Executives Seek Key To Turn On Music Sales

BY ED CHRISTMAN
NEW YORK—With sales data from the first six months of the year suggesting that the music business is on its way to experiencing the worst annual sales decrease in almost two decades, industry executives have mixed opinions as to whether a comeback is possible in the second half.

In the six months ended June 30, album sales declined 9.8% to 311.1 million units, compared with the 344.8 million units scanned in the first half of 2001, as counted by Nielsen SoundScan. That comes on the heels of last year’s 2.85% decrease in album sales, which delayed the industry’s nearly decade-long run of album sales growth.

Music industry executives cite numerous reasons for the decline, including CD burning, file sharing, bootlegging, a lack of hit albums, the maturation of the CD format, and the label-led abandonment of singles.

Pete Jones, president of BMG Distribution and Associated Labels, acknowledges that the industry’s health is affected by a number of factors, which he collectively refers to as a “circle of pain.” At a panel at the recent Universal One Stop convention, he said he did not see any short-term fix. “Just as it took a couple of years for the industry to arrive at where we are, it will take a few years to grow our way out of it,” he said.

In a follow-up interview, Jones states, “I don’t think any of the answers needed to solve this situation from technology or legislation will happen in the next six months to a year.”

At the same panel, Danny Yarbrough, chairman of Sony Music Distribution, agreed. “Yes, the industry is under attack [from a couple of different directions]. Piracy is huge and becoming a bigger issue.”

Similarly, Universal Music & Video Distribution (UMVD) president Jim Urie says, “Unfortunately, because I don’t see a great copy-protection solution right now, I do see this as being a down year. Like it or not, it all comes down to CD burning, and until it stops, the industry sales are going to drift down.”

(Continued on page 88)

‘O Brother’! Bluegrass Is Blooming

DOORS OPEN FOR ACOUSTIC ACTS AS THE INDUSTRY GUARDS THE MUSIC’S INTEGRITY

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE
and PHYLLIS STARK
NASHVILLE—“Every dog has its day, and the old bluegrass dog is having its day,” bluegrass legend Del McCoury says of the genre’s recent explosion into mainstream musical consciousness.

Once relegated primarily to the Southeastern U.S., the sounds of banjos, mandolins, fiddles, dobro, and acoustic guitars are now drawing a global audience. Much of the phenomenon can be attributed to the success of the Coen Brothers’ film O Brother, Where Art Thou?—which spawned a multi-platinum sound-track that has become a “must-own” CD among music aficionados.

But O Brother is just the beginning of the story. Beyond the soundtrack juggernaut, longtime bluegrass acts are seeing an increase in album sales and concert bookings. Attendance at bluegrass concerts and festivals is up, and the Down (Continued on page 86)

Uneasy Alliance Forms At Plug.In

BY BRIAN GARRITY
NEW YORK—There was the usual squabbling between labels and digital music companies at this year’s Jupiter Plug-In conference. A host of disagreements brewed about topics ranging from the viability of business models to the reasonableness of Webcasting rates and the speed of content licensing. But there was also an element previously unseen in interactions between content owners and online distributors at the leading industry summit concerning music and the Internet: a growing sense of shared purpose.

It still may be an uneasy alliance, but with physical album sales in serious decline and Internet piracy running rampant, the major labels are becoming increasingly willing to experiment with digital distribution in an effort to develop new revenue streams (see story, page 8).

Indeed, the notion of letting go was an overarching theme of much of the conversation and deal-making going on at the event, held July 8-9 here in association with Billboard.

In a keynote address, Rep. Nick Boucher, D-Va., called on majors to “take off the brakes” from their online music offerings. He suggested the majors put all their (Continued on page 8)

Music-Related Bills In Congress: Page 3  •  Jackson vs. Sony: Page 8  •  Labels Test Revival of Commercial Singles: Page 67
### BDS Certified Spin Awards June 2002 Recipients:

#### 400,000 SPINS
- **Lullaby**/ Shawn Mullins /COLUMBIA
- Sold (The Grundy County Auction Incident)/ John Michael Montgomery /ATLANTIC

#### 300,000 SPINS
- **Only Time**/ Enya /REPRISE
- **All For You**/ Janet /VIRGIN
- **Learn To Fly**/ Foo Fighters /RCA
- **Say My Name**/ Destiny's Child /COLUMBIA
- **Superman**/ Five For Fighting /WARE/ COLUMBIA
- **Bring It All To Me**/ Blaque /COLUMBIA

#### 200,000 SPINS
- **Foolish**/ Ashanti /MURDER INC/IDJMG
- **What's Luv**/ Fat Joe feat. Ashanti /ATLANTIC
- **Hey Baby**/ No Doubt /INTERSCOPE
- **The Middle**/ Jimmy Eat World /DREAMWORKS
- **You Won't Ever Be Lonely**/ Andy Griggs /RCA
- **How Do I Get There**/ Deana Carter /CAPITOL
- **You Can Feel Bad**/ Patty Loveless /EPIC
- **The 100,000 SPINS**
- **Underneath Your Clothes**/ Shakira /EPIC
- **Sock Up The Sun**/ Sheryl Crow /A&M
- **Hella Good**/ No Doubt /INTERSCOPE
- **Hot In Here**/ Nelly /UNIVERSAL
- **My List**/ Toby Keith /DREAMWORKS
- **Without Me**/ Eminem /INTERSCOPE
- **For You**/ Staind /ELEKTRA
- **Hero**/ Chad Kroeger feat. Josey Scott /ROADRUNNER/IDJMG
- **A New Day Has Come**/ Celine Dion /EPIC
- **What If She's An Angel**/ Tommy Lane Steiner /RCA
- **Young**/ Kenny Chesney /BNA
- **What About Us**/ Brandy /ATLANTIC
- **I Don't Have To Be Me**/ Steve Azar /MERCURY
- **Don't You Forget It**/ Glenn Lewis /EPIC
- **Drive**/ For Daddy Gene/ Alan Jackson /ARISTA
- **Wrapped Up In You**/ Garth Brooks /CAPITOL
- **That's When I Love You**/ Phil Vassar /ARISTA

#### 50,000 SPINS
- **I'm Gonna Be Alright**/ Jennifer Lopez /EPIC
- **No Such Thing**/ John Mayer /COLUMBIA
- **I'm Gonna Miss Her**/ Brad Paisley /ARISTA
- **Not A Day Goes By**/ Lonestar /BNA
- **Addictive**/ Truth Hurts /MCA
- **Oh Boy**/ Cam'ron /DEF JAM
- **Complicated**/ Avril Lavigne /ARISTA
- **Halfcrazy**/ Musiq /DEF SOUL/DEF JAM
- **When You Lie Next To Me**/ Kellie Coffey /BNA
- **Seein' Red**/ Unwritten Law /INTERSCOPE
- **The One**/ Gary Allan /MCA
- **Full Moon**/ Brandy /ATLANTIC
- **Days Go By**/ Dirty Vegas /CAPITOL
- **Ain't No Way**/ Nappy Roots /ATLANTIC
- **Caught In The Sun**/ Course Of Nature /LAVA
- **One Last Breath**/ Creed /WIND-UP
- **Just What I Do**/ Trick Pony /WARNER BROS.
- **Here To Stay**/ Korn /EPIC
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- **First Date**/ Blink-182 /MCA
- **Testify**/ Rage Against The Machine /EPIC
- **I Cry**/ Tammy Cochran /EPIC

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Legislators Propose Flurry Of Bills

BY BILL HOLLAND
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Before its current session ends in October, Congress is expected to introduce a flurry of significant bills that will have a major impact on the music business.

Two bills are particularly noteworthy. One, a Senate measure still in draft form, is sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, and would essentially require all music companies to earn royalties to record at the same rate as those for their contracts for receiving royalties. Webcasters and other third parties would be required to pay either a compulsory license royalty rate or a rate imposed by the Copyright Royalty Panel (CRP).

Importantly, a record company would first be allowed to bring a case before a CRP into print. If the company chooses to do so, royalties would return to normal procedure.

Hatch says: “This could be a substantial benefit for those artists whose rights are now held but not exploited by record labels because the labels are unable or unwilling to market, or to clear the rights to, their music [recordings]. It would not threaten the major labels’ CD sales, since these are out-of-print tracks. The benefits could run to the artists, to all legitimate services, including the label-owned services.”

A spokesperson for the Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) commented: “This week’s Universal Music Group announcement supports the bill’s intent. It proves that this is not an area appropriate for legislation and that the marketplace is moving to address catalog issues.”

Hatch also weighs in on direct payment to artists of digital royalties in the bill and seeks reforms of provisions in current record contract criticisms by artists as unfair: “We should address the relevance of such traditional charges against artist royalties as stream of revenue, returns, free goods, etc., in the context of digital distribution. Digital distribution could ultimately prove a boon in reproduction and distribution cost-savings, which ought to be shared with the artists.”

He also will incorporate a provision that enables artists to own their domain names if they leave a label, or bring them along to another label.

The other major provision of the Hatch draft bill would create the organization of an online registry at the Copyright Office to provide faster and more efficient online licensing of musical compositions.

In previous Congresses, music services such as roundtable groups have complained that the main stumbling block to quick song licensing has been the near-gridlock conditions that potential licensees face as a result of current rules and outdated paper filings at the office.

Carey Ramos, general counsel for the National Music Publishers Assn. (NMPA), says the idea might be reinventing the wheel. “The Harry Fox Agency has a perfectly good computer database already in existence,” he says, adding that it would strain the limited resources of the Copyright Office “to build another one from scratch.”

Hatch hopes to gain bipartisan support for the measure, and considers theWait for further action now that major companies are yet to emerge to control the process for it to use to determine Webcast royalty tariffs.

‘Digital distribution could ultimately prove a boon in reproduction and distribution cost-savings, which ought to be shared with the artists.’

—SEN. ORRIN G. HATCH, R-UtAH

FILE SHARING
A bill in the House—sponsored by Rep. Howard Berman, D-Calif., ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property—would give the industry a new technological weapon by allowing the RIAA to go after file sharers with huge repositories of unauthorized recordings that use peer-to-peer (P2P) services. The bill would legalize so-called “self-help” measures that confuse and slow down the tools used in such activity.

The use of such self-help measures is nothing new. But when such measures are used to thwart P2P piracy, they may be illegal and may run afoul of certain common-law doctrines and state and federal statutes, including the implied contract and tort theories. Berman admits: “I believe Congress should free copyright creators to develop and deploy technological tools to address P2P piracy such as interdiction, decoys, redaction, file-blocking, and other methods.”

Berman says the bill’s language must be narrowly crafted with strict bounds on acceptable behavior, and record companies “should not be allowed to damage the property of a P2P file trader or any intermediaries, including ISPs.”

An RIAA spokesperson comments: “We are encouraged by the efforts of Congressman Berman to help develop ways to combat the growing problem of online music piracy.”

OTHER BILLS ON THE WAY
Rep. Rick Boucher, D-Va, has announced that he and Rep. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., are going to introduce a bill that would allow small Webcasters to defer copyright payments under the new Web royalty rate (Billboard Bulletin, June 21). The bill would provide a “short-term remedy” to allow small Webcasters to use the Web royalty rate before the CARP recommendations named earlier this year. In the longer term, Boucher says, “we need to scrap the CARP”; find a new way to resolve similar payment disputes, and set a new rate using more accurate barometers and applying a percentage of gross revenue as a yardstick.

Also waiting in the wings is a so-called “consensus” online music-licensing bill being pushed by former Long Beach, Calif., P-DJ, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, that would serve as a “passable” substitute for Boucher’s long-pending Music Online Competition Act, which has a number of subcommittee opponents.

All in all, by the end of the session, members of Congress will introduce more legislation affecting the record industry than at any other time in Capitol Hill history. Veteran observers cite several reasons for this.

First, members of Congress—like the rest of the boomer-and-older demographic of the population—have become PC-proficient in the past five years (largely because of their teenage children) and now have a greater interest in and knowledge of the Internet and copyright-related concerns, including online music issues.

Also, while traditional groups like the RIAA are convincing lawmakers that they need more federal help to neutralize piracy on the Net—especially large-scale “file sharing” pirates—new Congressional players such as Webcasters and artists’ groups have been successful in securing a place at the table when rights and protections are being debated. On a political level, lawmakers are showing a keener interest in ensuring balance between the rights of copyright creators, users, and the content companies.

Election year plays a part, too. In the House, all 435 members are up for re-election this November, along with one-third of Senate members. Proposed legislation with a pro-consumer slant, even if Congress is too encumbered with other business to pass such legislation by adjournment Oct. 4, strikes a chord with constituents and puts a legislative bookmark in place for action in the 108th Congress, which convenes in January.
## Billboard Top Albums

**Artists & Music**

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## Billboard Top Singles

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THE MULTI-MILLION SELLING “NOW” SERIES IS STEAMING UP THE SUMMER WITH THE HOTTEST CHART-TOPPING HITS FROM TODAY’S BIGGEST ARTISTS!

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Butterfly Adds Distribution With Diamante Acquisition

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE
NASHVILLE—The Butterfly Group is purchasing Diamante Media Group, adding a distribution element to the recently formed label group. The acquisition comes as Butterfly prepares to launch its first wave of product, including a trio of CDs this fall inspired by the second film based on the popular Left Behind book series.

Butterfly, which includes the Gospel 1, Flying Leap, and Christian Records labels, opened this spring, with offices in Nashville and Las Vegas. It was founded by retired pilot Mike Rinaldi, Christian industry veteran George King, and songwriter Bob Carlisle, known for the multi-format hit "Butterfly Kisses." Carlisle is leaving the Diadem label (part of the Zomba-owned Provident Music Group) to record for the new venture.

Diamante was founded in 1993 by industry veteran Bill Conine. The Newport Beach, Calif.-based company is the fourth-largest Christian music distribution system behind the corporate behemoths: EMI’s Chordant Distribution, Provident, and Word, now owned by Warner Music Group. Diamante distributes more than a dozen labels, including Discovery House Music, Christ for the Nations, and Aluminum Records. Conine has signed a three-year contract to remain with Diamante as president, reporting to King. Diamante’s 15 staffers in the Newport Beach office will remain in their posts.

Conine says that the Butterfly deal gives Diamante "the opportunity to grow along with the industry giants and keep up with the requirements for marketing and distribution that the industry now requires.”

King admits he and his partners had considered signing on with one of the big three Christian distribution systems, but purchasing Diamante proved the more appealing option: "When you add our volume to their volume, it becomes a respectable distribution system," he says. "That makes you a player. There's a place for an independent, and it seems like the timing was right." Rinaldi acknowledges it was hard for Conine to sell a company he'd founded and nurtured for nearly a decade. "Bill has really come on board, but it was a bittersweet thing, selling a company he had given birth to. But his wife told me she thinks he's going to have more fun working with a team instead of being the Lone Ranger.”

Conine adds, "I'm going to get to see Diamante grow into the company I've always believed it could be." Diamante handles distribution in the Christian marketplace and goes through Navare for general-market distribution. The company also serves Canada's religious retail market through an agreement with Christian Marketing Canada. In February 2001, Conine formed a partnership with Nashville-based Servant Distribution that has since been dissolved.

Diamante has always operated as an independent distribution company, not a label; thus, Conine says, the company never had "proprietary product." As part of the Butterfly Group, it will now have product from the Butterfly labels going through the pipeline in addition to the product from the labels the company already distributes.

King says the Butterfly Group is preparing to launch several projects for release this fall. Carlisle will have a Christmas album, there will be a new album by Russ Lee, and there will be three albums tying into the film Left Behind 2: Tribulation Force, based on the book series by Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye. Produced by Cloud Ten, the film opens Oct. 29. King is music supervisor for the film and will produce three companion albums—one for the Southwestern gospel market, one for the urban market, and one adult contemporary compilation.

King is excited about the concept. "Once you have a brand that people understand, then you have a chance to spin things off that brand to touch different genres. There are a lot of people who appreciate urban, Southern gospel, and contemporary Christian music that have been readers of Left Behind books. This is one of those brands that has crossed all the lines.”

In The News

• Washington, D.C.-based XM Satellite Radio says it added more than 60,000 subscribers during the second quarter, which ended June 30 (Billboard Bulletin, July 10). To date, the service claims more than 136,500 subscribers—a 28% increase of the company's projected year-end total of 350,000.

• A federal judge in Los Angeles has granted a request by the Recording Industry Assn. of America that allows Sharman Networks to be included in the suit filed against three peer-to-peer companies. The complaint names StreamCast Networks, Grokster, and Kazaa, which earlier this year sold its assets—including the Kazaa network—to Australia-based Sharman. The case is scheduled to go to trial Oct. 1.

• In a move seen as a way of calming investors skittish about the funding concerns facing other media and communications companies, AOL Time Warner has secured two long-term revolving credit facilities. AOL Time Warner arranged the facilities—one for $6 billion and five years and another for $4 billion and one year—through 27 financial institutions. They replace two facilities that mature this year and are part of an "overall diverse corporate funding program" that also includes cash flow from operations, commercial paper, and access to capital markets.

VU Eases Financial Picture But Faces Investigation

BY MATTHEW BENZ
NEW YORK—Vivendi Universal (VU) made its short-term financial picture a little brighter with the addition of a new 1 billion euro ($990 million) credit facility. Yet the good news was tempered by simultaneous word that French regulatory agency is looking at the financial disclosures the company has made since January 2001.

The Commissions des Opérations de Bourse (COB), a stock-market regulator, is believed to be examining VU’s communication of financial information to the public since January 2001. A VU spokeswoman confirms that an investigation has begun and says the company will fully cooperate.

Though it’s unclear what may come of the COB investigation, investors responded by sending VU stock shares 7.5% lower in Paris the day after the news was made public. VU stock is down some 70% in 2002 over lingering questions about the company’s overarching strategy and financial well-being.

It also underscores the difficulty that new chairman/CEO Jean-René Fourtou faces in putting behind him and the company the tenure of his predecessor, Jean-Marie Messier. Messier’s six years at VU, which came to an end July 3 (Billboard, July 13), were highlighted by acquisitions—most notably, the Universal Music Group and Seagram’s other entertainment assets—but marred by the lack of an overall strategy for VU as a whole. Largely as a result of acquisitions, VU’s debt now stands at around 30 billion euros ($29.7 billion), including 1.8 billion euros of 7.7% due by the end of July. Recent published reports also suggested problems with the way VU accounted for certain financial transactions.

The new credit facility, coupled with VU’s $2.1 billion euros ($1.19 billion) in cash and $1.6 billion euros ($1.58 billion) in other credit lines, give VU breathing room. In a statement, Fourtou added that VU is "also working constructively with our banks on a longer-term financing facility.”

Credit-rating agencies are watching closely. Moody’s Investors Service, which has already cut VU to “junk” status—and thereby made it more costly for the company to borrow money—noted that “time is of the essence.”

It remains unclear whether asset sales will result. "I think it’d be silly for them to sell anything straight away," Merrill Lynch analyst Brett Hucker says, noting the rough market conditions. But Nicholas Bell of Bear Stearns expects VU to consider any and all asset disposals, though he concedes the potential scenarios are “incredibly complex.”

Market Watch

BY STORE

for weeks ending 7/13/02

www.americanradiohistory.com
Ray Brown's artistry was superseded only by his generosity and his joy of living.

Thanks Ray, for including us in the celebration.
BY MELINDA NEWMAN
LOS ANGELES—Michael Jackson, who is on a seemingly self-appointed crusade for the rights of black artists, may have trouble finding sympathy among other members of the African-American music community.

As one high-level black executive says, “You could throw a dart at the R&B chart and find almost any artist who would have more resonance on this issue than Michael Jackson.”

A multi-platinum black artist declined to comment specifically on the Jackson allegations but said of his own major-label dealings, “I think I’ve gotten a fair shake. Anything that happened negatively, I don’t think had to do with the color of my skin.”

But Jackson does have the support of A&R man Al Sharpton—who operates the National Action Network—and attorney Johnnie Cochran, who has assisted Jackson on legal matters for more than 10 years.

Jackson was accusing Sony of Epic Records—for whom Jackson has recorded for more than 20 years—of not properly promoting his October release, Invincible, because he is black. The album has sold 1,999 million units in the U.S., according to Nielsen SoundScan, and a total of 9.1 million units worldwide, according to Sony. Sources say the album cost $30 million to make, and Sony spent an additional $25 million marketing the project.

Jackson personally attacked Sony Music Entertainment chairman Thomas D. Mottola during a rally on July 6, calling him racist and “devilish,” while holding up a photo of Mottola with devil’s horns drawn on it. In addition, Jackson turned his rally into a civil-rights campaign, adding that by supporting him, his fans were “fighting for all black people, dead or alive.”

In a statement, Sony responded: “We were deeply offended by the outrageous comments Mr. Jackson made. We can only say that Sony Music spared no expense in creating a series of global marketing, promotion, and publicity campaigns in support of Invincible.”

According to sources, Jackson’s deal with Sony is up in 2004, and he will fulfill it by delivering a greatest-hits album featuring four new songs. A Sony rep says there is no release date set for such a project. Additionally, the rep says releasing more singles from Invincible is possible, “but no decision has been reached yet.”

Jackson, Sharpton, Cochran, and Jackson’s manager, Trudy Green, all declined to comment by press time.

**Digital Music Deals On The Rise**

**Major Labels, ISPs Experiment With Business Models**

BY BRIAN GARRITY

NEW YORK—Digital music may not be a profitable venture yet, but that’s not stopping leading media and technology companies from becoming increasingly serious about trying to build business off the concept.

As dealmaking in and around the recent Jupiter Plug conference demonstrated, everyone from the biggest labels to Internet service providers (ISPs) is experimenting with digital music models and concepts.

In the most notable example, Universal Music Group (UMG) has agreed to license repertoire to sister company Emusic. The deal represents the largest collection of major-label music ever made available for sale in the MP3 format.

Major labels have long advocated of digital rights management-protected content, but in recent months they have been dabbling in offering tracks, both promotional and commercially, in the pirate-friendly MP3 format.

Under the agreement, UMG will provide access to 1,000 back-catalog albums to Emusic, a subscription service which more than 1,000,000 and publicists who specialize in old and rare tracks.

Meanwhile, ISPs are looking to internet music to help drive subscribers. Atlanta-based ISP Earthlink is launching a new digital-music hub for its subscribers. The EarthLink Digital Music Center will feature on-demand music provided through FullAudio and streaming radio from Musicmatch.

FullAudio downloads—more than 75,000 songs from BMG, EMI, Universal Music Group, and Warner Music Group—will be available for rent at two monthly pricing tiers ($3.95 or $9.95) and tracks and $17.95 for 100 tracks. Payback will be offered through an EarthLink-customized version of the Windows media player, which will also function as a general-purpose jukebox.

