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SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2012

# Church schooled

## Former child star singer learns lesson from phone hacking case

DINAS POWYS, Wales (AP) — Charlotte Church’s nearly \$1 million settlement Monday with Rupert Murdoch’s company provides vindication for a former child singing sensation caught in a web of tabloid intrigue as she grew into her teens.

But she does not believe the company’s apology was sincere.

Outside London’s High Court after receiving 600,000 pounds (\$951,000) in a settlement from News International, Church attacked the tabloid culture that turned her life upside down: “They are not truly sorry. They are just sorry they got caught.”

In a weekend interview with The Associated Press at her home in the village of Dinas Powys in south Wales, Church said she was looking forward to putting her legal troubles behind her and concentrating on her career and her young children.

“I’m a singer,” Church said, wearing a casual blue dress while sitting crunched up in a small chair in her home studio, littered with electric guitars and a couple of dirty plates left by her bandmates.

“I’ve always wanted to sing. I never wanted to be famous. I always want to perform live, and I’ve really, really missed that. Hopefully it will be a little bit further moving forward.”

Church, who debuted at age 11 with an angelic voice that soared to classical song, is now a 26-year-old mother of two. Instead of preparing for what would undoubtedly have been a harrowing trial, she spends her free time in a garage studio next to her home, recording comeback tunes with local musicians.

The tracks-in-progress, covering a range of pop styles, are a reminder that before she was tabloid fodder — characterized as a loose teenager with a fondness for booze and cigarettes — she was a showstopping vocalist who had performed for a pope



CHARLOTTE CHURCH

and a president and become a regular on the Oprah Winfrey show.

Her voice still soars, seemingly without effort, despite the occasional cigarette.

Church keeps the studio locked, along with the gate that blocks her driveway, and she doesn’t talk freely on the telephone. Suspicion is a residue of the phone hacking scandal, even if reporters no longer hide in her bushes or tap her phone messages.

Church’s life offers a case study of the perils of child stardom. She sold out concert halls, made millions from record sales — and became an obsession with the tabloid press. Reporters dogged her every step, eavesdropped on her communications and published shock headlines about her family based on the flimsiest leads.

She said she had wanted the case to be brought to trial but was reluctant to again become the focus of attention for Murdoch’s lawyers and reporters. She also said she was concerned about possibly being held responsible for Murdoch’s extensive legal costs if the case did not go her way.

“I felt sick to my stomach at what I’d been put through, and what my parents had been put through for this company’s gain,” she said.

“We were going to take this forward, to know what went on. We had a strong

case, a lot of evidence. I wanted it to be as public as possible. But we settled for many different reasons. It’s really difficult — they’ve got 25 lawyers, and you’ve got four. They had massive resources, and they weren’t going to take it lying down.”

She does not believe her involvement in the case will end with Monday’s settlement.

Church said phone numbers for her American publicist and agent were found in private detective Glenn Mulcaire’s notes, which could be significant because Mulcaire was jailed after having been found to have hacked into the phones of some people mentioned in his handwritten notes.

She believes her agent and publicist may have been hacked as well, indicating that crimes may have been committed in the United States, raising the legal peril for Murdoch, whose company is headquartered in New York.

Church was just 11 when she shot to fame with her uncanny mastery of classical standards. The intensity of tabloid scrutiny picked up pace in her mid-teenage years — when she branched out into pop music — as her romantic life, nights out on the town and even her cigarette smoking sparked racy front-page stories.

The pressure has eased in the last few years as Church has stayed out of the public eye.

She lives in a spacious house with attractive grounds — and neighbors who protect her privacy. The living room is filled with teddy bears and has a casual, lived-in look, but a home-office on top of the garage has been turned into a “war room” for her legal battle with the Murdoch empire.

Church believes the tabloids have done lasting damage to her career. Her voice is intact; she believes her reputation is not.

“I realize now their power, their absolute power,” she said.

# Put your money on 'Taker, Punk at 'Wrestlemania 28'

By GEORGE DISHONG

The biggest wrestling pay-per-view event of the year is just four weeks away and “Wrestlemania 28” is shaping up to be a very good card.

