

MERRY LEXMAS, BABY

When **Lawrence Savell** arrived at **Chadbourne & Parke LLP** as a first-year associate in 1982, he was a bit reluctant to showcase the musical skills he cultivated during his post-graduate days at University of Michigan Law School—and for good reason. At Michigan’s annual “Talent Revue,” a talent show for law students (don’t laugh), Savell made a name for himself by writing and performing songs that parodied the law student and lawyer life.

“I had no delusions that I had any talent. I just wanted to have some fun,” says Savell, now a products liability and media law litigator. “When I came to Chadbourne, I didn’t think any big law firm would tolerate this stuff. But at the Christmas party, during my second year, I got up and did some parodies about law firm life. The reception was phenomenal.”

Inspired, Savell organized a cross-section of the firm’s employees to form what became the Chadbourne Band. After many years of honing his art, this holiday season Savell will release his



Savell

third album, “Merry Lexmas From The Lawtunes,” an assortment of “allegedly humorous, lawyer-related, law-related, rock ‘n’ roll holiday songs.” Savell’s first two releases were “The Lawyer’s Holiday Humor Album” (1998) and “Legal Holidayze” (2004).

According to a statement put out by Savell’s indie label, LawTunes, “the songs incorporate a broad spectrum of rock-and-roll styles, reflecting the influence of both current bands like Coldplay, as well as classic groups and performers like The Beach Boys, Jan and Dean, Bachman-Turner-Overdrive, Jerry Lee Lewis, and, of course, Elvis.” In short, Savell’s songs aim to please the ear. “For some reason,” he says, “little kids dance around the room when they



hear them.”

With titles like “Another Billable Christmas,” “I Got A Footnote In My Stocking” and “Hey, Santa, I Appeal,” the negative—but true—messages sent by Savell’s lyrics don’t seem to bother his partners. “The music is facetious, but of course there’s an element of truth to it. The fact that people here think it’s funny is part of what makes this firm what it is. It says we work hard, but we can also let our hair down on occasion and have

some fun. I’m not saying this place is a sweatshop. I wouldn’t be working here if that were the case.”

As for his audience, Savell’s total sales still hover around 1,000 albums, so he probably won’t be leaving his day job anytime soon, regardless of how many more Christmases he misses for work. That said, if his music helps to deflate stuffy, humorless stereotypes of lawyers, Savell considers his efforts well worth the trouble. “Lawyers put in long hours and sacrifice time with their families,”

Savell acknowledges. “But those are universal things for all people who are dedicated to their jobs and make those kinds of commitments, even if they don’t have a law degree.”

Indeed, “Merry Lexmas, Baby,” the fourth track on the new album, is partly a tribute to Savell’s wife, who has suffered her husband’s absences through his 24 years at Chadbourne. “When she first heard that song,” Savell recalls fondly, “she started to cry.” —D.S.