For streaming radio, Musicmatch will offer a free EarthLink-branded jukebox. Customers can also pay $4.95 per month to access Musicmatch’s premium radio service, Radio MX, as well as a one-time $19.99 fee to access a premium Musicmatch jukebox, which includes burning.

Record clubs are also using digital music to help lure new subscribers and retain existing members. Stewart Goldfarb, president/CFO of BeMusic, said his company, which owns mp3.com, would revive the Myplay digital locker service and tie in with BeMusic’s CDnow and BMG Direct. Customers of the latter two operations could qualify for locker service based on the amount of music they purchase.

Sony Electronics is looking to digital music to help support sales of its formats and playback devices. The division’s online music hub, SonyMusicClub, is serving as a distributor partner for both Pressplay and Rhapsody subscription services.

MusicClub is currently offering the subscription services in an advanced test mode, Sony Electronics music services business development VP Bob Nell notes. An official launch is set for later this summer.

As part of its promotion for Pressplay—which recently announced that it will allow the burning of tracks to MiniDisc later this year—purchasers of Sony products, including the new MD Minidisc player, the CD100 with an MD player, and Sony Viao computers, will receive special offers to join the subscription service via MusicClub.

MusicClub is also selling digital downloads from Liquid Audio and Sony Music at musicclub.sonystyle.com, where the company will launch a direct sales e-commerce store later this summer featuring more than 100,000 titles on CD, cassette, and SuperAudio CD.

Additional reporting by Steve Trunamen in New York.

But those working to foster the digital music market say that such steps and comments would have been unheard of only six months ago and therefore mark important progress.

“It tips the scales toward making it possible for others to follow,” says Bruce Jacobs of Universal Music Group, a leading digital distribution company.

Recent announcements in and around the recent Jupiter Plug conference demonstrated the rapid growth of the digital music business. The agreement, under which Jupiter Plug subscribers will be able to purchase a CD, a T-shirt, or a discount on concert tickets via the club’s website, was announced at the conference.

Additionally, Jupiter Plug subscribers will be able to access a new digital music service from Musicmatch, which will feature on-demand music provided through FullAudio and streaming radio from Musicmatch.

But despite signs of progress in accepting digital distribution, record companies remain at odds with the technology industry and some congressional leaders over everything from CD copy protection to Webcasting rates.

To address these concerns, Jupiter Plug subscribers will be able to access a new digital music service from Musicmatch, which will feature on-demand music provided through FullAudio and streaming radio from Musicmatch.

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CANCELLATIONS: All cancellations received between June 26 and July 24 must be in writing and are subject to a 20% cancellation fee. No cancellations accepted after July 15 and no refunds will be issued. Substitutions may be made at any time. Include a check processed after the conference is over.

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Daisy Ducret 323.782.6250 • ddurect77@hotmail.com
RPE's Area 305 Aims To Redefine Boy-Band Concept

BY LEILA COBO
MIAMI—The term “boy band” inevitably conjures visions of ‘N Sync, Backstreet Boys, and other singing, dancing, quartets. So what do you do if you're a group who do pop music, don't dance, and aren't accomplished instrumentalists, vocalists, and songwriters?
“Then we're a fusion pop band,” singer/bassist Tony Choy says. “We have Caribbean influences, [and we do] rhumba, flamenco, ballads. It's pop with an edge.”

Choy is one-quarter of Area 305, an acoustic-based group that could redefine the concept of boy bands—specifically in the Latin market—with its Aug. 20, 2002 eponymous debut. The Miami-based band whose members hail from different countries and backgrounds is garnering attention as the first signing to RPE, the joint-venture label created by producer/songwriter Randy Perez and Univision Music Group. Perez is a producer of major stars—including Christina Aguilera, Julio Iglesias, Luis Miguel, Luis Fonsi, and most recently, Pilar Montenegro—and his work is highly polished. Moreover, Area 305 is his creation, a group of musicians brought together as a unit after individually working in Perez's production company.

But during a recent impromptu Area 305 performance in Perez's living room prior to a recording session, the group—Jonathan Fusssey, Ricky Ruiz, Choy, and Nelson Cano—played with the ease of old friends rather than the slick feel of a rehearsed band. With no warm-up, mixes, or props, Area 305 traded vocals and guitar and bass lines with ease, harmonized impeccably, and blended the commercial accessibility of their tracks seamlessly with a distinct sense of rhythm and style.

Perez says, “One day I said, ‘There’s so many solo artists, but I don’t see a group that can do the love songs and actually play the instruments. I think the market needs that.’”

Area 305 had 18 months in which to try out new material and make multiple demos of many songs that—to its chagrin—were often handed to other artists to record. At that time, Perez recalls: “[I said,] ‘Guys, give me a chance. This will be great when it all comes together.’”

The timing was right when Univision Music Group chairman Jose Behar heard the group perform at Perez's house. “They're a wonderful hybrid of so many things,” Behar says. “And they're talented.”

Because U.S. Latin radio has rarely been receptive to the kind of acoustic sound that Area 305 boasts, Perez has added some instrumentation. The first single, “Si No Estas,” is a signature Perez ballad that is easier to program than more upbeat fare.

Riders Return With ‘Monster’ Set
CD On Walt Disney Records Complements Hit Movie’s Soundtrack

BY JIM BESSMAN
NEW YORK—Following the precedent set with Riders in the Sky’s Grammy Award-winning 2000 children’s album Woody’s Roundup (based on the Toy Story 2 film), the venerable and ever-vital country and Western music preservationists are releasing Monsters, Inc. Sound Factory Favorites via Walt Disney Records Aug. 27.

The "companionship album" to the soundtrack to the Disney/Pixar animated hit feature Monsters, Inc. coincides with the release of the film on DVD and VHS in September and contains mostly new, original material penned by the Riders.

According to Riders in the Sky frontman Doug Doug, the collection also features a Riders cover of "If I Didn't Have You" (The Academy Award-winning Monsters, Inc. theme by 2000 Billboards Century Award honoree Randy Newman). "Doo-Wah Diddy," a "monsters'" lyrics version of the rock'n'roll classic; and "Big High Wire Hop," which the group wrote and performed for Pixar Animation's Academy Award-winning animation short For the Birds, which accompanied screenings of Monsters, Inc.

For Monsters, Inc. Sound Factory Favorites, "we did a song for every character, like we did on Woody's Roundup," Ranger Doug says. The new album includes such character-related tunes as "I Only Have Eye for You," "The Perfect Rox," "Monster's ABC's," and "Monsters, Inc. March." "Lullaby for Boo" features a duet with Sonya Isaacs, an artist signed to Disney's Nashville label, Lyric Street Records.

"The fun thing about it is that it's sort of all over the map musically," Ranger Doug says of the album, the quartet's fourth children's set. "It's not just a cowboy record. Disney's big reservation was, 'Do they just do cowboy music?,' and I think we proved pretty forcefully that we do other stuff besides cowboy music: doo-wop, calypso, old-timey square dance, wailing sax, Dixieland, and swing. There's a little bit of everything for everyone. After 29 albums, I think our Western [music] credentials are pretty secure and that we can branch out here."

Walt Disney Records executive director of marketing Damon White notes, "It's a fun approach to another Disney/Pixar film, and we think fans of Woody's Roundup will enjoy it just as much."

The main marketing thrust is the promotional campaign behind the movie's release on DVD and VHS.

"We're essentially riding high on the awareness of the movie and characters and will merchandise in-store to get upfront placement of the album with the video product," Whiteside says. An album rebate will be included with video purchase, and the label looks to also exploit Radio Disney.

"They're basically a kids-and-family AM-radio network, and we do a lot with them," Whiteside says. "Hopefully they'll play some of the album, because the songs are so fun and upbeat for kids, and I think families will enjoy them."

Lauding the Riders' "real music," Kenny Curtis, PD for XM Satellite Radio network's XMKids children's programming service, says the album provides "an opportunity for us to expose kids to a style of music that they might not otherwise get a chance to hear." Disney Records, meanwhile, will also have album audio samples available on its disney.com Web site. As they approach the quarter-century-mark, Riders in the Sky—which includes upright bassist Too Slim, fiddler Woody Paul, and accordionist/producers Joey the CowPolka King—are working on a 25th-anniversary album. The group (managed by Paul Lohr of New Frontier Management in Nashville and booked by Buddy Lee Attractions) could well be enjoying its biggest touring year ever. Ranger Doug observes, "It's amazing in our 25th year to have a career that's still in the growing stage.

"We have unbelievable summer and Christmas tours," he continues. "The demand is going up, and we're doing symphony shows and festivals all over the country. We're doing some Disney festivals in Canada, too. They're such a great match for us, because they've always had a special love of the West, so they fit us hand and glove."

On the publishing side, the songwriters "all have hip pocket companies," notes Ranger Doug, specifically his Songs of the Sage (BMI), Slim's Too Slim Music (BMI), Paul's Back Music (ASCAP), and Joey The CowPolka King's Music Wagon (BMI). In September, Ranger Doug—using his real identity as former Country Music Foundation employee Douglas B. Green—will publish Singing in the Suds for Vanderbilt University Press.

"It's the first really comprehensive look at the singing-cowboy phenomenon that swept the country in the 1930s and shows where it came from, why it went away, and why it came back," he says. "I've written extensively on Western music through the years and studied it forever, so it's like a Ph.D thesis."
‘Crawlin’ King Snake.’” by Tim Buckley’s new album, *Honest to God*, is really felt. The label’s sold some 40,000 copies in its first week, and Buckley’s voice is rich and powerful. The album’s first single, “Song to My Mother,” has become a minor hit.”

“Blues,” and the label’s new policy of signing indie bands has made a significant impact. Buckley’s third album, *Dreamland*, is a departure from his previous work and features a more experimental sound. The album’s lead single, “Siren,” has been well-received by critics and fans alike.

Buckley’s next album, *East London*, was released in 1990 and featured a collaboration with the legendary jazz trumpeter Miles Davis. The album was a commercial success and was critically acclaimed for its innovative fusion of jazz and rock.

In conclusion, Tim Buckley’s career was cut short by his untimely death in 1975, but his music continues to influence and inspire musicians today. His albums, including *Honest to God* and *East London*, remain essential listening for fans of classic rock and soul.
PASSIONATE, MOTIVATED MCA DUO FROU FROU IS HERE TO MAKE CHANGES

BY ADAM O. KIM

Some might think of the slang “frou-frou” as meaning snooty, fritzy, or even cheeky. But MCA’s U.K. duo Frou Frou is anything but. On Details (Aug. 13), the group offers poetic lyrics amidst a technologically mastered backdrop.

The first half of this London pair consists of producer/tunsmith Guy Sigworth, who has worked with such superstars as Madonna, Seal, and Bjórk. The voice behind Frou Frou’s sounds is Imogen Heap, a tall, young woman in her mid-20s, who, quite simply, uses her breathy voice to conjure musical magic. Having already released a solo album in 1998 (Megaphone on Almo Sounds), she’s now ready to move up a notch in the music world by partnering with Sigworth.

Together, they deftly blend Heap’s voice with the technical skills of Sigworth’s computer work. They’re not at all ashamed that their music is created using technology, as opposed to organic instruments. In fact, they proclaim it’s the future of all music.

“Everybody’s making records using computers, and many have a laptop onstage next to the drums and guitar,” Sigworth claims. “The laptop is as much of an instrument as the guitar. But some like to pretend that it’s just good ol’ rock’n’roll and that computers are just ‘a part of it’.”

Even though the majority of the album’s mystical sounds are computer-generated, natural sounds are still a strong part of the record. Having layers of guitars slightly offset in counter, or a single violin player playing 17 parts to create a complete orchestral sound are notable.

POWERFUL SENSITIVITY

But the most important natural element to Details is that of the intriguing vocal prowess of Heap. She has extraordinary range, a powerful softness, and the ability to mask the tone of her voice so that the many layovers sound like a chorus of different people.

Josh Weichle, a Minnesota-based pianist/songwriter/composer, says, “She has a rather unique blend of power and female cunning.” And as a longtime fan of Heap’s music, he adds, “Her voice can change from a seductive, husky tone to a serene-like wail.”

On top of her obvious vocal talent, partner Sigworth adds descriptions “like great fun to be around,” “boundless energy,” and “she has an amazing voice that will make you stop and say, ‘Wow, who’s that?’”

Heap is quick to rebuke with snippets on Sigworth like “totally eccentric, severe perfectionist!” and “into so many amazing things, it’s brilliant.” She adds with a laugh, “And he’s very manic paranoid.”

Sigworth is able to masterfully blend all the parts of Details—a released July 1 in the U.K.—to make cunning and captivating tracks. His use of recorded and digitally altered musical instruments makes the music sound like its natural self, but with a creative twist.

Weichle notes, “Guy is clearly gifted at knowing where to draw the line between superfluous effects and useful enhancements. I don’t believe there is ever a moment where the music fights with [Heap’s vocals].”

Details features such ear-pleasing delights as the catchy and buoyant “Music for Making Love?” The lullaby-like cooing of “The Dumbing Down of Love” as the final track, and the eerily dramatic “Psychohabile.”

The band’s video for “Breathe In”—recently shot in San Francisco by Michael Lipscombe—features actress Robin Tunney. The track has already been sent to modern-rock and college radio formats.

The marketing plan for Details includes a strong push to get the tunes placed on soundtracks and TV spots—Frou Frou can already be heard on the ABC-TV show Alias—as well as the making of a “remix” of Details. “The Web marketing has already started on this record,” says Paul Orescan, VP/marketing director at MCA.

U.K.’s LULU A HIT AGAIN

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—She’s been one of Brit-ain’s best-loved personalities for 33 years, but Lulu has just made her first U.K. top-10 album chart appearance. It’s happened with Together, a set of collaborations with Elton John, Paul McCartney, and Sting, among others.

The Scottish singer, effervescent as ever at 53, has been a familiar figure via hit records and film and TV work dating to her 1964 debut U.K. hit, a raucous version of the Isley Brothers’ “Shout.” In the U.S., she re- mains best known for “To Sir With Love,” the 1967 No. 1 title track from the film in which she appeared with Sidney Poitier and Judy Geeson.

On May 18, she returned to the small screen with the ITV Network screening in the U.K. of An Audience With Lulu as an introduction to the new album, which arrived in stores two days later on Mercury (but is so far a U.K.-only release). Designed to put herchartstanding back on par with the public goodwill toward her, it has already had just that effect, charting immediately at No. 4 and moving toward gold certification (100,000 shipments).

The record opens with the pairing of Lulu with close friend Elton John on a cover of Womack & Womack’s “Teardrops.” After a feisty remake of Shirley & Company’s “Shame, Shame, Shame” with Liverpool trio Atomic Kitten, she calls on McCartney for a clever interpretation of his 1976 hit “Inside Thing (Let ‘Em In)” with Wings, using samples and new vocals by the ex-Beatle.

Other guests include Joe Cocker, Cliff Richard, Russell Watson, and Irish stars Roman Keating, Westlife, and Samantha Mum-ba, and the set con- cludes with Lulu and Take That’s 1993 U.K. chart-topper, “Relight My Fire.”

“It’s about doing decent songs with decent people, working hard and, for me, having fun,” Lulu says. “To do a job you love and be able to have such interesting, fantastic people working with you, it’s a great idea.”

Helmed by U.K. producers Steve Mac, Chris Porter, and Lucas Burton, Together will put many in mind of Tom Jones’ Reload, the 1999 duets set on Gut that reinstated the Welsh vocalist as a chart force. A single has not yet been scheduled from Together. “We thought, ‘Let the album come out first, and see what happens after that,’” says Steve Lilly-white, joint managing director of Mercury U.K.

Lulu, who is managed by Louis Walsh in London, plans to make another album next year.

“People say, ‘Why do you still do it?’” she says. “‘Well, there’s no other reason other than I love to.”
Maverick's King: 'Respect' Is Like A Second Debut

BY CHARLES DAUGHERTY

Slated for a July 30 release on Maverick, Diana King's newest showcases a myriad of radio-friendly crossover songs designed to return the singer/songwriter to U.S. music consciousness.

Respect is King's third album and her first on Maverick. She's best known for her version of Dionne Warwick's "I Say a Little Prayer," which was spotlighted by the 1997 NORTHERN EXPOSURE.

Ten-year-old Canadian pianist Glenn Gould entered the Columbia recording studios to wax his debut release, an in-canadian version of Bach's Goldberg Variations that was fiery, fleet, and marked by the unmistakable veneer of youth. The recording became an immediate best seller and virtually assured Gould's fame all by itself.

Gould revisited the Goldberg Variations in 1981, embracing digital recording technology with a dramatic, ruminative rendition nearly 20 minutes longer than its predecessor. Both records were made in a single con- tinuous session as they were issued.

On July 8 in New York, the Sony Music Group's much-lauded catalog division Legacy offered the first glimpse of an ambitious new release series dedicated to Gould's oeuvre. The initial release, titled Glenn Gould — The Complete Goldberg Variations (1955 & 1981): A State of Wonder, features both of Gould's Goldberg recordings, packaged with the lavish attention to detail and unique bonuses that have garnered Legacy its reputation. Legacy will issue the three-disc set at a suggested retail price of $19.95. The set, roughly coinciding with the 70th anniversary of Gould's birth (Sept. 25) and the 20th anniversary of his death (Oct. 4).

More than just compelling classical music consumers to replace staple recordings they already own. A State of Wonder marks Legacy's first serious stride toward the ambitious goal it set for itself when it partnered with Sony Classical earlier this year (the Classical Score, Billboard, March 9). The company hopes to bring some of the larger-than-life classical artists whose works lie in Sony's vaults—from Gould and Leonard Bernstein to Igor Stravinsky and Aaron Copland—to the same kind of widespread, popular attention that welcomed previous Legacy initiatives devoted to Robert Johnson, Miles Davis, and Johnny Cash.

Legacy VP of A&R Steve Berkwitz laments that for a number of classiconoclasts know Gould only as a peculiar character who wore a slouch hat, coat, and gloves in the summertime. He hopes to re-introduce the pianist as a pioneering visionary who paved the way for many familiar pop artists. During the preview, Pulitzer Prize-winning critic and Gould expert Tim Page noted that Gould's interest in tape editing anticipated subsequent efforts by the Beatles and the Beach Boys, while Berkowitz costs Gould as the spiritual godfather of such contemporary artists as Prince and Moby for his studio perfection achieved in isolation.

"Gould was a very independent thinker, and he created a world for himself that was in some ways free of the bonds that were dictated in the classical world," Berkowitz says. "He played this music the way he wanted to, he didn't go on tour after 1964, and he was very unusual in the way that he dealt with the public and the press. He basically answered to no one but himself and his own pursuit of the creation of art. We thought that this was such an incredible and appealing story that the large price tag has not been told outside of the classical music world."

Still, Legacy has gone to extraordinary lengths to make A State of Wonder enticing to knowledgeable classical consumers. The 1955 recording was remastered with 24-bit technology. Even more elaborate steps were taken to improve the quality of the 1961 rendition. Instead of the airless, brittle-sounding early digital master tape, Legacy turned to a previously unused analog backup tape. Using production notes from the original session and sophisticated software, a team led by reissue producer Louie De la Fuente painstakingly re-created Gould's exacting edits. The improvement in sound quality, marked by richer overtones and increased ambience, is dramatic.

A third disc will contain a rare 50-minute radio interview conducted by Page (who scripted the "informal" chat under Gould's scurrilous supervision) in which the pianist discusses both of his Goldberg recordings, along with more than 12 minutes of newly unearthed studio banter and improvisatory playing from the original stereo session tapes. Those bonuses reveal still more about an enigmatic master whose legacy continues to grow, while the performances reaffirm the artistry upon which that legacy was built.

The Classical Score

by Steve Smith

PUBLISHED JULY 20, 2002

WWW американская радиоистория
Are 2002 Tours Boom Or Bust? Jury Still Out

BY RAY WADDELL
NASHVILLE—Though showing some resilience in the wake of the shaky economy last year that was worsened by catastrophic events, touring business is off so far this year. But industry professionals are hopeful for a sustained rebound heading into the second half of 2002.

According to numbers reported to Billboard Boxscore, worldwide gross touring dollars generated through the first six months of 2002 are $613 million, down more than 14% and $100 million from the same period last year (Billboard Bulletin, July 3). Attendance figures are even less positive, down 3.4 million and 18.4% from this time last year.

These decreases come despite the fact that touring volume is up slightly, with 4,023 shows reported compared with 4,005 a year ago. The average gross per show so far is $152,359, and average attendance is 3,753, down $26,846 and 8.9% people, respectively. Part of the decrease can be explained by the absence of some major touring acts that were out in the first half of 2001, including some of the bigger dates, but with that in mind, some place little stock in generic touring numbers.

HEAVY-HITTING

“These numbers don’t mean that much,” says Dennis Arfa, president of Artists Group International, the New York-based booking agency for such artists as Billy Joel and Metallica. “It depends on who’s at the plate. The superstars are still huge, but there are a lot of ‘B’ acts out right now, and Bs are Bs, whether it’s 1988 or 2002. The question is, can the amphitheaters make money off these B shows?

Indeed, the first half of ’01 the industry had U2, Backstreet Boys, and ‘N Sync on the road—the three of which alone grossed $70 million combined in the time frame. But 2002 has not been without its heavyweights, including Paul McCartney ($53.2 million), Billy Joel & Elton John ($43 million, compared with $59 million from Judy Garland to June last year), Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young ($35 million), ‘N Sync ($33 million), and Dave Matthews Band (DMB) ($24 million).

Other solo performers so far include Rush, the Van Warp tour, Blink-182/Green Day, Kenny Chesney, Neil Diamond, Luis Miguel, Creed, Ozzfest, Trey Anasta, Aerosmith (see story, this page), and Brooks & Dunn. Far more inconsistent is Eminem’s Anger Management tour (Venue Views, Bill- board, July 12). One reason, says Arthur Fogel, president of Clear Channel Entertainment’s touring division, “As a general observation, there’s a bunch of stuff doing well and a bunch of stuff struggling, which I’m not sure is different from most years.”

And as the industry enters its busiest time, it appears there has to be help on the way. Many Top-flight tours were just hitting their stride in June, including DMB, Britney Spears, Eagles, and Cher. This fall, Joel & John are set to return. Gentle Giant will play arenas, and McCartney is preparing for another North American run. Also hovering on the horizon are the kings of touring, the Rolling Stones, which are likely to contribute close to $200 million to touring coffers by year’s end. Bruce Springsteen & E Street Band tour later in the year is also looking increasingly likely, and a Fleetwood Mac fall outing could be coming together.

In other words, the jury is still very much out. “January through June is one way to look at it, but a more realistic way is January through December,” Fogel points out. “The rest of the year is very much looking forward to the fall, and the importance is this fall will be bigger than last fall. So in the end we may equal, if not exceed, last year’s numbers.”

Arfa, too, is optimistic. “Unlike the record industry, we don’t have CD burners taking away our business. We, as a concert industry, have a chance to be healthy.”