So far, there are four big matches scheduled. We can’t talk “Wrestlemania” without mentioning the Undertaker. He will be facing Triple H for a third time at “Wrestlemania.” It going to be in a “Hell In a Cell” and could end up being the best match of the night.

## The Turnbuckle

This is going to be a brutal match. The Undertaker will walk into “Wrestlemania” undefeated, and you can bet he’s going to walk out of “Wrestlemania” undefeated. A perfect 20-0. The streak continues.

Also, Chris Jericho will be taking on C.M. Punk for the WWE championship. Punk and Jericho are two of the best in-ring performers in the WWE, so this should be a really good one. As good as Jericho is, I expect Punk to retain his title.

Sheamus will be getting a shot at Daniel Bryan’s world heavyweight championship. Sheamus has been getting a strong push from management over the last few months. He won this year’s “Royal Rumble” and I think he’ll take the belt from Bryan at “Wrestlemania 28.”

Then there’s John Cena vs. the Rock. Everybody wants to know who’s going

to win. I’m picking Cena because it makes the most sense. Cena is the face of the WWE, and the Rock is nothing but a special attraction. What sense would it make to have the Rock win this match? John Cena is on WWE TV week in and week out and the Rock shows up whenever he wants to.

The Rock will be gone from the WWE five minutes after this match is over. This match can’t end on a countout or a disqualification, either. For the money the WWE will be charging for this PPV, there has to be a clear-cut winner. This match has been getting all kinds of hype for a year. It better live up to it.

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**AROUND THE RING** — The next three-hour “Raw Supershow” is April 23. Eve Torres might get paired with a heel WWE superstar and feud with Zack Ryder and a WWE diva. Layla’s name has been mentioned. ... Wade Barrett suffered a partial dislocation of his left elbow a couple of weeks ago on “Raw, and is expected to be out of action for six to eight weeks. ... The WWE’s “Raw Supershow” will be coming to the Consol Energy Center May 14. Tickets now are available. ... Keystone State Wrestling Alliance’s fifth annual Joe Abby Memorial Tournament show is March 24 at the KSWA Arena at the Lawrenceville Moose. More information is available online at [www.kswa.net](http://www.kswa.net). ... NWA East’s next show is set for March 17 at the PWX Wrestleplex in McKeesport, 2125 Beacon St. Visit the [www.nwaeast.org](http://www.nwaeast.org) website for details.

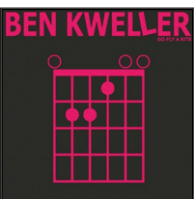
# Menzingers’ ‘Past’ puts Scranton on the musical map



**THE MENZINGERS, “On the Impossible Past” (Epitaph)** ☆☆☆½ — When you think of musical hotbeds, I’m guessing Scranton doesn’t appear high on the list.

But that’s where up-and-coming punk rockers the Menzingers call home and the Greg Barnett-fronted band have slowly and steadily built a name for themselves. Third album “On the Impossible Past” is their best yet as the Menzingers cultivate a sound that comes across as a mix of Against Me! and the Gaslight Anthem. Oddly enough, they’ve toured with both of those bands in recent years.

After a so-so start to the 13-track slab with “Good Things,” the Menzingers find their groove with standouts that include “Burn After Writing,” “The Obituaries,” “Ava House,” “Sun Hotel,” “Mexican Guitars,” the title track and “I Can’t Seem to Tell.” Kudos to Barnett & Co. for fine-tuning their sound and coming up with an excellent record. (*Jeffrey Sisk*)



**BEN KWELLER, “Go Fly a Kite” (Noise Company)** ☆☆☆ — With its cool, interactive cover art — the cardboard case folds into a colorful, cube-shaped mural

— Ben Kweller’s “Go Fly a Kite” provides enjoyment BEFORE you hear any music. The liner notes even double as an instruction manual with diagrams of all the guitar parts so you can play along as you listen.

