low numbers, Stuckey says he has always seen this as a moneymaking venture—he has just taken a slow-cook approach. He has gradually built the brand and established a following among the most discerning crowd: rock stars. Now when he and his sock puppet show up to a music festival, they're often the first ones ushered into a room. At a recent White Stripes show, says *Pancake Mountain* producer J.R. Soldano, there were hundreds of press people trying to get an interview with the band, but the only ones let in were *Pancake Mountain* and MTV. Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam recently approached *Pancake Mountain* to pen a song for the show.

With *Pancake* hunger on the rise, Stuckey is now firing up his next order of business: a network show. He says he's been approached by or had talks with companies including the William Morris Agency, VH1, and Cartoon Network. He estimates that a network production could still be done on the cheap, for about \$40,000 to \$80,000 an episode. But he has one condition: He wants to continue to produce the show himself. That way, he hopes, he can continue to bring a little punk-rock love to the elementary school crowd—and change the experience of music on television in the process. "Unlike some D.I.Y. characters," he says, "I believe that for the belly of the beast to change, you have to get inside."