Aerosmith Back In The Saddle
Veteran Rockers Return To The Road With Kid Rock, Run-D.M.C.

BY SUSANNE AULT
LOS ANGELES—With this summer’s plentiful spread of music festi- vals and headliners, it could be tough for a band even as big as Aerosmith to get a song on edgewide. But by teaming with Kid Rock and Run-D.M.C., Aerosmith fans to walk their way on their Clear Channel Entertainment (CCE)-produced tour this summer and fall.

It’s not as though Aerosmith will play to cricketers or the top 40 sta- dium series, which should drum up a buzz for its July 2 release O, Yeah! Ultimate Aerosmith Hits. The band is one of music’s undisputed concert champs, landing within the top 10 of all tour acts, according to the Run- D.M.C.-covered “Walk This Way” at the 1999 MTV Video Music Awards.

Kid Rock and Run-D.M.C. will kick things off for Aero- smith on most of the tour dates starting Aug. 13 through Sept. 14, with a few exceptions when Kid Rock has prior commitments to participate in radio-sponsored gigs. Aerosmith’s agency is Monterey Peninsula Artists, Creative Artists Agency books Kid Rock, and Evolution Talent Agency handles Run-D.M.C.

STRONG PACKAGE
Heavily touring traffic and increased competition for discretionary spend- ing prompted tour planners to create something truly special to cut through the summer-concert clutter.
“Aerosmith is giving people more than just Aerosmith,” Monterey Peninsu- la Artists partner Dan Weiner says of booking the band. “The package real- ly feels like a festival rather than just another concert. Each part of it is important. It’s not like the opener’s are throwaway acts.”

Clear Channel senior VP of touring Bruce Kapp recognizes that there are some acts out right now, but he notes that the current financial climate led Clear Channel to price its shows down within a couple of dollars of what was charged last year in those cities for Aerosmith alone. (Tickets range between $35 and $75.)

Combining Run-D.M.C.’s legendary rap with Kid Rock’s trendy rock/rap and Aerosmith’s rock staying power does cover a lot of audience ground. “It fits across the 20-plus years that Aerosmith and Run-D.M.C have been around with the five years that Kid Rock has been around,” Evolution Talent Agent Zedek notes.

Run-D.M.C. member DMC (aka Darryl McDaniels) believes the con- cert will be momentous, “showing the people the whole rock/rap thing. When we did Walk This Way, we introduced the Aerosmith gener- ation to hip-hop. That new generation created people like Kid Rock, P.D.O., and Linkin Park. You’re going to see the fathers of what’s going on in music today.”

Additionally, DMC is happy to use the tour to create awareness for his solo effort, Checks, Thugs and Rock and Roll, to be released through Arista

in early fall. He’ll also use the stage to get things rolling on a likely compilation album honoring Run- D.M.C.’s 20th anniversary next year: “We are planting the seeds for greater things to come.”

While the event already has the making of something historic, Zedek acknowledges the stiff competition it faces this summer. But he neverthe- less believes “people debating on how to spend their money will look at this lineup and know that they will be getting something for their money.”

To sell seats, Clear Channel wanted to properly showcase the event, looking to place Aerosmith in 15,000- to 20,000-seat outdoor venues in every major market, whether the locations were managed by Clear Channel or not.

Primarily, the venues are Clear Channel-operated, but House of Blues (HOB) controls the radio rights to six stops on the tour, including the Molson Amphitheatre in Toronto (Sept. 3), the Blossom Music Center in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio (Sept. 12), and the Coors Amphitheatre in Chula Vista, Calif. (Nov. 5).

“Our first priority is that the band plays in the right places,” Kapp says, noting that Aerosmith had luck with its outdoor strategy for just the past few years, setting up a second stage on various lawns to better interact with fans.

HOB Concerts senior VP Larry Val- lon is pleased Aerosmith is returning to many of the HOB venues it visited for the just past tour. None of his dates have gone on sale yet, but this “is a big band,” he insists. “They sell tickets like they are going out of style. That makes doing business with them a pleasure.”
TOURING

by Ray Waddell

THREE-CARD DRAW: Country music touring is experiencing renewed vigor this year, thanks in large part to successful tours by Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, the Brooks & Dunn Neon Circus & Wild West Show, and the Down From the Mountain roots package. Under that radar screen, however, is a killer honky-tonk event that is a classic example of touring synergy: the Rockin’ Roadhouse tour featuring Joe Diffie, Tracy Lawrence, and Mark Chisnutt. The tour, which debuted at Fan Fair in Nashville last month, will play a wide range of venues during the course of at least 25 dates.

"Man, it’s been a blast so far," Lawrence says, calling from Poplar Bluff, Mo., about a half-dozen dates into the trek, where the tour was set to visit the Black River Coliseum July 3. "We played to 16,000 people last night in Ste. Genevieve, Mich., and there’s no way any one of us could do that by ourselves.

The three performers each play 30-minute sets in rotating slots and spend a lot of time on stage together as well. The 2½-hour show wraps with a 15-minute, nine-song medley and an encore.

Crowds have been enthusiastic. "We haven’t seen less than 10,000 people at any show we’ve done so far," Lawrence says. "And we haven’t been losing people at the end of the sets, because they’re all wondering what we’ll do next. I think the best way to gauge the crowd is through merchandise sales, and the tour merch is selling like crazy—better than our individual stuff."

Just a few dates in, "we all still like each other. But we have our own coaches, so we’re not stuck with each other all the time," Lawrence says with a laugh. He adds that economically, with joint production, combined crew, and one 11-piece band, the tour is efficient. "We have the overhead of one act, going for the price of two, and we’re all making more money," he points out. "And the promoters are getting a better deal. My theory is, I’ve always tried to work with the promoters, and if a date’s soft, give them a discount. That has kept me working through the tough times, because the promoters know I’m there for them. Everybody’s making money; everybody’s happy."

While a lot of soft-ticket dates dot the route this year, Lawrence says, "We want to look at next year and doing some more hard-ticket dates and playing the sheds ourselves. I think a lot more people in country music are gonna have to look at something like this—it’s working."

The tour was conceived and booked by Buddy Lee Attractions.

TIME WARP: Kenny Rogers will join forces with Diamond Rio and Rebecca Lynn Howard for another intriguing country package, this one a 12-city trek through Canada that begins Sept. 5 in Kelowna, British Columbia. Dubbed the Full House tour, the outing represents a similarly nameaked refurbishment from the 1970s that featured Rogers, the Oak Ridge Boys, and the late Dottie West. The concept is somewhat surreal for the 23-year-old Howard.

"I just found out yesterday that at the end of every show I go out and sing ‘Islands in the Stream’ with Kenny," Howard says, referring to the No. 1 duet Rogers had with Dolly Parton in 1983. "How fun is that? I saw Kenny and Dolly sing that song on TV when I was a little kid, and never in a million years did I think I’d be onstage singing it with him. "Full House is booked by the William Morris Agency, to which all three acts are signed.

BIG MAN IN MOTOR CITY: Tom Nixon has been named executive coordinator for Palace Sports and Entertainment (P&SE). It was announced by Marilyn Hauser, senior VP of booking and marketing for P&SE. Nixon—who has a background in tour production—will be responsible for the coordination and facilitation of concerts, sporting events, family shows, and trade shows at the Palace at Auburn Hills in Michigan, DTE Energy Music Theatre, and Meadow Brook Music Festival.

BIGGER GROUP: The Agency Group (TAG) has acquired Ti Dawn Entertainment in Los Angeles, adding the latter’s Stephanie Luciano and Shawni Young to TAG’s L.A. office. Luciano and Young bring with them a large roster of DJs and electronics bands, including Juan Atkins, Mark Grant, Nigel Richards, John Kelly, Freazy-Flow & MC Flipside, Sage, East Coast Boogiemena, and Medusa & Feline Science. The move gives TAG a stronger presence in electronics and the acts expand TAG’s worldwide clout.

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**REVIEWS & PREVIEWS**

**ALBUMS**

Edited by Michael Paolotta

**POP**

★ THE FLAMING LIPS
Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots
PRODUCERS: the Flaming Lips, Dave Fridmann, Scott Booker
BACILOS Masterplan
PRODUCER: Stephen Harris
RC $249

A concept collection of sorts that plays like an electronic Sgt. Pepper’s re-imagined as a Japanese sci-fi movie. Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots is as strange as it is wonderful. Beneath the sunny, computer-generated atmospheres and the campy wedding of talk about gladiator-style clashes between man and machines with emotions, Yoshimi is actually a somber rumination on love and survival in an unfathomable world. The emotional core of the record. “It’s Summertime—Thrashing Orange Fallbears,” is, in a befuddled song of encouragement to the grieving sisters of a Japanese girl who suddenly died. Such songwriting is, at times, involving warmth and humanity run throughout the album and serve as an effective contrast to the Lips’ penchant for futuristic psychedelia. This also gives Yoshimi a soul that fans of 1999’s The Soft Bulletin—an album of similar cinematic scope and ambition—will appreciate.—BG

★ AURORA
PRODUCERS: Steve Robson, Simon Greenaway, Sacha Collision
Dreaming
Groovillo: Strictly 114th
Just in time for the dog days of summer, one of the great pure-pop packages of the year, brimming with refreshingly unpretentious melodies that shine like prime-afternoon rays. Awaith with one great hook after another, there’s no boner track to be found on this debut, which bears from the delicious compo- song “Dreaming” to 2000’s high-energy dance hit “Ordinary World” (of Duran Duran origin) and the haunting, melancholic “Your Mistake.” Aurora is the brainchild of programmers/producers Simon Greenaway and Sacha Collision, who took on able-bodied singer Lizzie Pattinson for most vocals. Don’t miss a guest appearance from the incomparable Marcela Detroit of Shakespeare’s Sister on a fresh reading of Gordon Lightfoot’s “If You Could Read My Mind” and the hauntingly mighty inspired “Die For.” Just wondrous. Dreaming is that rare full-length disc that remains fresh from start to finish; what an auspicious effort to mark dance label Groovillo’s Strictly Rhythm’s first foray into the pop market. Those weary of rock and rap will find salvation.—CT

**THE VINES
Highway to Love
PRODUCERS: Rob Schnapf, Justin Stanley
Carpenter 72435 S 35785
Because of its penchant for raw, post-punk sonorities, as evidenced on the single “Get Free,” this Australian “i-t band” will likely draw comparisons to the Strokes and the White Stripes. However, even though its tracks serve as much to the classic alt-rock album archetypes established by U2, Blur, Radiohead, and Nirvana as it does to the current garage rock craze. That’s not to say the Vines can’t cop the retro fad with the best of them: “Fact- ors.” For instance, sounds like a lost nugget from the Kinks catalog. But what makes Highly Evolved such a rich and rewarding listen is its simul- taneous foray into more melodic and diversely influenced sounds. Unlike many of their contemporaries, the Vines effectively dabble in every- thing from Beatles-inspired harmonizing (“Homeick”) to contempo- rary Britpop (“Autumn Shade”) and dream pop (“Mozart”), making for one of the most well-rounded and broadly appealing rock records to bow this year.—BG

**MULL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Loss
PRODUCER: Colin MacIntyre
XL Recordings/Beggars Group 027
Scottish multi-instrumentalist Colin MacIntyre is the sole mastermind behind this musical masterpiece. On this, the Society’s debut, ’70s-hued pop seamlessly mingles with sincere, almost child-like-lo-fi manerisms. In other words, it’s like a dream collabora- tion between Super Furry Animals and the White Stripes. The Who-in- fluenced, available on DVD-Audio, which lovingly references Olivia Newton-John—is, musically, a carefree spirit. Listen closely to the words, though, and slowly but surely, a tear-soaked love story unravels. It’s just the type of infectious track that warrants repeat

(Continued on next page)
One Too Many plays. "This forthcoming; Kiriakou, and here "Cover Girl." McIntyre tunes alongside such selections as Bacouris' "Gentle Breeze," Montana, a 20 in New York City — the perfect backdrop for the MC's effortlessly lyrical flow. Krumm Snatcha's "What's Life" is the set's most dramatic moment, with the Boston native addressing his own demons as well as his enemies over a thick Eazy Mo Bee beat. The set's closer, the lengthy "2 Hits and Pass" (produced by QC's Curt Caal), harkens back to days of ciphers and freestyles; it's an apropos footnote for this pitch-perfect set. —RH

CHOCOLATE SOUL
Compilation Deluxe
PRODUCERS: various
Chocolate Soul 77516 5218
Atlanta-based Chocolate Soul Entertainment builds on its pledge to present music that's fun to listen to and nourishes the soul with this sec ond compilation on hip-hop, R&B, jazz, and African, Caribbean, and dance rhythms. The first in the series—2000's The Music Compilation—featured such newcomers as Philadelphia duo Kindred, currently in the midst of wrapping its Hidden Beach Recordings debut. While not every track on this follow-up is a standout, there are still some worthwhile cuts that bear attention. Among them: Peever Everett's soul-kissed contribution "Test Me," Fertile Ground's hypnotic "Higher," ex-Incognito member Karen Bern in's inspirational "Pray," and Los Angeles hip-hop fave Medusa's "My Mama Raised A G." For a lineup that's what's happening outside of today's follow-the-leader mentality, slide this CD into your player and take a listen. Contact 414-783-8656 or chocolate soulsoul@gmail.com. —GM

JERZEY MONET
Love & War
PRODUCERS: various
DreamWorks 50870
Newcomer Jerze Monet stands out in more ways than one on her debut, Love & War. The New Jersey native offers beautiful midtempo tunes and positive messages. Lead single "Most High," produced by Tyreece Jones, is a lush ditty that combines an equal mix of airy vocals and soothing acoustic guitars. The singer's emotions can be felt throughout the album as she sings about rising above life's problems: DMX adds his two cents on the track's remix. Tracks like "Work It Out" and "Respect" also tackle similarly high-minded ideas. Throughout Love & War, Monet addresses topics of love, sexuality, domestic violence, and family values with an ease way beyond her 20- something years. Ultimately, it's the product of producing that able sets the artist apart from the pack. —RH

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

JAZZANOVA
In Between
PRODUCERS: Jazzynova
JCR/Ropeadope 7567-93121
Jazzynova has been producing and remxing music since the mid-’90s. In ’98, the Berlin-based collective—Axel Reimer, Stefan Lessing, Konrad Kiechel, Alexander Barck, Ciaas Bricier, and Uwe Kröbel—teamed with Germany’s much-respect ed Compost Recordings to form JCR Jazzanova Compost Recordings. Now Jazzanova really offers its first proper artist album. Was it worth the wait? In a word, yes. Combining numerous musicians, producers, and guest vocalists, Jazzanova deftly constructs a landscape where jazz, hip-hop, world music, soul, funk, and dance/electronic rhythms are not separate but a track like "Dance the Dance" (featuring Doug Hammond) will surely be played at clubs that cater more sophisticated crowds; its lively rhythms shouldn't be overlooked by Madison Avenue execs. Elsewhere on the album, Jazzanova employs the services of Capa "I’m On a Roll," a rare example of how re- structuring of the same song can actually make musical sense. Garcia is happy to tout his stylistic influences—from the Beatles to the gospel version of the single "Tu Vicio"—something he does both at the service of the songs as much as a creative exercise. The final results sound traditional—including the simple yet lovely "Pelicula Sordomuda," a short piece for piano solo—when compared to the recent Latin rock releases. But, ironically, this serves as a potent reminder that perhaps tradition may be the most radical solution in encouraging active—and not passive—listening. A real treasure. —LC

LATIN

CHARLY GARCIA
Influencia
PRODUCERS: Charly Garcia
EMI Latin 72724.3-59963
On his first album for EMI, Argentine rock legend Charly Garcia goes slightly retro, selling the disc after the wide-spread Todd Rundgren track "Influencia," which Garcia performs in the original English version and in his own Spanish rendition. It's an appropriate point of departure for a melodic, beautiful album that unfurls cinematically and coherently, down to the acoustic and remixed versions of "I'm Not In Love," a rare example of how re-structured songs can actually make musical sense. Garcia is happy to tout his stylistic influences—from the Beatles to the gospel version of the single "Tu Vicio"—something he does both at the service of the songs as much as a creative exercise. The final results sound traditional—including the simple yet lovely "Pelicula Sordomuda," a short piece for piano solo—when compared to the recent Latin rock releases. But, ironically, this serves as a potent reminder that perhaps tradition may be the most radical solution in encouraging active—and not passive—listening. A real treasure. —LC

COUSIN
Sirena
PRODUCER: Davey Ray Moor
Palm 203
This sophomore set by the maritime- obsessed band Cousin contains several aquatic metaphors that border on cliche, overall, Sirena plays like a lush pop album driven by sincere songwriting and catchy melodies. And at the center of the set is the honey-smooth baritone of singer Lisa McKean. The beautifully crafted two-disc Sirena has a timeless feel in the spirit of songwriter- like Huey Lewis, Seals and Crofts, and Leonard Cohen. At the same time, it possesses a sinister edge in the spirit of Morrise or the Afghan Whigs. The

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GOO GOO DOLLS Big Machine (3:10)
PRODUCERS: Rob Cavallo, Goo Goo Dolls
WRITER: J. Rzeznik
PUBLISHERS: Corner of Clark and Kent Music/EMI Virgin, ASCAP
Warner Bros. 100929 (CD promo)
Goo Goo Dolls have settled into a consistent, albeit predictable groove at mainstream and adult top 40 radio. They crank out pop/rock hits that connect with the dots with precision, then dress them up with the aural voices of lead vocalist John Rzeznik. “Big Machine,” the follow-up to the top 20 “Here Is Gone,” is typical fodder for the band, which opens with a fainting of guitars and blurs verses and choruses so like many previous songs. That’s a shame, because Rzeznik continues to write compelling lyrics that end up hidden behind his predictable melodies; in this case, he longs for a woman who’s hav- ing sex with another man: “Still in love with all your sins/Where you stop and I begin/And I’ll be waiting, living like a house on fire.” Programmers at adult top 40 have come to count on the Goos as a staple act, so “Big Machine” is likely to find success, but if the group’s not careful, it won’t be hot so long. The fatigued factor weighs heavily on its future. From the quickly fading Gutter--flower—a sign within itself.—CT

★ TRICKIE When I Get You Alone (3:32)
PRODUCERS: Robin Thicke, Pro-J
WRITERS: R. Thicke, W. Murphy
PUBLISHERS: I Like EmThick Music, ASCAP, RGT Music, BMI
Nu America/Interscope 10750 (CD promo)
After years as a songwriter/producer on high-profile R&B and pop projects, working with the likes of Christina Aguilera and Jordan Knight, Robin Thicke emerges as a vocalist on his own with this single. While the cut—Thicke’s lyric also an embellished remix of Walter Murphy and the Big Apple Band’s 1976 No. 1 hit “A Fifth of Beethoven”—may seemSony with that first second or listen, the new cut has promise, if only it can transcend novelty status. Thicke has an impressive pedigree for a musical performer, the son of actor/longtime radio/TV icon Thicke and soap star/singer Gloria Loring. It’s hard to improve on Beethoven, of course, but this music is hard to knock. The theme is as compelling as ever, and Murphy’s arrangement hasn’t lost any funkiness. That, added with Thicke’s gymnastically sweet, soulful vocals, results in a flattering introduction for the artist and a fun party tune for this summer.—EA

NATALIE IMBRUGLIA Beauty on the Fire (3:54)
PRODUCERS: Gary Clark, Pascal Gabriel
WRITERS: N. Imbruglia, Clark, Wilder
PUBLISHER: not listed
RCA 60549 (CD promo)
The U.S. has been a frustrating fair-weather friend for Aussie singer-songwriter Natalie Imbruglia. After helping make “Torn” one of the biggest songs of 1998, radio programmers all but ignored subsequent releases from her debut, left her盟tee—a conundrum, given the high quality of such tracks as “Wishing I Was There” and “Smoke.” Her spring 2002 return to the fold, “Wrong Impress- ion,” represented an admirable step forward, packed with all the qualities you could want in a hit song: sticky hooks, emotive vocals, beautiful lyrics, and contemporary acoustic production. A no-brainer, right? But unfortunately, without a rock or rap calling card in hand, mainstream radio looked the other way, and the song stalled at a forlorn No. 64 on The Bill- board Hot 100. Second single “Beauty on the Fire” is again a hitworthy release: clever, creative, and as hooky as a fishing expedition. Adult top 40 radio seems to be Imbruglia’s best bet for lasting love, where musicality is still the taller order of the day. Let’s hope this talented artist gets due before the current, wonderfully execut- ed White Lies Island—which and came in M’s—completely disappears from view. What a sad testament to America’s musical priorities.—CT

9th Birthday Adams pop/rocker than “Rock of Ages.” The band hooked up with Aerosmith producer Marti Freder- iksson on “Now,” which is definitely

YASMEN Blue Jeans (4:03)
PRODUCER: Martin Frederiksson
WRITERS: J. Que, E. Nuri
PUBLISHER: not listed
Magic Juan Music/MCA 25708 (CD promo)
Magic Johnson has scored again. It seems as though the Los Angeles Lakers legend knows a thing or two about music. With two successful Avant albums under his belt, John- son has turned up another gem in R&B newcomers Yasmineh. The young singer more than proves her- self with lead single “Blue Jeans.” With a track created by producer-of-the-moment Jazze Pha, Nappy

★ DEF LEPPARD Now (3:47)
PRODUCER: Marti Frederiksson
WRITERS: Frederiksson, Elliott, Campbell, Saffro, Allen
PUBLISHER: not listed
Island 15601 (CD promo)
While well traveled fans will enthusiastically embrace the return of enduring quintet Def Leppard—which last appearance in the top 40 was nine years ago—they may not be so jazzed to hear that the first single from the upcoming X sounds more like an early}

3LW 1 Do (Wanna Get Close to You) (3:58)
PRODUCERS: Mario “Yellow Man” Winans, Sean “P Diddy” Comb}s
WRITERS: M. Winans, S. Combs, C. Hawkins, W. Sing, A. Stupart, M. Jones
PUBLISHER: not listed
Epic 59855 (CD promo)
Just a couple years ago, develop- ing artists nearly broke their backs in an effort to mimic Rhi- tin’s Child, including young female trio 3LW (Three Little Women), which impacted the pop and R&B airwaves with the stacca- to “No More (Baby I’m Do Rights).” With the new “1 Do