Take that, digital downloads!

That the 11-track collection of indie rock gems ranks among the San Francisco native’s best platters is delicious icing on the cake. Power-pop standout “Mean to Me” is one of Kweller’s most infectious tunes, and he additionally soars high on “Jealous Girl,” “Gossip,” “Full Circle,” “Justify Me,” “Time Will Save the Day,” and “You Can Count on Me.” Highly recommended. (*JS*)



**TONIGHT ALIVE, “What Are You So Scared Of?” (Fearless)** ☆☆☆½ — The buzz has been building for Aussie emo rockers

Tonight Alive for several months, thanks to some well-placed guest spots, a dynamite debut EP and lovely 19-year-old frontwoman Jenna McDougall. Expect the hype to continue with the release of “What Are You Scared Of?”, their solid first full-length. It’s a sound we’ve heard before, but McDougall shows she’s more than a pretty face and her band does the emo thing better than many of their peers. “Breaking and Entering,” “Sure as Hell,” “To Die For,” “Listening,” “Thank You and Goodnight” (with blink-182’s Mark Hoppus) and the title track are the ones you’ll remember on the 12-track release.

If you like what you hear on “What Are You So Scared Of?” — and why wouldn’t you? — be sure to stop by Mr. Smalls in Millvale on March 24 when Tonight Alive share the stage with Go Radio and There for Tomorrow. (*JS*)



**JENNY OWEN YOUNGS, “An Unwavering Band of Light” (self-released)** ☆☆☆ — I’ll never forget the impression

indie singer/songwriter Jenny Owen Youngs made with dynamite 2007 debut album “Batten the Hatches.” The centerpiece of that record was the R-rated “F\*\*\* Was I,” a jaded, bruised ballad that remains affecting to this day. Sophomore release “Transmitter Failure” was pretty good, though it didn’t really move her career forward and she kind of dropped out of sight after that.

Almost three years later, Youngs has cut ties with her former label and seems to have rediscovered the magic. The 11 songs on “An Unwavering Band of Light” are clever and smart, and Youngs’ voice gets better with age. None of the songs jab a fist into your chest and rip out your still-beating heart the way “F\*\*\* Was I” does, but she impresses with keepers “Love for Long,” “Your Apartment,” “Pirates,” “Born to Lose,” personal fave “Way You Fall,” “Already Gone” and “Wake Up.” Glad to see Youngs back in the groove. (*JS*)



**TONY BENNETT, “Isn’t It Romantic?” (Concord)** ☆☆☆

— As hard as it is to believe, the great Tony Bennett, 85, didn’t score his first No. 1 album in a legendary career that spans seven decades until last

fall’s “Duets II.” How does that happen? Chalk “Isn’t It Romantic?” up to striking while the iron is hot. The 15 romantic ballads that make up the platter were recorded in the mid-1970s and all have appeared on previous albums, but it’s great to have them all in one place when your next romantic dinner needs the perfect soundtrack.

Bennett puts his spin on such classics as “Make Someone Happy,” “As Time Goes By,” “I Could Write a Book,” “Days of Wine and Roses,” “The Touch of Your Lips,” “Young and Foolish,” “We’ll Be Together Again” and “Lucky to Be Me.” A must for his legion of fans. (*JS*)



**KIM DiVINE, “Five” (self-released)** ☆☆☆

— You might not know her name, but chances are you’ve heard the bubbly pop songs of pixie-like singer/songwriter Kim DiVine. She’s had tunes featured on episodes of “Jersey Shore” and “One Tree Hill” and that’s her singing the Jell-O jingle in national commercials. Her latest musical effort is the fantastic EP “Five,” a (you guessed it!) five-track collection of folksy pop tunes that are sure to leave you smiling.

First single “Perfect Kind of Love” is sweet without crossing into saccharine territory, and DiVine soars on “Best Thing,” “Yours to Keep” and “Just the Same.” The good-but-not-great “Easy on Me” is the only track that fails to register, but that’s a minor hiccup on an otherwise excellent record. (*JS*)