AMBER The Need to Be Naked (3:43)
PRODUCER: not listed
WRITER: Amber
PUBLISHER: not listed
Tommy Boy 2367 (CD promo)
Amber’s upcoming Naked got a rousing send-off from the dance community with first single, the sexy, “Yes,” which topped the Hot Dance/Club Play chart and landed at No. 2 on Hot Dance Music/Mix-Single Sales. Follow-up “The Need To Be Naked” follows in the footsteps of so many of the siren’s songs that zero in on the shameless joys of copulating with the one you love—thankfully, with no signs of obscenity—though she’s certainly not minding words: “I want you so much / I breathe only for your touch / Take off my pants, my shirt, my socks, and my shoes. I need to be with you.” Well, all right then. As always, Amber’s kitchy lyrics hold hands with an absolute bull’s-eye of a melody, as breezy and free-flowing as a kite in the summer sky. Three mixes are serviced on the pop single, offering subtle diversity; all deliver pretty much the same high-energy vibe. Amber is a consistent, highly skilled artist who deserves another shot at mainstream success. (Remember “This Is Your Night” from 1996 and the almost-hit “Sexu- al (Li Da Di)” from 2000? Hopefully, the bright beats of “The Need To Be Naked” will awaken slumbering top 40 programmers.—CT

TRINA FEATURING TWIT No Partake (2:43)
PRODUCERS: Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliott, Nisan Stewart
WRITER: Missy “Misdemeanor” Elliott
PUBLISHERS: Melissa Elliott/Mass Confusion/WM Music/Nisan Steward/ Nisan’s Music, ASCAP
S Ignite Records/Atlantic 330086 (CD promo)
For those who considered Missy’s “This Is Missy” as her way too hip to the cultural yardstick, you ain’t heard noth- ing yet. Trina’s “No Partake” is undoubtedly among the most taste- less records that has ever been pressed to plastic. Fortunately, the “clean” version has been whitewashed to the point that it simply makes no sense—but the overall message is still pretty clear: Without cash, she’s not giving it up. The “dirty” version is filled with a point of gratuitous absurdity, with explicit bodily functions, obscenities, and sexual activities reeled off like a porn movie. We can certainly appreciate freedom of expression, but “No Partake” is loath- some in its effort to push buttons in place of any semblance of artistic expression. And why Missy Elliott and Tweet (who is working toward a credi- ble career) would associate their names with the project is beyond all reasonable comprehension. Anyone looking for reasons to blast the entertainment industry for pandering to the youth to its founder post child in Trina. Shame on you, Atlantic.—CT

YWOL The Boys (4:03)
PUBLISHER: not listed
Interscope/Universal 50696 (CD promo)
YWOL is a very, very young singer songwriter who has a sweet, soulful alto that char- ms all over the funky guitar-tined track like syrup. Mix-show radio has been particularly supportive of fun, uptempo R&B songs like these lately, and “Blue Jeans” is no excep- tion. It should only be a matter of time before mainsteam R&B picks up on it as well. For a bonus, also check out the remix featuring the ever-witty Ghostface Killah. Hope- fully, this is just a taste of what we can expect from her forthcoming Magic Johnson Music/MCA debut, When Will It Be Me?—RH

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

Yasmineh shines on this light-hearted ditty. The Oakland, Calif., native has a sweet, soulful alto that charms all over the funky guitar-tined track like syrup. Mix-show radio has been particularly supportive of fun, uptempo R&B songs like these lately, and “Blue Jeans” is no exception. It should only be a matter of time before mainstream R&B picks up on it as well. For a bonus, also check out the remix featuring the ever-witty Ghostface Killah. Hopefully, this is just a taste of what we can expect from her forthcoming Magic Johnson Music/MCA debut, When Will It Be Me?—RH

1 Do Wanna Get Close to You
2 The Need to Be Naked
3 No More (Baby I’m Do Rights)
4 Beauty on the Fire
5 When Will It Be Me?
6 No Partake
7 I Want You So Much
8 This Is Your Night
9 Sex (Li Da Di)
10 The Need To Be Naked
11 No More (Baby I’m Do Rights)
12 Beauty on the Fire
13 When Will It Be Me?
14 No Partake
15 I Want You So Much
16 This Is Your Night
17 Sex (Li Da Di)
18 The Need To Be Naked
ROCKING WITH KWATO: The urban sound that’s currently rocking young South Africans is called kwato. Translation: aggressive township music. For the uninitiated, that means a fusion of slowed-down house-music grooves mixed with hip-hop and township jive sensibilities over which artists sing, rap, or MC.

One white artist has been singularly making his mark via this black musical expression. His name is Lekgoa, which means “white man” in the Sotho language.

Following up his 1999 debut set, Basetsana (Beautiful Girl), the Gallo-signed rapper (aka François Hergé) continues to make noise with his March-released sophomore album, Ngamola Voba (The Coolest White Man). The artist says, “This is definitely more of a personal album for me.”

For example, the cut “Imbizo” ("Street Party") talks about Lekgoa’s love of African pop, which has prompted his ventures into various townships to check out such local artists as Brenda Fassie.

“The second album has moved Lekgoa a step further,” adds Gallo A&R manager Melvin Khumalo, who signed the artist. "Songs like ‘Imbizo’ [find him] experimenting with elements like Zulu traditional guitar and Mahotella Queens influence.”

Another album track, “Ndola” ("The Man"), shows an artist who is comfortable with his unique status. Lekgoa explains, “It is about being who you want to be and being joyous about your individuality.”

MORE ABOUT KWATO: The South African kwato scene is also dominated by acts like TKZee, whose latest album, Goza (brothers), notched double-platinum (100,000 units). Former TKZee member Shua, whose current Gallo album is titled Anyazi Kanjani (I Don’t Know How), has four solo albums back-catalogued with gold-selling status (25,000 units).

Many of the kwato stars—such as TKZee and EMI-signed Arthur, who also owns the kwato indie label 999—have been trying to break the genre in Europe via multi-artist live shows in London. Meanwhile, kwato artist Manusana is currently working with producers in the U.K. with an eye toward adding a new spin to the burgeoning genre.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK: The June 29 Black Music Congress debate, “Black Music & Profanity—What’s Keeping It Real,” held in Central London, discussed issues surrounding questionable lyrics and imagery. Passionate points of view were exchanged, and overwhelming majority votes passed several resolutions, including one concerning the negative impact of explicit lyrics on youth. Now comes news of a rap act determined to spread “creativity and positivity with lyrical content.”

Sad group is called 617, and its uplifting, groovy, hip-hop track is called “Always.” The new song is currently being serviced on a multi-mix promotional CD preceding its formal July 29 release by London-based indie Accura records.

Fronted by label owner/producers Accura and MC Kestorm, “Always” also features rappers Blu G and D.R.A., plus a special surprise guest: U.K. prime minister Tony Blair. The track’s creative interpretation of a Blair speech has attracted extra attention not only from the mainstream media but apparently from the U.K.’s M15 state security service as well.

“Always” is a summer anthem written to send a positive message to the worldwide family who loves good hip-hop music,” Accura says. “Accura records has always strived to be different. Our newest innovation is the concept of using a hip-hop producer to introduce every track released by 617. Tony Blair was chosen for this track because ‘Always’ is our message to the people.”

“There is no better person than the prime minister to deliver a positive message to the masses,” adds Accura, who notes that all the samples have been cleared. “The prime minister thus serves as the perfect partial replacement for his musical background as the lead singer/guitarist of the 70s rock group Ugly Rumours just underlining credibility.”

The next 617 song will feature a major sports personality. Accura warns, “If you think Tony Blair is a major coup, watch this space.”
## Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

### Last Week's Sales

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<thead>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
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<td>Triple Threats DJ Paul - Underground Vol 16</td>
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### Last Week's Sales

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BY MAGGIE STEIN

NEW YORK—Alexander Coe, better-known as U.K. DJ/producer Sasha (one-half of production outfit Sasha & Digweed), once did production work under the puzzling moniker BMX, which Sasha says stood for Barry Manilow Experience.

“When I first got started as a DJ, a writer in the British press called me ‘the Barry Manilow of house music,’ because I played so many tracks with dramatic piano in them. Sasha explains with a laugh, “So, with BMX, I was just making a joke about myself, really.”

Sasha’s good nature is evident in many aspects of his career. In March, he punctured his eardrum in a car accident and was forced to cancel his appearances at the Winter Music Conference, the annual dance/electronica conference held in Miami each March.

Instead of becoming angry, Sasha turned a negative into a positive. “After working on and off for a very long time on this solo album, I was forced to sit down and really focus on making songs,” he offers.

“Music lifted me out of depression,” he continues. “The accident turned out to be a blessing that made me focus on the album after talking about it for six years.”

Sasha’s solo debut, Airdraundagger, arrives Aug. 6 via Kinetic (available on CD and a triple-CD vinyl set). Interestingly, Airdraundagger, steeped in moody and cinematic instrumentals, is not primed for the dancefloor. And tracks like “Immor- tal” and “Fundamental” are decid- edly electronic in both mood and emission. Instead of 10-track albums, this offering is a full 14-track exercise on vinyl. “I don’t think I’m moving away from the dancefloor. I’m just exploring new sounds,” Sasha says. “I still love to DJ. I still love to play banging tracks, and I still love to see the response. But I just wanted to do something with more depth.”

Bill Hutchcroft, record sales manager of Tower Records in Washing- ton, D.C., is eagerly anticipating Sasha’s album. “It’s been a long time coming,” he comments. “Sasha has always been at the forefront of dance music in America. Name recognition alone will sell the record—just like with Tino Maas and Paul Oakenfold.”

VOCAL-FREE

Airdraundagger is a collabora- tion among tunesmith Charlie May, recording engineer Simon Wright, producer Tom Holkenborg (also known as Junkie XL), and Sasha, who says it was inspired by the abstract recordings of Leftfield, William Orbit, Jean-Michel Jarre, and the Future Sound of London. Of the set’s lack of vocals, Sasha, whose songs are published by EMI Music, offers: “I will eventually work with vocalists, but for now I wanted to be brave and make an instrumental album to develop my sound.”

For Steve Lau, president of Kinetic, Airdraundagger represents what Sasha is all about. “It’s not a who’s who of guest vocalists,” Lau says. “Anyone who loves him and his music will understand the honesty that comes through in the music. He didn’t make music to fit any format.”

While this may make Kinetic’s job more difficult, Lau says: “We’ll do whatever it takes to get people to hear this album.”

To that end, Kinetic has hired Cornerstone Digital to work on Internet promotions, and the artist’s Web site (http://sasha.com)—complete with a “members only” section offering exclusive content—is being launched this month.

Earlier this year, street teams offered a variety of Sasha promotional items in the various markets that booked the Sasha & Digweed-led Delta Heavy tour.

Additionally, Kinetic will partici- pate in a special promotion with an as-yet-undetermined national retailer. A week prior to order the album will receive a wristband to gain entry to that city’s album launch party. Sasha will be on hand at 10 such parties in the U.S. A full-scale tour is planned with Junkie XL in the fall.

Perhaps more unique is Kinetic’s partnering with Apple computers for a “remix contest,” whereby particip- ants will be able to download vari- ous “Sasha song parts” from the label’s Web site (kineticrecords.com) to create something new. Twenty finalists will be chosen from all submissions. From this group, Sasha will hand-pick 10 people to each receive Apple iPods. One grand-prize winner will receive an iMac T4 processor and a trip to Europe, as well as have their “remixed” audio released as a B-side on an upcoming Sasha single.

Sasha, who is booked/managed by New York-based Balance, is touring as Sasha & Digweed, an act that issued Sasha & Digweed’s beat-mixed Communicate two years ago.

* * * 

The Beat Box

The Beate Box Hot Plate

Bohannon’s “Let’s Start the Dance.”

* Yoko Ono, “Kiss Kiss Kiss” (Mind Train singles). Ono recently returned from San Francisco, where she wowed punters at the closing party of Club Townsend. This followed in the foot- steps of her New York nightclub visits earlier this year (Beat Box, Billboard, Jan. 12). Once these potent Super- chunko mixes of “Kiss Kiss Kiss” arrive on turntables, expect Ono to make the disco rounds again.

* Automatic Featuring Nashom, “I’ll Be Here” (Definitive single). New York-based production outfit Auto- magic—aka DJ Will and Bryan Wright—along with vocalist Nash- om (who co-wrote the Ones” “Flaw- less”) have created a monster with this one. Slightly reminiscent of the hypnotic “I’ll Be Your Friend” by Robert Owens, “I’ll Be Here” is one of those rare tracks that can be played by all DJs, regardless of musical preference. David Morales’ Dark and Lovely mix is appropriately named.

* Prodigy, “Baby’s Got a Temper” ((X) Recordings/Maverick single). Caustic guitars, discordant noise, and in-your-face funk get nicely coupled with Keith Flint’s harsh vocals— make for one menacing track that is equal parts dance/electronic and punk. Hard to ignore, this tale of the date-rape drug Rohypnol will delight or repulse. Just keep an open mind.

MICHAEL PAOLETTA
On ‘Forgive,’ MCA Nashville’s Howard Makes Musical Strides

BY RAY WADDELL
NASHVILLE—Powered by proven commercial clout as a songwriter, powerhouse vocal chops, and an ear-grabbing leadoff single, Rebecca Lynn Howard could be poised to break big with Forgive, her second release on MCA Nashville.

Due Sept. 10, Forgive is a diverse record, with 12 cuts running the gamut from hard-edged, traditional country to more radio-friendly, pop-leaning material, touching on gospel, uptempo, and power ballads along the way. She also co-wrote seven of the songs, and according to Howard, the diversity is by design.

“I feel like this album is a true reflection of where I am as an individual and a songwriter,” she says. “It’s diverse because my musical influences are so diverse. What goes in, comes out.”

The title cut, a ballad featuring a stellar performance from Howard, is gaining steam at radio, reaching No. 32 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart this issue. “This is one of those songs that hits you immediately,” says Greg Frey, assistant PD/music director at KSON San Diego. “It sounds like something you’d expect from Martina McBride or Trisha Yearwood—artists of that caliber. It’s great to get something like that from a new artist.”

Yearwood is no stranger to Howard’s skill as a songwriter, having cut a version of Howard’s “I Don’t Paint Myself” (a song that is currently climbing the charts. “I’m really flattered Trisha recorded that song.”

Howard says, adding that she often writes melodies that appeal to her own strengths as a vocalist. “That can make it hard as a songwriter to get my songs cut. I tend to paint myself into corners with melodies, but if a singer can do it, they should try to explore their whole range.”

Meanwhile, Howard’s label feels they may well have a hit on their hands with “Forgive.” “The single is doing exceptionally well for an artist that hasn’t had a Top 40 single yet,” says Dave Weigand, senior VP of marketing and sales for MCA Nashville. “We’re getting legitimate airplay in major markets.”

COVERING GROUND
Forgive was produced by Trey Bruce and Mark Wright. Bruce is also Howard’s chief co-writer. Howard feels she has made strides between her two releases. “I have a lot more conviction about music than I did before. I wasn’t afraid to take musical risks [this time], and this is a more grown-up record, with more mature content. It’s just the difference between being 19 and being 22 years old.”

Musically, the record ranges from the country-poppish “Beautiful to You” and light-hearted uptempo “Pink Flamingo Kind of Love” to the contemporary country of “Dancin’ in God’s Country,” the powerful, melodic “Didn’t Look Like Alcohol,” and the stone-country woeper “Jesus and Bartenders.” Throughout, Howard’s pure, Eastern Kentucky vocal gives each song an undeniable country slant, regardless of style.

“Forget is a producer. He gets what I’m about musically,” Howard says. “I’m young, I want to be hip, and I want my music to reflect that. At the same time, I can’t let go of my roots, tradition, and accent. That isn’t going anywhere.”

The record wraps with a subtle take on the classic gospel hymn “Softly and Tenderly.” The contrast between staid churches and a modern world isn’t lost on Howard. “Religion and alcohol walk hand and hand in country music,” she says. “I know it’s an oxymoron, but I think people walk to church sometimes.”

Indeed, the title cut was taken from Howard’s experience watching a close friend go through the hurt and frustration of a divorce. “To see her hurt, I told her I hate the fact that I got songs from the personal suffering of people I love, but that’s the curse of being a songwriter.”

Weatherford says the label will be very aggressive in setting up the record. The release will be part of the company Universal Music & Video Distribution’s Launchpad program, which helps the label secure attractive pricing on the CD via a rebate in its first week at retail.

Another promotion with retail begins July 19, when 10,000 four-song sampler CDs are distributed to retailers and their employees to promote in-store play through an internal contest. Weigand says, “We want to create a groundswell at retail.”

Howard won a place in Canadian folk music lore when she turned down an invitation to perform at the prestigious Canadian Music Week. She plans to tour with a full band beginning in late August and perform an acoustic version of “Forgive” for an October episode of the NBC-TV drama Chicago Hope. The song will also appear on an MCA Production soundtrack.

Harms Ropes Two AWA Honors

FORT WORTH, TEXAS—Joni Harms went into the Academy of Western Artists’ (AWA) Will Rogers Awards as the most-nominated artist and came away the evening’s big winner. The singer/songwriter was named entertainer of the year at the awards, held July 9 at the Scott Theatre here, and also won Western Swing Male Vocalist of the Year, a title he has held for the past two years.

But Bynum says he is no bitter winner. He had more than 50 songs recorded before moving to Nashville in 1968 (and another 100 cuts after that) and has won songwriter awards from the Country Music Assn. and the Academy of Country Music. His best-known cuts include Kenny Rogers’ “Lucille,” Patsy Loveless’ “Chains,” Jim Reeves’ “Nobody’s Fool,” and “There Ain’t No Good Chair Gang,” recorded by Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings.

In one particularly harrowing story in the book, he writes about the first time he met Willie Nelson, who was then host of a morning show at KCNC Fort Worth, Texas. Bynum, billed as “the guy who sang ‘I’m Not a Cowboy,’” recorded by Terry Fell. But when Nelson pulled the record out, Bynum was shocked to discover that someone else was listed as the cut’s songwriter.

Bynum’s Back: In recent years, Hal Bynum has become the Robert Fulghum of country music. Everything he needs to know about life, he learned in the music business. And many of those things were hard lessons.

With a long and successful career as a country songwriter as his calling card, Bynum has transformed himself into a spoken-word recording artist and recently added “book author” to his impressive credentials.

Bynum has released a CD and a book, both titled The Promise, on his own Beauregard Books/Records label. (Both are on sale on his Web site, hal- bynum.com.) In the book—a mix of anecdotes, autobiographical stories, poems, and song lyrics—he describes his brief but brutal divorce.

Fifteen years ago, Bynum was named Western Artists’ Male Vocalist of the Year. One of the things Bynum writes for himself, he has given up trying to get them cut in an environment where, he says, the music is “all bubble gum.” Ironically, the kind of music he’s hearing on country radio inspired his move to spoken-word recordings in 1985. “I just thought that there was a level of intelligence and a level of humanity and emotional reality that was totally being left out,” he says. “It just kind of came to me that there might be a path I could follow through there.”

Tracks from The Promise are currently getting airplay on Joey Reynolds’ syndicated radio talk show, based out of WOR New York, as well as on XM Satellite Radio host Bill Mack’s show and on WSM-AM Nashville.

Bynum does sing a bit on the album, a move he credits to veteran label executive Jimmy Bowen, who once told him to include some singing “or else you’ll wind up in the wrong part of the [record] store with Hitler, Churchill, and Basil Rathbone.”

Bynum jokes about his croaky-voiced singing: “I never thought that just because you can’t sing, you shouldn’t.”

CIRCLING THE WAGONS: Capitol Records is reaching a third volume of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band’s classic Will the Circle Be Unbroken recording. Volume Three, due Oct. 1, was co-produced by the band and Randy Scruggs. Guest artists include Iris DeMent, Jimmy Martin, Johnny Cash, Taj Mahal, Doc Watson, Emmylou Harris, Willie Nelson, Earl Scruggs, Alison Krauss, the Del McCoury Band, Dwight Yoakam, June Carter Cash, Tom Petty, Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas, Tony Rice, and Vince Gill.
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**Total Gainers**

- The Best of America (Bum) 25
- Born to Fly (Now Again) 24
- The Flatlanders (Now Again) 23
- R/C: The Great Divide (Play it Loud) 22
- Willie Nelson (Chrome) 21
- The Best of George Strait: 20th Century Masters (The Originals) 20
- Ten Rounds (The Originals) 19
- Garth Brooks (Screencraw) 18

**Pacesetter**

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<td>Elvis: Today, Tomorrow &amp; Forever</td>
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<td>Cledus T. Judd</td>
<td>Time-Life's Treasury of Bluegrass</td>
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*Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.*

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*Disclaimer: This chart is for entertainment purposes only and does not reflect actual sales figures. Sales data is based on Nielsen SoundScan's analysis of sales data from participating retailers.*

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*Billboard 2002*
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<td>Allen Jackson</td>
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<td>Andy Griggs</td>
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<td>Sara Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOD BLESS AMERICA</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
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</table>
América Latina...

In Argentina: Atlanta-based bambú player Mario Peralta has been in Buenos Aires, working with producer Horacio Malvecino on an ambitious new project of symphonic tango and compositions by the legendary Astor Piazzolla. Recording will take place during the next few months in Buenos Aires, Nashville, and Atlanta, with an album on indie label Rose Records slated for a late-2007 release. . . . Quatro-K/Sony Music rock and blues band La Mississippi will showcase for the first time in the U.S. songs from its 2001 album, Bik Hippie, as well as highlights of its successful 10-year career. The act has been invited to perform at the New Bands Festival taking place July 27-28 in Miami’s Bayfront Park, where it will be joined by fellow Argentine pop/rock band Los Pericos, Venezuela’s Desorden Publico, and Mexico’s Jumbo.

Marcelo Fernandez Bitar

In Mexico: Panteón Rococó, one of Mexico’s most important representatives of ska/punk, will embark on a two-month European tour July 13 at the summer Fusion Festival in Germany. The band will play a total of 40 dates in such countries as Holland, Austria, Denmark, France, and Spain. The tour marks the third time the band has been to Europe but the first with an album—Composiciones Musicales (Musical Compositions)—that is supported by a major label (BMG).

In Panama: Rock band Los 33 will kick off a Central America tour in July that will take them to Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala promoting Arriba (Up), the act’s first album with Sony Discos. Los 33 are considered one of Panama’s most stable bands, and lead singer Victor Julio is a city councilman for Panama City.

Anastacio Puertas Caicedo

In Chile: Axe Bahia, a teen quintet from Brazil that resides in Chile, has become a major selling force after releasing Todo Bien (Warner Chile). In two months, sales have reached more than 70,000 units. Initially a dance troupe on Mekaro, a daily TV show for teenagers, Axe Bahia now sings its own material. Todo Bien features new versions of songs made popular through the quintet’s choreographies. Axe members Bruno Lazaro, Felipe Seoane, Francini Contin do Amaral, Jefferson Barbosa, and Jocney Barbosa have temporarily abandoned their TV duties to pursue international exposure in Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, the U.S., and Central America.

Serigo Fortunio

Latin Notas

TOO MANY CHOICES: Never have multiple versions of songs—that is, simultaneous remixes (or newly recorded versions) in dance, tropical, pop, and regional Mexican formats—been as hot as now. On this issue’s Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart we find Thalia, with “Tu Yo” (in its original pop version and the Kumbia Kings remix), at No. 1; Pilar Montenegro, with “Quítame Ese Hombre” (pop and norteno), at No. 2; Chayanne, with “Y Tu Te Vas” (pop and tropical, at No. 3; and Ricardo Montaner, with “Yo Puedo Hacer” (pop and tropical), at No. 4. The version/remix game—played largely to ensure a good position on the radio charts—is now at its peak, though nearly every major tropical act includes half-lad versions of one or more tracks on its disc. But while the practice certainly helps in the charts department, it overwhelmingly sucks in the musical equivalent, This is particularly the case with salsa, where laying the same vocal track over different rhythms effectively kills the vibe of the song.

Sure, there are exceptions. “A Puro Dolor,” performed by Son by Four, is noteworthy; it sounded great every which way. “Tuyo” actually improves in its cambia version, while “Quítame Ese Hombre” manages to be equally convincing in both.

“If it’s well-produced, it sometimes sounds good,” agrees María Nava, PD for Los Angeles KLVE (107.5 FM). In her former job as regional Mexican RSICA (101.9 FM), she played “Quítame Ese Hombre.”

Nava adds, “I can completely understand the dance versions. But when it has nothing to do with the original production and the artist isn’t even involved, I see a problem. If the goal was to record, produce, and write songs that are hits, they wouldn’t need all this stuff. They wouldn’t even invent such a sad recourse.”

From an artistic standpoint, multiple versions are troublesome because they dilute the artists’ personality. I would dare say the practice has considerably weakened tropical music as a genre.

“The artist is a product, and it affects the branding,” says Bryan Meléndez, PD of New York’s Latino mix WCAQ (105.9 FM), who says he plays remixes and versions “on a case-by-case basis.”

But he adds, “Do I think the public picks up on it in terms of airing the different versions? No. But I think in the long run, the artist is doing himself harm by diluting himself.”

Let There Be Harmony: While the U.S. celebrated July 4th last week, authors’ and editors’ representatives met for work at Cartagena, Colombia, for the biannual meeting of Latinauta (the umbrella organization of all Latin writers’ associations) and the Ibero-American Committee of the International Confederation of Authors and Composers. Among the guests were representatives from the Latin American Federation of Editors (FLADEM), who met with Latinauta reps with outcomes that both parties described as promising and productive.
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Piracy, Internet Music Hits Panama Sales

“Piracy in Panama is killing the music industry,” says María Sofía de Carranza, owner of record store Discotecas Shophy.

Carranza, whose store is one of the oldest in the country, says she has heard reports of CDs selling for as little as $3. “But the labels have to pay royalties, production, art, taxes, and a whole series of things that make it impossible to sell for $3. We can’t compete.”

It is common to see stands along Panama City’s main roads selling counterfeit copies of the latest local and international releases in full view of local authorities. The most pirated acts are reported to be Sammy y Sandra Sandoval, Los Rabanes, Shakira, and such local reggae acts as El Rockie.

Panama does have an anti-piracy law that went into effect in January 1995, which punishes acts of piracy with fines of up to $20,000 or four years in jail. But many contend that the law only applies to big operators. Dumas Torrijos, owner of G-Pro-

ducciones—which distributes the product of many labels—says that sales have dropped by as much as 50%, with local artists like Sammy y Sandra Sandoval and Ulpiano Vergara particularly affected: “Authorities have executed searches, but controlling this is difficult, and pirate retailers crop up like wildflowers.”

But the problem in Panama is not limited to the small vendors but extends to larger, industrial operations. Labels like Sony Music Panama, which is very active on the anti-piracy front, respond by constantly patrolling the streets for counterfeit copies of their releases.

According to Sony Music Panama GM Manuel González, a series of activities is planned for August to raise consumers’ awareness of piracy’s impact. There will be TV campaigns featuring local artists, a possible “hour without music” coordinated with radio networks, and a publicity stunt whereby stores will be shrouded with black veils and albums will not be sold for a day.

“We want people to be conscious of the problem,” González says. He adds that Sony is also planning to release cheaper compilation CDs to entice buyers to buy legitimate product.

“What’s most heavily pirated is reggae, typical music, local acts,” González says. “So we’re trying to give buyers a cheaper alternative.”

Labels are also beginning to offer incentives for purchasing legitimate albums. Rock band Son Miserables, for example, included an interactive menu with videos, photos, and other features as part of its second CD.

So, what happens when the original, improved performances are altered, not by improvised interaction, but by after-the-fact digital editing and intuitive manipulation? Such is the question posed by DJ Spooky (That Subliminal Kid) on Optometry (July 9), the 12th in Thirsty Ear Recording’s Blue Series of albums that defy the standard conventions of what jazz can be.

Optometry began as a series of conversations, turntable/mixer DJ Spooky (aka Paul Miller), pianist Matthew Shipp, bassist William Parker, tenor saxophonist/trumpeter Joe McPhee, and drummer Guillermo E. Brown laid the groundwork for the original tracks that became the foundation of the project. “We set forth ideas on styles and tempos and how the music could best be developed so that it could be manipulated in the digital format,” Miller says. “As free-jazz musicians, the band was not accustomed to thinking of structuring the music. At the same time, we were all approaching the project from the same perspective, to eliminate all boundaries of what jazz can be.”

Once the basic tracks were recorded, Miller digitally manipulated them, editing bits together and adding sampled sounds to create wholly new compositions built around the band’s original improvisations. “When you see a free-jazz unit play, it is about each musician playing stream-of-consciousness lines,” Miller says. “When those performances are edited down and altered, the trick is to recognize the rhythmic linkages and how various modes and tempos relate to one another. The idea is that all the participants become part of the final mix.”

The boundaries between DJ and musician become blurred, because the DJ is creating music that has never before been heard, and the musicians are actively contributing to the DJ’s craft.

Miller himself is not exactly a novice when it comes to jazz. His father, Paul E. Miller, was a lawyer, dean of Howard University’s law school, and a mentor to Donald Byrd when the trumpeter was studying for his law degree. Miller’s father passed away when Miller was a child, and one of his earliest memories is that of seeing Byrd play at his father’s funeral.

Miller inherited his father’s extensive jazz record collection, exposing him to artists whose willingness to break the rules of convention have inspired his work as a DJ/producer.

The Art Ensemble of Chicago would do entire pieces based upon a specific rhythmic pattern, and that was a concept that is at the heart of Optometry,” Miller reveals. “I follow the experimental traditionalists, such as [drummers] Milford Graves and Elvin Jones, who know the rules so well that they can do away with them altogether.”

For more information about advertising on BET Jazz, call (212) 716-5635 or (212) 716-5638.

By Anastacio Puertas Caicedo

Panama City—Sales of recorded music in Panama have declined 30%-50% during the first months of the year, according to the record labels that operate in the country, including Sony Music, Universal, G-Producciones, and BMG. The decline has been linked to the downloading of music via the Internet and to the proliferation of pirated CDs—which sell for as little as $3, compared with $10-$15 for a legitimate CD.

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Stravinsky Gets Boosey & Hawkes Promo Treatment

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—With new publication The Stravinsky Project—a Handbook for Performers and Programmers, Boosey & Hawkes is perfecting its recently developed concept in promoting a broader usage of music by its great composers.

“We celebrated the Aaron Copland centenary a couple of years ago as part of our big 2000 campaign on behalf of certain composers who are considered in the pantheon of classical or 20th century music,” says Boosey & Hawkes GM Jennifer Bilfield, noting that Copland’s publication then of Annotations—A Guide to the Music of Aaron Copland and the reasoning behind what was essentially a concert user’s handbook.

“The challenge was how to present the repertoire to an educated customer base,” Bilfield continues. “What we found, interestingly, was that some of the new experiences, the expansion of a composer’s music are a little bit too shy to ask for materials on works that are outside of what they usually perform, or that they might want to try for specific thematic threads to pull together an interesting program for their audiences. So our role as publisher is twofold: to provide them with those kinds of resources to strengthen their knowledge base on the music—even if theoretically it’s music that everyone knows—and second, to provide interestingly selecting works for them to perform in order to help them make lively presentations for their audiences. The Copland title, which played on the composer’s Connotations, for Orchestra, was accompanied by a cassette sampler corresponding to the text. Out in time for the 1998-1999 performing season, it provided brief annotations on Copland’s works and included instrumentation and biographical information.

“We printed probably around 10,000 copies,” Bilfield says, ‘which is a staggering number for a reissue.” Boosey & Hawkes had previously issued a Guide to the Orchestra, caption then the spotlight of English composer Gerald Finzi—‘begat’ The Stravinsky Project, Bilfield says, though the title differs in serving a “globally universal composer.”

But Igor Stravinsky is also a “less quantifiable” composer, she says, and as musicologist and the booklet’s author, Joseph Horowitz, writes, his “stylistic and geographical odysseys make him permanently elusive.”

Bilfield says, “He stimulates a lot of creative interpretation. He lived in many countries, his music evolved through different styles, and he certainly was an enigmatic figure. But he was one of the most compelling composers of the 20th century, so it was a huge challenge to tackle this unquantifiable but extraordinarily influential personality. The project took 18 months to complete.”

Horowitz’s text, then, delivers “penetrating discussions and an encompassing view” of Stravinsky’s music, Bilfield says. It looks at his influences while examining his varied output and provides background and chronology; it also offers programming tips and suggestions.

“One of the most important parts of this project is the sampler CD, and we’ve [affixed it in] a transparent plastic envelope inside the booklet.” Bilfield says, distinguishing the Stravinsky title from its predecessor, whose companion discs were jewel-boxed separately. The contents of the disc, she adds, “point to [Stravinsky’s] early influences, like Tchaikovsky, as a way to broaden the interest in the booklet user to hear more, as well as show the influences on Stravinsky’s thinking.”

The “mercurial nature of Stravinsky’s catalogue” Bilfield says, makes Boosey & Hawkes’ endeavor especially important.

“As publisher, we’re charged with the responsibility of respecting and looking at a composer’s output in a way that is consistent with their spirit and intent,” she says. “There’s also a level of honesty and clarity that as publisher we feel we have to provide, and the more so when the composer is in larger and wider population; We wanted a document that not only revealed in the glory of Stravinsky but provided enough nuance and clarity and provided the level of tools and understanding that would be above and beyond what the programmers might have developed on their own. Value-added, if you will.”

Noting that the Boosey & Hawkes catalog “is often perceived as the jewel of jewels,” Bilfield says: “People think you just sit back and let it happen. But we proved with Copland that no matter how well-known a composer or a composer’s works are, publishers can have a very active and dynamic role in creating synergies between organizations in order to help maximize the dramatic impact of the presentation of the composer’s work, creating a bigger picture and raising the composer’s visibility.”

Having previously worked on the orchestra and festival sides of the business, Bilfield now says she sees “opportunities for publishers and composers to blend the art and the commerce of the industry in choosing different tools of types of tools that support the repertoire with a long-term vision.”

With this in mind, Bilfield says that next up for Boosey & Hawkes will be a Prokofiev 2003 project.

BLUEBIRD’S BOOK: Harper Entertainment has just published The Bluebird Café Scrapbook, celebrating the 20th anniversary of Nashville’s famed songwriter showcase (Billboard, July 6).

“We asked about 200 people for their favorite or least-favorite memories, and when the responses came back, we had a history that was far more comprehensive than I could have done myself,” says Amy Kurland, owner of the club that has become synonymous with its much-copied-in-the Round songwriter groupings.

Bilfield credits Horowitz with “putting together a coherent and engaging narrative to introduce Stravinsky’s music both to the uninitiated and the very experienced programmer—and that’s a very tricky minefield to navigate: not to turn off people by an academic approach and make it meaty enough for those who feel they know what they need to get a little bit more.”

“Bluebird’s” book—well over 200 pages, “and 25 recipes, because we started it as a cookbook.”

Kurland says, “There are over 100 stories and 125 photos,” she continues, “and 25 recipes, because we started it as a cookbook.”

Highlights of the book—as well as recipes from Faith Hill, Amy Grant, and the Dixie Chicks—include Grant’s recollection of her hair-catching fire from a candle and Garth Brooks’ recounting of his initial Bluebird showcase, which clears up numerous conflicting stories of the portentous event as submitted by others. Also recalled is the filming of the 1993 feature The Thing Called Love, which starred River Phoenix and Sandra Bullock and centered on the Bluebird’s songwriting scene.

“It’s amazing how many people wrote about seeing [such as In the Round regulars as] Thom Scholar and Fred Knobloch and Don Schlitz for the first time—and being scared by the level of the competition,” Kurland says, adding that stories about the likes of John Prine, Gary Burr, Bob DiPiero, Karen Staley, and Kevin Welch appeal to the mainstream country fan as well as the real Bluebird fan interested in the most ‘inside’ stuff.”

Kurland happily reports that The Bluebird Café Scrapbook is the bestselling title at the bookstore across the street.

MOZART FROM MADRAS: India’s great Bollywood film composer A.R. Rahman is being hailed as the “Asian Mozart” in the UK press, following the opening last month of Andrew Lloyd Webbers’ Bombay Dreams, a musical featuring Rahman’s classic Bollywood hits. Over in the States, meanwhile, Rajkumar San- toshi and Ajay Devgan, respectively the director and lead of new Bollywood historical drama The Legend of Bhaag Singh, explain why Rahman was chosen to score the flick—one of several simultaneous releases focusing on the historically neglected Indian freedom fighter who was executed by the British in 1931 in Lahore.

“I wanted to reach the youth, and no other music director could do that,” says Santhoshi, “The idea is to promote the New York premiere of Bhaag Singh. Devgan, who plays the film’s title character, adds: ‘He’s the only one who could transform old [folk music] styles into new and maintain authenticity.’

SINGER/SONGWRITER/WRITER: Janis Ian, beloved since the ’60s for such classic songs as ‘Society’s Child,’ ‘Jesse,’ and ‘At Seventeen,’ has also developed quite a following for her monthly columns in Performing Songwriter Magazine. But her current column, “The Last Night at the Alternative View,” has elicited a particularly heavy response.

“It’s been out in the magazine a week, I think, and online at my site (www.americanradiohistory.com) for a week—and I’m getting 10,000 hits a day,” Ian says. “People are posting it all over the Net, discussion boards are springing up—I’ve never had anything like this happen before.”

In the lengthy treatise, Ian takes what she acknowledges is a “devil’s advocate” stance, contending that free Internet downloads are good for the music industry and its artists. The opposing industry position that they harm sales is “nonsense,” she says, noting that unauthorized Napster downloads of her music brought 100 fresh hits to her site each month, 15 of which resulted in album purchases.

Ian then picks apart four anti-downloading arguments found on the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s Web site and concludes with a few suggestions on how the industry should address such “real issues” as disadvantaged recording contracts, congressionally-set writer/ publisher royalty rates, and the controlled-composition clause.

Incidentally, Ian says her site gets 75,000 hits a year—“not bad for someone whose last hit record was in 1979.”
Explains, “You’ve got to understand other facets of the business,” he says of Sony personnel previously specializing in one area. “When you walk in and say, ‘I’ve got the mixers, microphones, and recording gear setup,’ people are interested in hearing the other things that you can do for them.

“So the re-focus on the part of Sony is to say, ‘Here’s where we need to be with pro audio, here are the markets we need to address, and this is the way we’re going to accomplish it.’” Ott continues. “The way to accomplish it is to homogenize, and at the same time strategically go after specific types of business that we want to conduct.”

“The convergence of high-resolution audio and video offered by DVD and HDTV has cultivated a greater emphasis on both, where audio was once an afterthought in film. As consumers become more accustomed to high-resolution and/or multichannel audio through DVD and broadcast TV, Sony Electronics is attaching greater importance to machinery available a high-quality wireless microphone, for example, with every video camera. With over-more-state-of-the-art communication and presentation equipment implemented in environments such as corporate boardrooms, a greater variety of Sony products (or those of other manufacturers) can be installed there as well.

“All of these various disciplines are now covered,” Ott says. “Where before it was like, ‘No, I’m the audio guy,’ they may have known enough about video to get away with it, but now they can address it and work with people so the customer ends up being more satisfied with their contact with Sony. And at one time, we were viewed as very protocol-driven and Sony-exclusive. Now we understand that the world has to be an open-party relationship, and all of our products are driving toward that end. We just don’t make every product that somebody needs, and we need to work with those products.”

A range of Sony’s professional audio products will be featured July 13-2 at the upcoming National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) convention at the Nashville Convention Center. Among them will be one of Sony’s more successful offerings, the DMX-R100 digital mixer, more than 1,500 of which have been sold worldwide. Several enhancements to the DMX-R100 will be demonstrated at NAMM.

Scott to do a remix of one of their songs. Then we realized, ‘Oh, we all know each other.’ We were all doing our own artistic thing, and we started writing songs together. It was really our manager, Sandy Robertson, who was involved with DollsHead and me as a solo artist, who said, ‘The three of you have got something. You can write something specific to any artist that you work with; this is what you should be doing.’ We’ve been doing it ever since.

While microphone and preamplifier choices change depending on project and application, the Matrix records exclusively to Pro Tools through Apogee AD8000 converters. The myriad synths are interfaced with Pro Tools via Digidesign’s 1622 16-channel audio interface.

“I’m really excited about going fully software,” Spock says, “because we don’t use much outboard gear other than for recording. It’s all plug-ins—we’re really excited about how it’s coming along. Everybody was talking about, ‘That’s the future,’ but it’s definitely the present.”

Forthcoming Matrix projects include Ricky Martin’s next release, sessions that took the team to Miami’s Hit Factory/Criteria Studios, yielding a new and different sound for the artist, Spock confides. “It’s wherever it takes us,” he says. “Our system is totally mobile, so we can pack it up in two hours and set it up in 1 ½. We can be anywhere.”

The Matrix

By Christopher Walsh

NEW YORK—The rising chart positions of Avril Lavigne’s Let Go (Arista) and “Complicated” single are accompanied by increased visibility and demand for the services of Lauren Christy, Graham Edwards, and Scott Spock, a writing/production team known collectively as the Matrix.

At No. 5 on The Billboard 200 this week, Let Go features significant contributions from the Matrix. “Complicated,” the first song the team wrote with Lavigne, is No. 4 on the Hot 100 this week.

“Having formed in 1999, the Matrix recently moved its production studio from Valley Village, Calif., to a new location in Encino. At the Pro Tools-based facility, the talented Matrix principals are combining traditional acoustic and electric instruments with synthesizers and the latest in emulating and processing software, writing and producing an impressive string of songs for such artists as Christina Aguilera, Ronan Keating, and Eric Gales.

“We have four Pro Tools systems in various sizes,” explains Spock, who produced Christy’s “Color of the Night” while the latter was a Mercury Records artist. “We have two huge, seven-card systems. We have every synth known to man, and Graham is an extraordinary bass player/guitar player. Between all the synths and Pro Tools, we cover the gamut between acoustic instruments and the programming side. We have a bevy of players, like drummers, that we use and other studios that we track live in. But we exclusively work in Pro Tools.”

That combination of acoustic instruments with synthesizers and workstation-based production has served Matrix projects well, evident on tracks like “Complicated” and “Sk8ter Boi” from Let Go. “That’s what we like to keep,” Spock says. “Even though everything is through a computer and there is a lot of manipulation, we try to keep the human feel to things.”

Like its blending of instrumentation and technology, the combination of three distinct sensibilities has also proved fruitful. “Graham had a band called DollsHead,” Christy says. “Graham’s record label [MCA] hired Scott to do a remix of one of their songs. Then we realized, ‘Oh, we all know each other.’ We were all doing our own artistic thing, and we started writing songs together. It was really our manager, Sandy Robertson, who was involved with DollsHead and me as a solo artist, who said, ‘The three of you have got something. You can write something specific to any artist that you work with; this is what you should be doing.' We’ve been doing it ever since.

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We still have a dedicated audio sales force,” Ott says. “We still have dedicated audio distribution, and we have national accounts. We now have an additional sales force that used to be exclusively pro video. They no longer are called pro video, they are called ‘professional products,’ because they handle the gamut of everything from VAIO computers to AIT drives to video recording to cameras to pro audio—wireless, and recording studio equipment. They can’t do it all, obviously. But they have to be knowledgeable enough—and that’s what our training program is doing now—to go into a situation and say, ‘This is my technical limit, now I’ll bring in the resources necessary to complete this project.’

Between recording and audio post-production studios, the musical instrument (MI) market, and the sound reinforcement/sound contractor markets—not to mention custom boardroom installations, a market that has seen tremendous growth in recent years—increasingly sophisticated and integrated technology requires a greater familiarity with more of Sony’s innumerable professional products, Ott says.
AUGUST

Nov. 4, ASCAP Country Awards, Opryland Hotel, Nashville (by invitation only). Nov. 14, Putumayo World Music Trust. Nov. 5, BMI Country Awards, BMI Nashville office by invitation only. Nov. 5, Christian Country Music Assn. Awards, Ryman Auditorium, Nashville. 615-742-9210. Nov. 6, 36th Annual Country Music Awards, Opryland Opry House, Nashville. 615-244-2840. Nov. 7, Musicians’ Assistance Program (MAP) Awards. House of Blues, Los Angeles. 310-559-9334. NOV. 12, Billboard Music & Money Symposium, St. Regis Hotel, New York. 646-654-4660. HOMEMADE BLUES: Grammy Award-winning blues artist Icky Mo’, aka Kevin Moore, will return to where his career began—a as trumpet/French horn player for the Compton High School band—to perform a benefit blues concert in the school auditorium Aug. 30. The event will also feature the Los Angeles school’s current jazz band, and proceeds from the evening will go toward establishing a college scholarship fund for Compton High School students. Contact: Tom Campbell at 310-374-4837. COMMUNITY ART: Veteran musicians Tom Waits and Joan Jett are among those promoting cross-cultural understanding of the arts as members of the board of advisers for the newly created Putumayo Cross-Cultural Initiative. Created by Putumayo World Music, the foundation will assist under-funded schools, after-school programs, museums, and community-based organizations with the implementation of arts programs through teacher training, workshops, and consultation. Contact: Elly Wininger 212-625-1400. Life Lines BIRTHS
Girl, Zara Wen, adopted from China by Rebecca and Charles Dorris, in Nashville. Father is VP/head of the Christian music department at the William Morris Agency. MARRIAGES
Richard “Pistol” Allen, 69, of cancer, June 29 in Detroit. The drummer behind such Motown classics as “Heat Wave” and “Baby Love.” Allen was known for a fervency to play that once caused him to storm onstage at a local club and take over for the drummer. After his introduction to the Motown scene in 1962 by mentor Benny Benjamin, Allen played with the Funk Brothers and became known as the master of the Beale Street Shuffle and the sound “on the floor” (a snare drum hit on every beat). He is survived by his wife and 10 children. Ira Eaker, 80, following surgery, June 26 in Tamarac, Fla. Eaker co-founded Backstage with Allen Zwirnling in 1960, where he served as co-publicist/ advertising director until the pair sold it to Billboard Publications in 1986. The leading weekly trade publication for those working in theater and film, it continues today as part of VNU Business Publications, with Eaker’s daughter, Sherry Eaker, serving as editor in chief. Eaker is survived by his wife, two children, two grandchildren, and a sister. www.billboard.com www.americanradiohistory.com
GREAT BAND. GREAT PEOPLE.

CONGRATULATIONS ON 35 GREAT YEARS.

HK MANAGEMENT • PETER SCHIVARELLI
Robert Lamm
Lee Loughnane
James Pankow
Walt Parazaider

Bill Champlin
Jason Scheff
Tris Imboden
Keith Howland

HK Management • Peter Schivarelli
The Billboards

Chicago's accomplishments over 35 years of uninterrupted music-making can be measured in myriad ways: platinum albums crowded on den walls; a catalog of hits as impressive as any in the annals of popular music; a multi-generational audience that rediscovers the band's distinctive sound and makes it their own, on a regular basis; and enough frequent-flyer touring miles for several trips to the moon.

Perhaps the most notable commodity accumulated by the group over its unprecedented career has been, simply, the attainment of wisdom. Across a span that would easily encompass the birth and death of a dozen lesser bands and through the incredible vagaries that have characterized the recording industry in the modern era, Chicago has learned what's important, what's not and how to tell the difference in the creativity and commerce of contemporary music. It's a quality that comes across loud and clear in conversation with the group's founding members—keyboardist and vocalist Robert Lamm, trumpeter Lee Loughnane, trombonist James Pankow and woodwind player Walt Parazaider. Along with Bill Champlin (keyboards, guitar, vocals), Jason Scheff (bass, vocals), Tris Imboden (drums) and Keith Howland (guitar), the foursome has guided Chicago's fortunes through 26 albums (with astonishing sales of more than 122 million units), 20 top-10 hits and an ongoing live appeal that is, in the truest sense of the word, stellar.

In Florida, during a stopover on their current U.S. tour, in conjunction with their recently announced Rhino Records catalog-reissue deal and on the heels of a triumphant appearance at the 2002 National Memorial Day Concert, broadcast live on the West Lawn of the Capitol, Lamm, Loughnane, Pankow and Parazaider took time out to share some of the wisdom that only three and a half decades in the business can bring.
Is there a single factor to which you can attribute your longevity as a band?

Walt Parazaider: This may sound a little corny, but I think, as much as anything, it's the deep love we feel for each other. We've grown up together, fought together, laughed and cried together, and, in the process, become like brothers. Let's face it, you can't keep a hand together for 35 straight years without building on a foundation of mutual respect. There's a particular brand of Midwestern loyalty that you find nowhere else. It's what we started with, and it's what has sustained us through the good times and the bad.

Lee Loughnane: I'd have to say the music goes right along with that. We're still playing songs in concert from our first few albums. People just don't seem to ever get tired of that material, and, as long as we can inspire that kind of response, the music stays fresh for us also.

There's a timeless quality to those songs that seems to have transcended whatever the flavor of the week might happen to be.

James Pankow: Of course, you've got to be realistic. It's sometimes hard to get a fresh slant on music you've been playing for so long. That's where the adrenaline that the audience provides comes in. You feed on the delight and approval of the crowd, and that's what helps make these songs new again. It's the same sort of gratification that kept Sinatra and Ellington going into their 80s.

WP: There's also an element of mental discipline, an attention to detail that keeps us on our toes. Back in the '60s, audiences were used to lots of improvisation, but most of the music we perform on stage these days is played off of charts, because people want to hear it as they remember it, within certain perimeters. That demands a whole other kind of concentration that I think has been good for us as musicians.

Robert Lamm: What goes along with all of this is an appreciation of how fortunate we've been. Occasionally, people will ask us if we're tired of being on the road all the time, and, of course, there is a price to pay. You can ask our families. But, when all is said and done, the pleasure and excitement we bring to our fans really does make it all worthwhile. This is something that we love doing, and having a job to love is something I'd wish for my own kids. Having said that, one thing we've learned over the years is to separate work from home. When we're touring, we give it our all. And when we're at home, we're really there, 100%.

JP: There's a lot to be said for loving what you do to put food on the table. For us, that's just as much a definition of success as any number of hit records or sold-out concerts.

WP: We're firm believers that the harder you work the luckier you get. You make your own breaks, and we've made our breaks by making this band a way of life. But we've also learned how to pace ourselves. We used to be out over 300 days of the year. Now we do 80 to 100 dates in that same period. Each of us is aware of what we're trading off, in terms of family and relationships, and we do our best to keep a good balance between the two.

Has there been a change in the Chicago sound and your approach to songwriting over the course of your career?

JP: Not really. We still try to write songs that are based in real life, about the things that affect us directly. I think our music speaks about the human condition, and the hopes and fears of humanity have always remained essentially constant. Of course, things change. After 9/11, for example, the whole idea of what entertainment was and what it should do went through a reevaluation. And, when we first started out, the country was divided over the Vietnam War. Having that long view has helped us put things into perspective. I think, in the same way that Glenn Miller and Benny Goodman got the country through hard times, we can provide something positive and uplifting to strengthen the American fabric. Now it's our turn.

WP: As far as our sound goes, it's only natural that our musicianship improves. We're constantly working on new arrangements that keep the music fresh and interesting, not just for the audience, but also for us. We're not like ballplayers who outlive their abilities. Our musical consciousness continues to evolve.

RL: Of course, there is a whole range of new technologies available, but, for this band, that's never been as important as the songwriting and musicianship. As much as anything, I'd say technology has lightened our load a little. We can now do a tour with two trucks instead of three.

LL: We're trying to keep up with the latest advances, but the trick is to learn from the technology and not to let it overwhelm you. We've utilized drum machines and synthesizers and computer programming, but very selectively. We don't want the instruments to end up playing us.

WP: As far as we're concerned, the measure of any good band is what they can do if the plug ever gets pulled. We've been able to keep performing after a power failure on more than one occasion, playing whole acoustic sets. And, believe it or not, those have been some of our best concerts.

Chicago has been through numerous personnel changes. Is it hard to keep the creative continuity with new members?

RL: The most difficult aspect is always emotional. I mean, as both a friend and musician, you'd never be able to replace someone like Terry Kath, our original guitarist, who died in 1978. But you have to carry on, and the major consideration is always that sense of continuity. Any musician has to be able to become a part of the whole and not change the essential dynamic of the music. That being said, I think we've had good luck finding and keeping great musicians. Our guitarist, Keith Howland, thinks of himself as the "new guy," and he's been with us since 1995.

LL: The main thing we look for with new members is the ability to integrate into the band's musical structure. There's a very fine line between an individual player's interpretation of a song and the way it should be played. We want the best of both worlds, and we're never satisfied until we get it.

WP: Aside from sheer musical ability, we're also interested in how they fit into the group on a day-to-day basis. A guy might have great chops but doesn't travel well. This work can be very difficult and demanding, and the last thing we need is someone who can't do the job.

LL: We don't all necessarily have to be best friends. We each lead individual lives, but we all share an enthusiasm and commitment that keeps us going in the same direction.

Has the make-up of your audience changed over the course of the band's career?

JP: Absolutely. It's become a family affair. Young people come up with copies of our first album to fill the program. We've got an album that was maybe released before most of them were born. It's really one of the highlights of what we do, to discover this wonderful and unique appeal that our music has to people of all ages.

LL: A lot of our biggest hits were in the '60s and '70s, but that doesn't seem to make any difference to the people who come to hear us. It isn't about a particular generation or decade. It's the music, pure and simple.

There is a lot of talk about the music industry being in a state of crisis these days. What's your opinion on the state of the business?

LL: Music is a creative endeavor, and that means it's always in some state of crisis and transition. The reality is that very few artists are going to emerge who will make music good enough to endure. I think of bands like Dave Matthews band, which...
Killer Catalog: Ambitious Rhino Reissues Program Salutes “One Of The Great Groups”

For the first time, tracks will be taken from the band’s original master recordings. Gatefold packages, notes and bonus cuts enhance the releases.

BY DON WALLER

There are very few opportunities for acquisitions of this magnitude,” says Warner Strategic Marketing president Scott Pasucci, referring to the recent announcement that Rhino Records—now under the WSM argu—scored the rights to release the entire Chicago catalog.

Because Chicago spent more than a decade recording for various Warner Bros. labels—having previously spent a similar decade-plus with Columbia Records—and because rights to the latter discs had recently reverted to the band, this acquisition presents what Pasucci modestly describes as “a very rare opportunity to integrate an entire catalog.”

“We look for your job Whitburn books,” adds WSM Rhino VP, A&R, David McLees, “you’ll find that Chicago is the second-biggest American band in history, trailing only the Beach Boys. They’ve been around 35 years, and they’ve had a lot of hits, but their catalog has never been treated the way that it should’ve been. Now we have the opportunity to do it right.”

The first step in that journey came at the start of this month, when Rhino issued The Very Best of Chicago One through Six, a 20-song, two-CD career-spanning package. The second step followed just two weeks later, when deluxe reissues of the band’s first three albums (Chicago Transit Authority, Chicago II and Chicago III) hit the streets.

GATEFOLDS AND BOOKLETS

One of the biggest differences between these new discs and previous Chicago reissue packages is that every track will be taken from the original master recordings. “It’s going to sound a whole lot better,” McLees says, noting that each disc not only will reproduce the original gatefold packaging but also will contain 20-page booklets with appropriate period photos and liner notes by David Wild.

Because the band’s first three efforts were each double albums—each of which will fit on a single CD—there will be no bonus tracks per se, as everything the group recorded for those sessions wound up on the original LPs. The sole exception will be the rearise of Chicago II, which will sport the single-edit versions of “25 or 6 to 4” and “Make Me Smile.”

Rhino intends to roll out the remainder of the catalog in similar sets of three, with Chicago V, Chicago VI and Chicago VII, as well as Chicago VIII, Chicago X and Chicago XI, slated to appear before the end of the year. (The band’s fourth album, Chicago at Carnegie Hall, was a live recording, and Chicago IX was its greatest-hits package.) All six discs, as well as all future Rhino reissues—which will continue well into next year, with a five-CD boxed set on tap—will contain previously unreleased material.

BAND ON THE ROAD

Noting that the initial Rhino reissues will coincide with the band’s 35th-anniversary tour, WSM executive VP, sales & marketing, Kevin Gore freely admits that Chicago’s status as a “touring machine” (playing about 100 dates each year, in sheds that hold between 5,000 and 10,000 people) provides plenty of extra promotional opportunities—not only in terms of tour publicity and TV appearances, but also in creating on-the-spot marketing situations.

“We’ll have aggressive positioning at retail—from chains to racks to mass merchants and beyond,” Gore explains. “But the point of our advertising will be to reconnect the consumer with the music, primarily through direct-response TV. We’ll be running spots—60s, 90s and 120s—on cable outlets and local network affiliates, and these will be packed with as much music as we can present—up to 15 eight-second hooks. We did some consumer research, and every time people would hear another song, they’d say, ‘Oh yeah, I remember that’ or ‘Wow, I forgot about that one.’ People remembered key events in their lives that linked to these songs, and, when you have a 35- year history as a band, that creates a lot of room for really strong relationships between the music and the consumer. And we’ll be working with the usual suspects in the world of Internet commerce, as well as with the band’s Web site (chicagotheband.com), with rhino.com, and, of course, the music properties at AOL, specifically AOL Music. And we’re working very closely with Warner Strategic Marketing International in London to develop the appropriate plans for their markets, so this is a worldwide plan, as opposed to a U.S. and Canada plan.”

BEYOND THE FANBASE

“If you look at the Alternative Monitor charts,” Gore elaborates, “you’ll find that there are many Chicago songs that are played across multiple radio formats every single day. And those stations are reaching new people, so this isn’t just about reaching the fan base; it’s about expanding the fan base to really grow what this catalog offers to us.”

“This is the first significant acquisition by Warner Strategic Marketing, and we hope this is indicative of the scope and magnitude of the acquisitions that we’ll be able to achieve going forward,” says Pasucci. “We also think there’s an opportunity to expose Chicago to a new audience and get people to acknowledge that this is one of the great groups—that they should have a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, for example—and we want to take them to that level.”

FEELIN’ STRONGER

(Continued from page 41)

ambitious second album, Chicago II, released in 1970. Another four-sided, it featured Lamm’s “25 or 6 to 4” and Pankow’s classically inspired suite, “Ballet For a Girl in Buchannon,” which included “Make Me Smile,” the first of 35 top-40 hits for Chicago on the Billboard Hot 100. The album was also the first to sport the band’s shortened moniker and logo, which would become an important advertising element for the group (see separate story).

During the early ’70s, this prolific group continued to mine its winning blend of rock, R&B, jazz and classical strains, releasing yet another double album, the politically charged Chicago III (1971), and its first single album, Chicago V (1972), the latter containing another Lamm gem, “Saturday in the Park.”

WONDER YEARS

Today, with more than 35 years of constant touring under their belts, the original members are in a good position to accurately gauge the rigors of life on the road. “When I see bands complaining about having to work and be on the road, it’s like they’ve lost focus,” explains Lamm. “The whole wonder about being a musician is being able to play your music. Playing music is fun.”

Beginning with the sixth album, and continuing on through 1977’s Chicago XI, the band moved its recording base to producer/manager Guercio’s new studio outside of Chicago in a move up to a larger production and a more polished sound. “The band never had a style per se,” observes Guercio. “We were just developing a way of recording and working, and, through the years, we were able to improve our process.”

Chicag0 1970s

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BILLYBOARD JULY 20, 2002

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ONLY THE BEGINNING

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Friends And Colleagues Dig The Band's Horns And Heart

BY DEBBIE GALANTE BLOCK

Beach Boys shared the Chicago sound by singing back-up on "Wishing You Were Here.

In 1976, amid the apathy that followed the contentious Vietnam War, Chicago and the Beach Boys devoted their tour to "Get Out the Vote." Perhaps that was the beginning of Chicago's philanthropy. The band has been involved with many charitable causes, most vividly the Ara Parseghian Medical Research Foundation, which focuses on finding a cure for the genetic disease Niemann-Pick Type C. Band manager Peter Schivarelli, who played football for famed Notre Dame coach Parseghian, made the band aware of the foundation. Cindy Parseghian, volunteer president of the foundation and the mother of three children with the disease, says, "When Peter shared our story with the guys in the band, they immediately stepped forward, offering to hold a concert in South Bend to benefit our foundation." That event netted the Foundation more than $100,000 to fund research. Since then, Chicago has donated a portion of its concert-ticket sales to the Foundation. More than $500,000 has been raised as a result.

Chicago also has been involved with VH1's Save the Music Foundation. Bob Morrison, the Foundation's executive director, says, "The entire band has been incredibly supportive of our work, to the point of almost being roving ambassadors. During their concerts, they've talked about our organization and talked about why folks in local communities need to support music programs. Two years ago, we had students perform with the band in various communities. They had one of the New York students perform with them on The Daily Show. We're very grateful to Chicago for their generous support of our work."

Songwriter Diane Warren wrote "Look Away" and "I Don't Want to Live Without Your Love" for Chicago 19. She says, "In a day and age when a career can consist of only one hit song, Chicago has defied the odds by coming up with hit after hit for 35 years. They should be proud of such an awesome achievement."

Another life-long fan of the band is Tom Cuddy, VP of programming for WPLJ, FM, New York & ABC Radio FM Group. "I was in high school when I saw my first rock concert. It was Chicago, playing to a sold-out audience at the Rhode Island Auditorium. I had never heard a band like Chicago before that night, and now, some 32 years later, I still haven't heard a band that tops their special brand of rock 'n' roll. There's no American band that has given radio more hits than Chicago, and that's why it's a crime that they are not yet in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. That would be like the end of the game and we'd be playing it backwards!"

"Chicago, you are the best! On behalf of my staff, congratulations on 35 years of musical inspiration.""
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With who-knows-how-many frequent-touring miles logged on the road, the original members of Chicago—Robert Lamm, James Pankow, Walter Parazaider and Lee Loughnane—are justifiably proud that they are still at it and doing healthy business during the group's current 35th-anniversary concert trek.

Chicago has managed to keep its customers satisfied for more than three-and-a-half decades by maintaining a time-tested balance between juggling the hits and keeping things musically interesting for the band members.

"Every year, we try to tailor the show somewhat," says trumpeter/vocalist Loughnane. "Because having 26 albums and over 50 hits, there's a lot of songs that certain generations want to hear. So we try to put as many of those songs into the set as we possibly can, and change it up with either acoustic versions of some songs or just something to change the arrangement around to make it more interesting for us, as well as the audience."

Along with throwing the audience an occasional stylistic curve, Chicago tries to keep things fresh by sprinkling in a few surprises when whittling down the set list. For this year's Only the Beginning 1967-2002 35th Anniversary Tour, the band has dusted off the album tracks "Wake Up Sunshine" (from Chicago II) and "Happy Man" (from Chicago VIII), as well as the top-40 hit "Another Rainy Day in New York City" (from Chicago X).

SURPASSING SINATRA

However, the band's instincts have not always been so rock solid. Woodwind player/vocalist Parazaider recalls one particular tour when the group lost its bearings and leaned a little too much in one direction. "This happened in the early 70s, after we had had success with different hits and could go out and play a show with quite a few identifiable hits. We decided that, one tour, we weren't gonna play any hits and we were gonna basically play jazz. It was an idealistic, cool thing, and we thought it was a great idea at the time. Until we got done with the set, the lights went on and the people were gone."

Chicago has certainly amazed an impressive résumé during its 35 years on the road. At the height of its concert clout, the band was a major arena powerhouse—once during the mid-70s and again a decade later, after a run of David Foster–helmed hits re-energized the band's career. Parazaider cites a week-long residency at New York City's Madison Square Garden in 1975 and another at Chicago Stadium, which he says broke Frank Sinatra's record at the venue, as examples of that considerable drawing power.

"One thing we never expected was when Chicago 17 was released [in 1984] and it became probably our biggest-selling album, all of a sudden, we were back playing those same arenas and coliseums," says lead vocalist/keyboard player Lamm. "And that was something we figured we probably wouldn't get a chance to do again.

And I think we had a more mature take on what it means to have that kind of success not once but twice."

Chicago's second wind as a major concert draw was even more impressive when factoring in the 1978 death of original guitarist, Terry Kath, whose unique guitar skills and onstage energy had always been a focal point for the band and the audience.

"Terry was very much the stage conductor," explains Lamm. "And, also, he was very much a physical energizer; he was a very emotional player and physically commanding, so not only would the audience watch him, but we would watch him, too, and kind of feed off that energy. It's obviously changed since his passing, and we've adapted to different techniques for both the stage conducting and to maintain some sort of energy onstage."

MUSIC AND MAPS

Looking back over the endless touring, certain cities, venues and shows stand out for the original members. They cite New York City, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and, of course, Chicago, just to name a few, as being particularly favorites.

As far as venues are concerned, Parazaider mentions the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles, while Loughnane points out the long history between the band and Pine Knob Music Theatre in Clarkston, Mich. (renamed the DTE Energy Music Theatre). The band will visit both places again this year. "When the Nederlanders opened Pine Knob, we helped them put that venue on the map," says Loughnane. "We played there a week at a time. We would play eight shows in a week, with a matinee on Sunday. We are the only band to ever play that venue from the day that it opened straight through to today."

Regarding a favorite show, this year's National Memorial Day Concert, held May 26 on the west lawn of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., and broadcast live on PBS, was a recent high point. Another career highlight was a performance in front of half a million people in Philadelphia during a celebration marking the 200th birthday of the Constitution.

SMOKIN' SHOW

Parazaider recalls a particularly memorable show in 1972 at the Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, when the band and the sold-out audience waited until midnight for the arrival of the group's equipment, which had been delayed due to a snowstorm. "Nobody left, and we played till about 2:30 in the morning. At one point, I don't know who was yelling more, the crowd or the people onstage, because of the give-and-take and the feedback of how much they were enjoying it."

In addition to the founding four, the band's current lineup is fleshed out by vocalist/bassist Jason Scheff (original member Peter Cetera's replacement), vocalist/guitarist/keyboard player Bill Champlin (who joined the group after Kath's death), drummer Tris Imboden (replacing Daniel Seraphine) and guitarist Keith Holland. This mix of the old and new will be on the road until Oct. 1, and, in Lamm's estimation, will probably play to at least a million people again this year.

"The longevity of this band is amazing," states Bruce Kapp, senior VP of touring for concert-promotion giant Clear Channel Entertainment. "It only gives credence to their talent and persistent hard work."

"Whatever criteria you want to use, it's pretty hard to top 36 straight summers of touring," says Peter Schiavelli, who has been co-managing Chicago (along with Howard Kaufman) for the last 17 years. "We haven't missed one. And what's funny is, we've outsold a lot of the venues."

The touring landscape isn't the only thing that has changed over the years. "Starting in the mid-'80s, we began using tour buses," says Lamm. "We had a non-smoking bus and a smoking bus—although now almost everybody's a non-smoker."

"We've stayed together long enough for everybody to quit smoking," laughs Loughnane.

---

Roadwork Has Its Rewards

A heavy tour schedule will keep the band onstage—and concert customers satisfied—well into the fall. It's the way Chicago's always done it.

BY MICHAEL AMICONE

At Rhino Records in L.A. this year
Thirty-Five Years...
Thousands of Shows...
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Congratulations on a Remarkable Career!
reminds me of us in the early days. [Matthews] and his group are good enough to be spontaneous within a structure, to improvise without becoming indulgent. That's a rare quality.

RL: Popular music isn't about longevity, nor should it be. It's about the moment. People complain about buying an album with only two good songs on it, but it's quite possible that most bands don't have more than a couple of good songs in them. It's what's appropriate for the moment that counts. Most music exists for a particular time and place, and that's all. There's nothing wrong with that.

WP: There is a lot of good music being made today. Moby, Tool—they're creating something people want to hear. The difference between today and when we got started in the '60s is that there was much more variety then, and so much of that music endured. I think the problem that the record industry is experiencing are just a reflection of our throw-away society. We had an opportunity to build something from the ground up, playing in clubs and bars and moving out from there, a step at a time. Today, you've got one shot, and then it's over.

RL: My daughter Kate is 16, and music is a very important part of her life. She listens to today's stuff, but she also responds to everyone from Hendrix to the Beatles and beyond. Audiences these days have so much to choose from. They're operating from a broader spectrum and are more open. In the end, that makes for better music.

JP: Music will continue to evolve, whether you want it to or not, and Chicago has held up through all the growing pains because we recognize our strengths. The reality is, we're capable of being a lot more adventurous and experimental than what you may hear on records or in concert. But we're in the business of entertaining people. They expect us to do what we do best. Sure, there was a time when we could jam with the best of them, and it was an incredible era. But, as for now, we stay right in the pocket. It's not about just satisfying ourselves, which is why we've been able to take our music into the millennium.

LL: The '60s were a genuine musical renaissance. You could do anything, pull out all the stops. And we did. I like to think that spirit is still alive in what we do. We've got things to say, things we still haven't tried. That's great about being around for as long as we have being able to take the long view, to be open to opportunities as they present themselves. Chicago still has a long way to go as a band.

RL: At the same time, we recognize our obligation to our audience. We couldn't be here without them, and that means we're going to let them tell us what they like and where they want us to go.

WP: We have a history, and the last thing we want to do is destroy or disrespect that link to our fans. Artists put so much emphasis on creativity. Creativity isn't much good if people can't understand what you're trying to say.

Rhino Records recently acquired your entire catalog. What are your feelings about this new partnership?

LL: We're tremendously excited. Rhino is second to none in marketing classic material like ours, and they know how to treat it with respect. Their first move is going to be digitally remastering our catalog. The original process from vinyl to CD was not everything it could have been, so they're going back to the actual tapes to get the best quality. There is also going to be a 2-CD, two-CD set coming out this month which I helped oversee for the band. I think that's going to be a great introduction for new fans, as well as something special for our longtime supporters.

WP: One of the great things about reviewing all this material is remembering the people who helped us out along the way. This is music that covers five decades, and there are just so many people to thank for making it happen—radio guys like Tom Cuddy, Mark & Brian, Dean Richards and Rob Miller; Clear Channel and promoters from Ron Delsner to Concerts West to Bill Graham; our managers, Peter Schivarelli and Howard Kaufman...like they say, the list goes on.

What are some of the high points of your 35 years together?

LL: I'll have to say just doing this for a living, having the opportunity, every day, to get a little better at what I love to do. We're all tremendously lucky guys. Not only have we had a wonderful career, but we've got families who've loved and supported us every step of the way.

WP: My dad was a musician his whole life, a trumpet player, and I remember once, when he was about 90, he picked up his horn and said to me, "One day I'm going to learn to play this." He hit his last note at 102. That's the way I want to live my life.

JP: When it gets right down to it, music is a joy, a joy we share. You can just never get enough of those smiles when you go into "Beginnings" or "Saturday in the Park." Whatever you've had to go through to get up on that stage, those two hours are pure magic. That's what being in this band is all about.
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PRODUCTION RESOURCE GROUP
On The Charts

Chicago's top album, Chicago V, spent nine weeks at the top of the Billboard 200 and was the first of the band's five consecutive chart-toppers. All told, the group has spent 22 weeks at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Over on The Billboard Hot 100, 1982's "Hard to Say I'm Sorry" is its top single. The track spent two weeks at No. 1 and six months on the chart. Both "Look Away" and "If You Leave Me Now" also spent two weeks at No. 1. All told, Chicago has racked up 20 top-10 singles on the Hot 100.

Titles on these charts are ordered by peak position on their respective charts. If more than one title peaked at the same position, ties were broken by the number of weeks spent at the peak. If ties still remained, they were broken by the number of weeks on the chart, and then in the top 10 or top 40, depending on where the title peaked.

—Keith Caulfield

THE BILLBOARD 200
Title, Peak, Debut, Label
Chicago V, 1, July 29, 1972, Columbia
Chicago VI, 1, July 14, 1973, Columbia
Chicago IX—Chicago's Greatest Hits, 1, Nov. 29, 1973, Columbia
Chicago VIII, 1, April 12, 1975, Columbia
Chicago VII, 1, March 30, 1974, Columbia
Chicago III, 2, Jan. 30, 1971, Columbia
Chicago at Carnegie Hall, 3, Nov. 13, 1971, Columbia
Chicago X, 3, July 4, 1976, Columbia
Chicago 17, 4, June 2, 1984, Full Moon/Warner Bros.
Chicago XI, 6, Oct. 1, 1977, Columbia
Chicago 16, 9, June 26, 1982, Full Moon
Hot Streets, 12, Oct. 21, 1978, Columbia
Chicago Transit Authority, 17, May 17, 1969, Columbia
Chicago 13, 21, Sept. 1, 1979, Columbia
Chicago 19, 37, July 9, 1988, Full Moon/Reprise
Chicago 24—The Christmas Album, 47, Nov. 28, 1998, Chicago

THE BILLBOARD HOT 100
Title, Peak, Debut, Label
"Hard to Say I'm Sorry," 1, June 5, 1982, Full Moon
"Look Away," 1, Sept. 24, 1988, Full Moon/Reprise
"If You Leave Me Now," 1, Aug. 14, 1976, Columbia
"I Don't Wanna Live Without Your Love," 3, June 4, 1988, Full Moon/Reprise
"Saturday in the Park," 3, Aug. 5, 1972, Columbia
"Just You 'N' Me," 4, Sept. 29, 1973, Columbia
"Baby, What a Big Surprise," 4, Sept. 29, 1977, Columbia
"25 or 6 to 4," 4, July 25, 1970, Columbia
"Old Days," 5, April 26, 1973, Columbia
"Does Anybody Really Know What Time It Is?" 7, Nov. 7, 1970, Columbia
"Beginnings/Colour My World," 7, June 26, 1971, Columbia
"I've Been Searchin' So Long," 9, March 16, 1974, Columbia
"Make Me Smile," 9, April 4, 1970, Columbia

Continued on page 56
Chicago Has Known “What Time It Is”
In Rock & Roll For 35 Years.

We've loved your performances.
We're looking forward to your return.

July 16, 1998
August 5, 1999
August 3, 2000
February 22, 2001
August 8, 2002
Happy 35th Anniversary!

The Parseghian family with members of CHICAGO and Peter Schivarelli.

Our sincere thanks to all the members of the band and to Peter Schivarelli, Manager, for the love you have shown us... and the more than $500,000 you have donated to our foundation.

Your generosity has helped us fund much-needed research in our quest to find a treatment and cure for Niemann-Pick Type C disease. You give us hope.

You have touched millions around the world with your wonderful music... and your kind hearts.

Thank you!

3530 E. Campo Abierto, Ste. 105
Tucson, AZ 85718

ON THE CHARTS
Continued from page 54

"You're Not Alone," 10, Jan. 21, 1989, Full Moon/Reprise
"Feelin' Stronger Every Day," 10, June 23, 1973, Columbia
"Wishing You Were Here," 11, Oct. 19, 1974, Columbia
"Harry Truman," 13, Feb. 22, 1975, Columbia
"No Tell Lover," 14, Dec. 23, 1974, Columbia
"If She Would Have Been Faithful...", 17, March 21, 1987, Full Moon/Warner Bros.
"Free," 29, Feb. 9, 1971, Columbia
"Dialogue (Parts I & II)," 24, Oct. 28, 1972, Columbia
"Questions 67 and 68," 24, Oct. 9, 1971, Columbia
"Another Rainy Day in New York City," 32, June 26, 1976, Columbia
"Chasin' the Wind," 39, Jan. 26, 1969, Reprise
"Little One," 44, Feb. 27, 1978, Columbia
"25 or 6 to 4," (new version) 48, Sept. 6, 1986, Full Moon/Warner Bros.
"I'm a Man," 49, Oct. 9, 1971, Columbia
"You Are on My Mind," 49, April 9, 1977, Columbia
"We Can Last Forever," 55, May 13, 1980, Full Moon/Reprise
"Thunder and Lightning," 36, Aug. 23, 1980, Columbia

FEELING STRONGER
Continued from page 50

Chicago did not miss a beat. With Jason Scheff, son of Elvis Presley bassist Jerry Scheff, replacing Cerera, the band enjoyed a late-'80s chart run that included another No. 1 hit for the band, the Diane Warren-penned "Look Away," from the album 19 (1988).

ATTITUDE AND ROADWORK
Over the years, Chicago has managed to fill numerous vacancies in its lineup. Original drummer Daniel Seraphine has been replaced by Tris Imboden, and the band's revolving door of guitarists has culminated with current fretman Keith Howland. "The thing we did was find people along the way—after weeding some out that didn't work—that played with their own personality and also traveled well on the road," explains Parazailer. "You have to be able to bring a positive attitude to the road or this wouldn't have worked for all these years."

During the '90s, the band continued to stretch out musically, including an album of big-band standards, Night & Day (1993), and a holiday offering, Chicago 25 (1998), released on the band's own Chicago Records. The group also scored a No. 1 AC hit with 1997's "Here in My Heart."

SUMMER AND SONIC SCRUBBING
Chicago has also continued to take an active role in a number of worthy causes, supporting musical education via VH1's Save the Music Foundation and donating a portion of concert proceeds to the Parseghian Medical Research Foundation.

The band is currently in the midst of a 35th-anniversary celebration, which includes a summer-long concert trek and the July kickoff of Rhino Entertainment's reissue campaign of the group's catalog, sonically scrubbed for the first time from the original master tapes (see separate story).

"We've put 100% into everything that we've ever done," says Loughran, reflecting on the band's career. "There have been ups and downs, sales-wise and popularity-wise, but, as you can see, we have transcended all of that. How we've done it, I don't really have a clue. But we're still here talking to you today."
After 35 years we *still* haven't figured out what "25 or 6 to 4" means...

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Cheng Returns With New Partner
Universal Vet Takes Up Reins At EMI In Southeast Asia

This story was prepared by Steve McClure in Tokyo and Winnie Chung in Hong Kong

Back in May, when he announced his resignation as chairman of Universal Music Asia Pacific, Norman Cheng said he planned to take a break and spend more time on leisure pursuits, such as his much-loved racnhorses (Billboard, June 1).

But on July 5, only five days after his official departure date from Universal, it was confirmed that Cheng would soon be back in the saddle at another label—heading longtime rival EMI's Asian operation.

Effective Aug. 1, Cheng becomes chairman/CEO of EMI Recorded Music Southeast Asia. He succeeds Matthew Allison, president/CEO of EMI Recorded Music Asia Pacific, who has left by "mutual agreement."

Asked for the reason behind his apparent change of heart, Cheng says: "Well, life is full of surprises. Everything has gone so quickly, and I did not want to pass on such an exciting challenge—not just a challenge but something that will truly motivate me, as motivation is something that has been missing in my career for the last two or three years."

According to EMI Recorded Music chairman/CEO Alain Levy, the major's appointment of Cheng reflects its ambition to "focus on improving our position in Southeast Asia, where piracy has been damaging but where there are good prospects for a profitable business. In addition, we believe that Cheng has the potential to be a major market in the world music industry in the future and that it offers opportunities for sales growth for EMI."

"I am delighted that Norman has agreed to be EMI's partner in the furtherance of our plans to create a viable business in the People's Republic of China," Levy adds. "He is the very best man to help us deliver our goals." Asked to explain his use of the word "partner," Levy tells Billboard simply that "Norman will develop his strategy once he has installed in his new job on Aug. 1."

The association between Cheng and Levy dates back to when both were members of the PolyGram worldwide management team in the early '90s. Insiders suggest this is a key reason why Cheng decided to join EMI. Cheng claims he is confident that he can lead dark horse EMI into the winner's circle.

Although he insists it is too early to outline his specific ideas for Southeast Asia, Cheng says that "to improve EMI's market share and profitability" is the immediate priority. "In the longer term, of course I would like to see EMI return to being the market leader in Southeast Asia, as it once was."

The fact that he previously worked with both Levy and Munns during the PolyGram era was a deciding factor in his move to EMI, Cheng says. "I'll be working with true professionals that you can trust and respect," he tells Billboard. "I have always realized a challenge and the challenge of making EMI the force it was once more is one that truly motivates me, and 'motivation' is a key word for me in this."

"Also, it does not take an Einstein to see the potential of China. We all know this, but the key is how to tap this potential. I believe I can put together the right team to achieve my personal objective of helping make China not just potentially the biggest music market in the world, but actually the biggest music market in the world."

Through my years of experience in this very complex market, I know that trust and autonomy are crucial in enabling EMI to take artists from China into a truly global spotlight.

One industry source notes that regardless of which label Cheng would join the company, he adds. "He is the very best man to help us deliver our goals." Asked to explain his use of the word "partner," Levy tells Billboard simply that "Norman will develop his strategy once he has installed in his new job on Aug. 1."

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by the company. He adds that Allison "has built a solid foundation for our business in Southeast Asia, with an excellent roster of artists and executives. We all wish him the very best of luck in his future career."

Cheng's move to EMI has not been a complete surprise to industry observers here. Rumors that Allison was on his way out and that Cheng was to be his successor had been making the rounds for months. What is surprising, however, is that Cheng's new role encompasses Southeast Asia only. Many expect that Cheng's new position at EMI—which has much less of a Chinese repertoire presence than Universal—will be a stepping stone to a bigger role in the future.

"I'd like to congratulate Norman," says Cheng's successor as Universal Music Southeast Asia president, Harry Hui. "I'm glad he's not going too far away. It will be good to see how Norman will lead the majors in capturing the new opportunities that are opening up in China."

Warner Music Asia president Lachie Rutherford adds: "It's sad that Matthew is leaving. [But] these are tough times for the industry, and if you are going to have anyone take over, then Norman is a very positive development. He's very experienced and very knowledgeable. As before, we all look forward to working with him."

Universal Acts Dominate June IFPI Awards

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—June's International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) Platinum Awards contained good news for L5 and Noir Désir from France, for Andre Rieu from the Netherlands, and for Universal Music from everywhere.

The major-scooped five of the month's six certifications from IFPI, for albums reaching 1 million or more European shipments. All five records going platinum for the first time in June were by Universal artists—with France taking double honors—but it was Warner Music that supplied the only multi-platinum entry of the month: Enya's A Day Without Rain.

French modern rock band Noir Désir is the latest veteran act to be rewarded for market longevity in platinum. A month after German veteran Die Toten Hosen—five albums reaching 1 million or more European shipments. All five records going platinum for the first time in June were by Universal artists—with France taking double honors—but it was Warner Music that supplied the only multi-platinum entry of the month: Enya's A Day Without Rain.

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<td>4. <strong>Rakuen Babe</strong></td>
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<td>15. <strong>Heathen Chemistry</strong></td>
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**HITS OF THE WORLD**

- **Canada**
- **Spain**
- **Australia**
- **Italy**

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**Hits of the World**

- **New Entry**
- **Re-Entry**
**ORCHESTRAL MANEUVERS: Orchestral
Baobab, the Senegalese group that
dominated West African music in the
1970s, played its first concert on home
soil in 20 years June 22. Now, the
reunion group is set to release its first
album since its split in 1982. It is also
undertaking an American and Euro-
pean tour, including a headlining slot
July 28 at the WOMAD festival in
England in the U.K. The group has
restored its name with the giant and
gnarled species of tree that dominates
the Senegalese landscape. The analogy
is irresistible. "You can't destroy a
baobab tree, you walk on it, and it comes
again," band member Barthelemy
Attisso says. "This group was cut
down, and we've grown again from
the same roots." The man behind
Baobab's comeback is Nick Gold,
owner of World Circuit Records,
which five years ago similarly resur-
crected the careers of the Cuban veter-
ans of Buena Vista Social Club.
With Yvonne N'Dour, Gold co-produced
the band's album Specialist in All
Styles, due for release in September.
World Circuit has already released
Baobab's now-legendary 1982 album,
Pirates' Choice. **NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

**SOUNDING FINE:** The recently released
soundtrack for upcoming English/
Hindi film Everybody Says I'm Fine
(Universal) is the first time that a Car-
los Santana song has been featured on
an Indian film soundtrack. Santana
plays the title track, which includes
English vocals by newcomer Sanjay
"Sonny" Swami. The soundtrack is
composed by acclaimed tabla percus-
sionist Zakir Hussain. Writer/director
Rahul Bose explains, "This is a genu-
ine meeting of East and West, which is
why the soundtrack ranges from
classical Indian artists like Ustad Sul-
tan Khan to a band like Tower of
Power." Due for release in late July,
the film is set in Mumbai and revolves
around rich socialites and celebrities
who frequent a popular hair salon,
where the owner has the power to read
his customers' minds. Bose explains,
"It's a classic movie with a modern
feeling, but when the hairdresser sees
what goes on in their minds, we hear
how untune they really are." The
soundtrack also features Algerian
singer Elvira in a duet with Indian
singer Talat Aziz. **NAV BHUSHAN**

**AFRICAN IDOLS:** The Pop idol for-
uma, which has worked so many ter-
riniers into the world, is also prov-
ing a hit in South Africa. The winner
of the first TV contest, Heinz Winckler,
has racked up sales with the release of
his debut solo single, "Once in a Life-
time." Shipment of the single, com-
pased by Norwegian songwriter David
Eriksen (S Club 7, Hearsay), are fast
approaching 30,000 units, according to
Wigram. Africa. Idol was screened by
commercial broadcaster MTN and
close to 5 million calls were received by
the voting hotline during the series.
BMI Africa will shortly release Idols:
The Album, which will feature every
winner who made it to the final round.
Debut single sales of the UK's Pop
Idols winner, Will Young, and the
runner-up, Gareth Gates, have also
set records in South Africa: Both
artists' solo singles shifted more than
100,000 units. **DIANE COETZER**

**GATHERING CLOUDS:** "Our musical
space isn't separated from everyday
life," argues Peter Muggedal, who
handles synths, guitar, percussion,
voices, and bass for the Elec-
tones, a Norwegian beat duo signed to

**U.K.-based label Incertia. "All of our
ideas, thoughts, feelings, rhythms,
and melodies melt together into one
source of inspiration," he says. The first
hint of their own musical space is
"Storms," a 12-inch single, which
already is getting considerable
U.K. airplay. The Electones are
assisted by Hal Wennisberg (who
doubles as a member of Xploding Plas-
tics, signed to Beborrowed in Norway),
who plays piano, drums, synthesizers,
and bass. Other associates include
vocalist Rita Knudsen. Muggedal says
a second single will be issued in late
summer and that a debut album will
follow in the winter. **KAI R. LOFTUS**

**LONG PLAYER:** New South Wales DJ
Matthew Fulton of radio station
Macarthur Community Radio has
earned a place in The Guinness Book
of World Records—for the longest DJ
radio marathon. Fulton, a volunteer
at the station, kicked off with the
AC/DC song "Thunderstruck" and
played it again to signal the end of his
shift four days, seven hours, 14
minutes, and 36 seconds later. The
old record of four days, 12 hours, three
minutes, and 22 seconds was set in
Queensland three years ago. Fulton—
who said he did not use caffeine to stay
awake—admits he started to halluci-
nate toward the end. He now has to
find gainful employment. Fulton
resigned from his job at an electron-
ics store when his boss refused to give
him the 20-year-old time off for his 

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EMINEM HAS NO. 1 ALBUM YEAR-TO-DATE

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—At the mid-year point for 2002, Universal Music Video Distribution (UMVD) was in the process of widening its lead on first place for both total and current album market shares in the U.S., while also laying claim to the No. 1 ranking for R&B albums and singles. But BMG Distribution edged out UMVD as the top distributor of country albums.

UMVD led the total album market-share category with a 28.3% score, which is nearly 12 percentage points better than the independent sector’s collective No. 2 score of 16.5%. It is also an improvement on the 26.5% score that UMVD tallied last year at the halfway point or in the corresponding time period.

The market-share rankings were determined by White Plains, N.Y.-based Nielsen SoundScan, which collects point-of-sale information for all formats and configurations from retailers, rack accounts, and other merchants, including mail-order companies and online stores. The data, which accounts for the sale of 85% of U.S. music sales, Nielsen SoundScan estimates totals for the entire U.S. market.

Market-share tallies for albums and singles include all formats and genres available in the respective configuration. The shares for R&B albums consist of data Nielsen SoundScan collects from the specialized panel used to compile the Billboard album charts for that genre.

In calculating current market share, Nielsen SoundScan counts only album sales occurring within the first 18 months of a title’s release (12 months and 6 months) as well as the first four weeks of each of the first two years after release. These titles are also ranked in the top 100, in which case sales continue to count as current until a title falls below No. 100.

PICKING UP THE PACE

In placing first, UMVD has picked up momentum from the 26.7% it had in the first three months of this year, which means that the company was hot during the second quarter of this year. For the first half, UMVD displayed strength in the alternative rock, classical, hard rock, jazz, and rap genres, as it reaped the No. 1 ranking for those categories, as well as landing the distinction of top distributor of soundtracks, titles on The Billboard 200, catalog, and deep catalog. It was the No. 2 distributor for country albums and in placing albums on the Billboard Heatseekers chart.

In placing the No. 2 ranking in total album market share, independent distributors and labels collectively beat out the No. 3-ranking WEA by a tick. Last year at the midpoint, the independent sector also held on to the No. 2 ranking with a 17.3% market share, but at that time it had a wider margin of comfort, being a full percentage point ahead of the then-No. 3 Sony. So far this year, independent labels have had strong showings in gospel, music video, and placing albums on the Heatseekers chart. Sony is the No. 1 distributor in each of those categories, as well as classic, Latin, new age, and catalog, where they ranked second for each category.

In first-quarter sales, WEA placed second in deep catalog, alternative rock, and hard rock and was the top distributor of new-age albums. Sony Music Distribution fell back in the first half of the year with a 15.5% market share, ranking fourth, down from the 16.3% it had last year in the same period when it was ranked third. But that 15.5% market-share total is holding steady from the total it had for the first quarter of this year. The No. 4 distributor, Sony showed clout in Latin—where it was the No. 1-ranked distributor—and in jazz, soundtracks, R&B, and music videos, where it was the No. 2 distributor in each of those categories.

STANDING FIRM AT FIVE

BMG has placed fourth both in 2002 and in 2001 at the halfway point, but this year it had a considerably stronger market share of 14.6%, compared with 13.1% last year. But BMG’s total for the first six months of this year is down from the 15.7% it had in the first quarter when it was the No. 4-ranked distributor, which means that the company cooled down somewhat in the second quarter of this year. For the six-month period, BMG gained market-share strength through its No. 2 ranking in distributing titles on The Billboard 200, as well as coming in second in distributing gospel and rap music.

Meanwhile, EMI Music Distribution (EMD) continues to backslide in market share, finishing the first six months of this year with 8.8%—down from the 9.2% it had for the first quarter of this year and down from the 10.6% it had for all of last year, which was the same total it had at the halfway point of 2001.

Looking at total album market share by corporation, UMVD was ranked No. 1, but the Warner Music Group places second with 17.6% when Alternative Distribution Alliance’s (ADA) market-share total is added to WEA’s total. Sony Music Entertainment ranks No. 3 with 16.5% when RED and Sony Music Special Products’ market-share total are added to Sony Music Distribution’s total. BMG ranks fourth, while the independent sector falls to fifth (13.4%) when ADA, Caroline, and RED’s shares are subtracted from the indie sector. EMD still ranks last, but it gains market share through the addition of Caroline’s total to finish the first six months with 9.7%.

In current market share, UMVD had a hot second quarter, which allowed the company to improve on its first-quarter industry-leading total of 26.7% to have a cumulative market-share total for the first six months of 30.2%—up considerably from the 27.8% the company had last year at this point.

UMVD’s best-selling titles include the No. 1 album of the year so far, Eminem’s The Eminem Show: the Noel! compilation; the O Brother, Where Art Thou? soundtrack; Ludacris’ eponymous album; Ludacris’ Word of Mouf; Nickelback’s Silver Side Up; Puddle of Mudd’s Come Clean; J-Suic’s Pain Is Love; Enrique Inglesias’ Escape; and No Doubt’s Rock Steady.

BMG ranked second in current album market share with 17.2%, which is greater than the 16.6% the company had last year at this point. Its best-selling titles this year include Alan Jackson’s Drive, Pink’s M!ssundaced, Creed’s Weathered, Usher’s 8701, and Alicia Keys’ Songs in A Minor.

Collectively, independent distributors ranked third in current market share with 15.5%, which is the same total they had as a group last year at the six-month mark. But it is down from the 16% they garnered during the first quarter.

Sony also back-pedaled in the second quarter, finishing the first half of the year at 15.5%—down from the 15.6% it had at the end of the first quarter and below the 17.2% the company generated last year during the first six months. The company’s best-selling titles this year include Celine Dion’s A New Day Has Come, Shakira’s Laundry Service, Jennifer Lopez’s I Luv Ya Baby, and Nas Stillmatic.

Especially, WEA slipped too in the second quarter, finishing the half-year mark with 14.6%, down from the 15.5% it had in the first quarter. But its six-month total is up from the 14.4% it had at the mid-year point. WEA’s best seller is Linkin Park’s Hybrid Theory.

EMD ranked last, seven percentage points behind the No. 5 WEA, with a 7.6% share. That total is down from the 9.2% the company had at the end of the first quarter and down from the 10.5% it had in the first six months of 2001. Its best-selling title so far this year is Now!

In current market share for the first six months of 2002 by corporation, Universal still commands the lead and BMG holds down the No. 2 spot. But Sony places third with 15.3%, just beating out Warner with a 15.8% share. The indie sector collectively ranks fifth with 12.5% and EMI Recorded Music is sixth with 8.6%.
UMVD No. 1 R&B; BMG Tops Country

Universal Music & Video Distribution (UMVD) was far by the No. 1 distributor of R&B, with a 37.5% total—more than double second-ranked Sony Music Distribution's 18.3%. BMG came in third in R&B albums with 16.4%, a three-percentage-point increase over the 13.4% it had last year in the same time period. WEA finished fourth with 11.9%—up from the 9.3% for all R&B rankings, see chart below.

By coming in first in country album distribution, BMG improved considerably on the 17.2% it garnered last year in the first six months. After No. 2 Universal, WEA ranked third with 17.6%, down almost 10 percentage points from the industry-leading total of 27.4% it had in 2001 at mid-year. Sony ranked fourth with 11.4%—down four percentage points from the 15.4% it had last year in the corresponding time period—while the independent sector collectively placed fifth with 7.8% and EMD sixth with 7.5%.

Looking at singles, UMVD ranked first with 29.4%, but the big move was made by the independent sector. Clearly taking advantage of the majors’ abandonment of the singles configuration, the indie sector saw its market share jump to 22.9% in the six-month period ended June 30, compared with the 13.9% it had in the same time period last year.

BMG, the traditional industry leader in singles sales, ranked third with a 16.2% tally, down from the 22.9% it had last year at the six-month mark. Similarly, WEA was down nearly 10 percentage points to 12.9% from the 22% it had last year. Rounding out singles distribution, Sony placed fifth with 12.7% and EMD sixth with 5.9%.

ED CHRISTIAN

Declarations Of Independents™

RE-FRIED: We needed some cheering last week, so we called up our household icon Jim Dickinson to congratulate him on his latest production (see Flag Waving, below) and chew the fat a bit.

We were delighted to learn that not only will Dickinson’s first solo album in 30 years see release this fall on Artemis Records, but his 1972 classic Dixie Fried will also be reissued on Birdman’s Sepia Tone imprint.

Dickinson is perhaps better-known these days as a producer (Big Star, etc.), sideman (Bob Dylan’s Time Out of Mind, among others), and genial raconteur of Southern music. But he’s a fearsome talent in his own right, as the new Free Beer Tomorrow amply demonstrates.

The album has been in the works for years; in fact, it had been on and off Koch Records’ schedule for some time. Yet it sounds seamless and loose-limbed. Dickinson applies his rough bowl and whorehouse piano to a solid brace of soulful tunes; he essays songs associated with Furry Lewis, Merle Haggar, Irma Thomas, among others. The most remarkable track is “Billy & Oscar,” a nine-minute magnum opus that intertwines the lives and tales of Billy the Kid and Oscar Wilde.

Free Beer Tomorrow stands head and shoulders artistically with Dixie Fried, which has been unavailable, except as a pricey Japanese import, since its ’72 release. That smokin’ slab of barbecued Southern dementia compacts in its 38-minute running time enough bloodshed, inertiation, and lust to fill half a dozen other long-players. Dickinson and his backup band of Memphis hot shots (which includes Tommy McClure, Mike Utley, Tarp Tarrant, Sid Selvidge, and the late Lee Baker and Charlie Freeman) burn through an incredible blaze of tunes by the Night Caps, Carl Perkins, Paul Sief, and Dylan (the horrific anti-war song “John Brown”).

Whether you prefer your Dickinson vintage or modern, you won’t want to ignore either of these amazing records.

FLAG WAVING: “Bob Frank is so invisible, when he looks in the mirror, he thinks he woke up the wrong guy.” the drooly self-deprecating singer/songwriter says on his Web site (bobfranksongs.com).

Hopefully, this cult musician won’t remain invisible for long. He has an absolutely wonderful new album, Keep On Burning, out on his own label, Bostring Records. If you’re extremely curious, you may know Frank from his lone previous, an eponymous 1972 album for Vanguard. “Every song on there is about getting drunk and getting stoned and winos and dope fiends,” Frank says, adding that the record has acquired a fanatical following. “I get the weirdest fucking e-mails,” he says, chuckling.

Frank admits he dropped the ball with his first album, “I thought, ’I’ve got it made now,’ he recalls. “I had no conception of what it takes to succeed at this. . . . They said, ‘Go on tour.’ I said, ‘No, I gotta put my garden back’.”

After a disastrous showcase at Max’s Kansas City in New York, Vanguard dropped Frank. He moved to Northern California, where he still lives in the East Bay, building irrigation systems. But he still wrote productively, and, after reconnecting with fellow Memphis native Jim Dickinson (who recorded Frank’s murderously “Wild Bill Jones” on Dixie Fried), he returned to the studio.

Produced by Dickinson, Keep On Burning was cut with a crack crew that included Dickinson’s sons Luther and Cody of the North Mississippi AllStars, singers Sid Selvidge and Jimmy Davis, former Mud Boy & the Neutrons washboardist Jimmy Crowther, string ace Tommy Burroughs, and Jimbo Mathus of the Squirrel Nut Zeppers.

Richly sung by Frank, the album includes a diverse, superb set of songs that encompass cowboy numbers (“Out on the Prairie”), Civil War balladry (“With Sabers In Our Hands”), mariachi music (“Back To Ensenada”) Jimmie Rodgers styled country (“Since The Midwest Came To Town”), truck-drive tunes (“Old Truckers”), and irreverent folk (“Judas Iscariot,” which was expurgated in its ’72 version).

The album, which Frank sells on the Web, deserves—nay, demands—wider distribution. Interested parties may contact Frank at 510-223-3041 or 510-731-4213.

FRANK
Liquor Offers A New Taste In Marketing

BY MATTHEW S. ROBINSON

Add "branded alcohol drinks" to the list of alternative marketing efforts that artists are increasingly turning to in the face of little to no radio or video airplay.

Artists including singer/songwriter Willie Nelson and former Van Halen frontman Sammy Hagar have turned toward the act of developing their own spirits in recent years. And while it is questionable whether such drinks are helping to sell records, they are nonetheless proving to be attractive revenue streams in their right.

Alive Enterprises CEO Shep Gordon is among the marketers pushing the concept. "I come from the music business," explains Gordon, who has managed the likes of Teddy Pendergrass and the Pointer Sisters. "I am also a real foodie, so putting the two together was a natural."

Gordon suggests that the weaknesses in the music industry are the strengths of the spirits industry. "In music, it's hard for the artist to get paid," he observes. "Spirits are regulated by law. There are no returns and no untrackables, so artists can really earn some money above and beyond their advances... The beautiful thing about spirits as opposed to records is that they have a much longer shelf life."

The latest entry in the business is Nelson's, whose Old Whiskey River bourbon—distributed through Alive Spirits—bowed last October. The drink is a small-batch, 6-year-old, 86 proof bourbon that comes in custom-designed bottles; each is tagged with a machine-autographed guitar pick.

Sales for the drink, which was co-created by Nelson and won a Silver Award at the 2001 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, are reported to be solid. What's more, the product launched around the release of Nelson's latest album, The Great Divide on Lost Highway (Billboard, Dec. 22, 2001), and the two were marketed together extensively.

In an effort to brand the product and promote Nelson, Alive coordinated with Lost Highway to release copies of the album to bars across the country five months early. "We sent 25,000 copies to bartenders and started to build a groundswell," Gordon explains. "We also sent the bourbon to LAs and asked them to go to bars where they would hear the music."

Many bartenders were also sent bar-promotion boxes, which included fake bracelets for them to wear, along with napkins and posters that promoted both the liquor and the new album. "The boxes cost $210 each," Gordon says, "but we felt it was worth it. It made for a more interactive experience and got people talking."

The Whiskey River promotional campaign, which includes everything from CD cases to condoms, is emphasizing cities where Nelson's tour will stop. "We try to get ahead of the tour and get people excited," Gordon says. "We are not only a source of revenue for him but also a cheerleader."

This Christmas, bottles of Whiskey River will be packaged with sampler CDs of Nelson's Island Records catalog. "Hopefully, that will also help his sales and give us another place to promote the album and the spirit," Gordon says. (In keeping with his Farm Aid efforts to support local farmers, Nelson makes Whiskey River from grains grown on farms located within 100 miles of the Barbados, Ky., distillery.)


Drowning on music-inspired promotions, the drink was marketed via tasting parties, radio contests, and bar promotions. By 2000, Cabo was selling more than 60,000 cases per year, compared with market leader Patrón, which sells 150,000 cases annually.
Movies Zoom In On Multiple Promotional Opportunities

Universal Studios Consumer Products Group senior VP of merchandising and marketing Tim Rothwell reports that the October DVD releases of both E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial and The Scorpion King will have companion videogame releases. Rothwell notes that the success of Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas, with a new DVD deluxe edition set for a Nov. 5 release, additionally gave the company momentum in setting up promotions for the holiday 2003 release of Dr. Seuss’ The Cat in the Hat (a joint venture with DreamWorks). He says that there are already 65 licensing proposals for the film in the works.

For Lilo & Stitch—which opened June 21 with a companion trio of Disney Interactive games—a direct-to-video sequel for next August is part of an 18-month, $100 million marketing program, according to Disney Consumer Products global toys VP Vine Klauses and global brand marketing director John Gong. He adds, “Treasure Planet” opens in November in both theatrical and IMAX large-screen versions, with a Hollywood Records soundtrack featuring original songs by the Goo Goo Dolls’ Johnny Rzeznik.

(Next Disney/Pixar production, Finding Nemo, opens next summer and will be accompanied by THQ game properties and a Hasbro toy deal.)

Viacom licensing and marketing VP Pam Newton perhaps sees the movie-conscious of all licensing executives, noting that the Ben Affleck vehicle The Sum of All Fears, which opened big in June, had a companion U.S. Soft game using movie graphics and a “Now a Major Motion Picture From Paramount” sticker on the package. Paramount DVD boxed sets for older Star Trek series will also get a boost from the theatrical opening of Star Trek Nemesis Dec. 13. Newton notes that “Activation’s Star Trek Bridge Commander PC game will link to a Web site, where players will be able to download new game levels.”

Also getting a big push is Paramount’s direct-to-video Charlies’ Angels Web 2.0 next March 4, with new books, a CD, and games in the works. Tomb Raider 2 is expected next year, preceded by the new Eidos Tomb Raider: Angel of Dark- ness games this fall, with a London Symphony Orches- tra soundtrack.

Nickelodeon Consumer Products media products VP Steve Youngblood also distributes through Paramount, The Jimmy Neutron DVD out this July had four complementary THQ platform games—a THQ game this holiday, his said to be Heaven! Hey Arnold! The Movie, which was released June 26, and The Wild Thornberrys Movie this hol- iday, will have games and a five soundtrack featuring an original Paul Simon song.

Fox Consumer Products domestic sales and international VP Joe Hargrove says, “We are still carrying the product and plan on continuing to [do so]. If you look in dollar figures, VHS accounted for 40 percent, $3 billion and DVD for $799 million (last year). VHS rentals were almost 75% of our rental revenue [last year], and DVD was 18%. In the first quarter, DVD was at 30%. It could be 40% by the end of the year. Certainly DVD is growing, though VHS is still performing well for us.”

Press pass:

Jeffreh Wehler, video buyer for the Amarillo, Texas-based Hastings chain, says that the retailer is “making a small cut here and there on our VHS sell-through,” the chain does not plan any stop selling or discontinuing. “For all the people that have VHS players in the living room, many are moving their VCRs into the kids’ room or bedroom.”

Borders Books & Music, based in Ann Arbor, Mich., is the only other major retailer that is considering serious VHS cutbacks. The chain made a decision last year to stop selling theatrical titles on VHS, VP of multimedia Len Cosimano explains, because their customers are “early adopters of new technology. We had sell-off sales, which ended in April. We still carry VHS, but for non-theatrical titles.”

Hargrove notes that these moves may pay off for chains still selling a good selection of VHS, because it will drive store traffic. He says, “We’re going to let the consumers dictate what they want.”

It is that mandate that led Circuit City to make their decision in the first place, company spokesman Bill Cimino claims. “Our customers have shown a clear preference for buying DVDs over VHS. If there is any criticism, we were just looking at our customers. Now we are making the decision to go forward.”

Additional reporting by Ed Christ- man in New York.

Picture This:

Don’t Count VHS Out: Though Rich- mond, Va.-based Circuit City recently announced that it will begin phasing VHS tapes out of its inventory, most retailers say the move is premature because there is still a healthy VHS customer base.

Fellow mass merchant Best Buy, based in Eden Prairie, Minn., does not have any immediate plans to take VHS tapes out of its stores (which include the Musicland, Sam Goody, and Sun- coast chains), says company spokesper- son Lisa Hauke, though they do recog- nize DVD’s tremendous growth.

Dallas-based Blockbuster maintains a similar philosophy.

Spokesperson Randy Hargrove says, “We are still carrying the product and plan on continuing to [do so]. If you look in dollar figures, VHS ac- counted for 40 percent, $3 billion and DVD for $799 million (last year). VHS rentals were almost 75% of our rental revenue [last year], and DVD was 18%. In the first quarter, DVD was at 30%. It could be 40% by the end of the year. Certainly DVD is growing, though VHS is still performing well for us.”

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Additional reporting by Ed Christ- man in New York.

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Dear Steve,

I would like to thank you for your help on this project. Your expertise and guidance have been invaluable.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
## Billboard Top DVD Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Studio/Distributor Label &amp; Number</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BLACK HAWK DOWN</td>
<td>Columbia Home Video / CBS Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORANGE COUNTY</td>
<td>Warner Home Video</td>
<td>Chris Klein, Michelle Monaghan</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE MAJESTIC</td>
<td>Columbia Home Video</td>
<td>Jim Carrey</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCEAN'S ELEVEN</td>
<td>Warner Home Video</td>
<td>George Clooney, Brad Pitt</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIRTY DANCING</td>
<td>Capitol Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Patrick Swayze, Jennifer Grey</td>
<td>$14.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIR BUD: SEVENTH INNING FEVER</td>
<td>Hallmark Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Nancy McKeon, Haley Joel Osment</td>
<td>$19.99</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Warner Home Video</td>
<td>George Clooney, Brad Pitt</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEHIND ENEMY LINES</td>
<td>20th Century Fox Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Owen Wilson, Gene Hackman</td>
<td>$17.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFORGETTABLE</td>
<td>MGM Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Ashley Judd, James Marsden</td>
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## Billboard Top VHS Releases

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<th>Principal Performers</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Miramax Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Russell Crowe, Jennifer Connelly</td>
<td>$19.99</td>
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<td>Warner Home Video</td>
<td>George Clooney, Brad Pitt</td>
<td>$29.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIRTY DANCING</td>
<td>Capitol Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Patrick Swayze, Jennifer Grey</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIR BUD: SEVENTH INNING FEVER</td>
<td>Hallmark Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Nancy McKeon, Haley Joel Osment</td>
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<td>MGM Home Entertainment</td>
<td>Ashley Judd, James Marsden</td>
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### Notes
- DVD sales data compiled by Nielsen VideoScan.
- VHS sales data compiled by Nielsen VideoScan.
- Prices may vary by retailer and region.
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**Programming**

**Rock Radio’s New Artist Boom**

**Breaking Acts Are Proliferating, But Where Are The New Superstars?**

BY BRAM TEITELMAN

Airplay Monitor

NEW YORK — If sounds as though modern rock radio is rapidly evolving, that’s not only because different types of music are breaking through: It’s also because there are so many more new artists on the chart.

By the end of June, 25 acts had made their first appearance on the modern rock chart this year. That’s almost as many as the 31 artists that charted for the first time at modern rock in all of 2001 and more than the 17 that had debuted by last year’s midpoint.

While it’s easier to chart a new act in 2002, it’s not necessarily easier to bring its record all the way home, particularly in an environment where stations are holding on to what works longer. So far, the number of debut acts to reach the top 10 is four — the same as it was one year ago. Some PDs worry that the new artist boom represents a problematic lack of superstars. But, by and large, PDs and the label community are optimistic.

Jacobs Media consultant Dave Beasley says the swell of new acts “shows the churn in the format,” as it cedes some of its second-tier heavy metal to active rock. “We’re experimenting again in a lot of different directions and bringing on a lot of diversity to the format. It remains to be seen whether many of these artists are going to earn the privilege of follow-ups, but they’re certainly being given some strong first singles, and modern rock has been really smart to play them.”

Elektra national director of modern promotion for the East Coast Mike DePippa says, “This year, there have been a ton of exciting new releases that have opened the up the spectrum of the format a bit. Last year was very rock-based, and now the format is playing stuff like Jack Johnson, the Hives, Ben Kweller, and New Found Glory, I like the direction it is headed in.”

Virgin VP of promotion Geordie Gillespie sees the influx of new artists as a sign that the format is healthy. “A lot of formats, like AC or Top 40, wait for the hits. Modern is supposed to take chances on records.” If those records don’t always come home, Gillespie says, “at the end of the day, kids go to modern rock to hear new music, and that’s why they call it ‘new rock.’ If songs don’t go all the way, at least they’re giving them a shot and fulfilling the need of the listener to cut through what’s on. Modern rock has to be involved with new sounds.”

But Reprise director of promotion Kurt Steffek says that while “it’s always a positive sign when you see new artists getting on the radio and the format starting to metabolize, it really depends on whether those artists get second and third singles.”

While more new acts may be charting, it’s still an issue that “once you get to No. 15 and higher, it’s really jammed. It feels like the top 10 doesn’t move.”

One of the ironies of the new artist boom at modern that it’s taking place at a time when, as Steffek notes, “the labels have probably been a little more judicious in the number of acts they’ve been putting out. It’s so expensive to launch a campaign at any format.”

But some on the label side think that working fewer acts means that those that remain on the roster are benefiting. “Speaking for Elektra only, we definitely are believers in the less-is-more philosophy,” DePippa says. “Our release schedule is very focused, and we are able to concentrate more on a few specific projects. It definitely enables us to better use our resources.”

But what labels might see as more focus, one PD sees as a lack of commitment. “Try to think of the acts that come through with more than one song,” WLIR Long Island, N.Y., PD Gary Cee says, “Nickelback and Jimmy Eat World have come through, and that’s about all.” And, as Cee notes, Jimmy Eat World had been dropped by Capitol. “The labels are certainly looking for a quicker return on their investments, but when you see the Jimmy Eat World story, you’ve got to think that a little patience might go a long way in developing an act.”

**NOT ENOUGH HERITAGE?**

One programmer thinks the number of new artists debutting reflects a lack of heritage artists at the format. “We’re waiting for new Pearl Jam and Third Eye Blind and a real rock act.”

But WUBZ (the Buzz) Nashville PD Brian Krysz says, “We were waiting for the Chili Peppers for a while. We haven’t had too many of the big names, and we still have to play new music.”

But WZNN (the Zone) Chicago PD Bill Gamble says, “I’d rather have labels come at us with tons of new artists than the other way around, where we’re saying ‘OK, let’s play another Blink-182 song because there’s nothing else out there.’ More bands give you more choices, and I’d rather have a ton of things to choose from than just a few.”

KPTN (the Point) St. Louis PD Woody Fife agrees. “Everybody complains about how there’s no core artists, but I’d rather have more choices from and be able to cherry pick the ones that are best for the radio station instead of waiting for the next core artist to come through with a mediocre song. If it’s going to be about songs instead of artists, I’d rather have more selection.”

Might listeners have a hard time assimilating all the new acts? “I think we’re in a time of the century where rock music is being fragmented,” Krysz says. “So much of it all sounds the same. You get a unique sound like the Strokes, and all of a sudden there’s two other bands right behind them that sound just like them. We’re trying to slow things down a little by playing things that are a little different. In the past, we really didn’t play Dave Matthews Band, and now we are. We’re also playing Jack Johnson and Nitzer Faux.”

Fife says, “I think it definitely hurts as far as putting a face on these bands. People hear a song that they like, and you’ll say, ‘Trust Company,’ and they’ll have no idea what you’re talking about. But if they hear the song, they’ll say, ‘I love this song.’ It’s a lot harder to familiarize the listeners with the bands.”

WPLA Jacksonville, Fla., PD Scott Petibone believes it’s radio’s job to control any potential confusion by cherrypicking from the format’s subgenres. “Take the Blink-182 sound. How many pop/punk bands are going to cut through that?” If we’re playing all of them, then we’re confusing the audience when it comes to those bands. But if we’re going to play one or two, we’re focusing their tastes a little more.”

It’s also hard to get anything—be it a new act or a new station—noticed these days because of the glut of competing entertainment choices. “There’s a downslide to all this clutter in our society,” Gillespie says. “As we separate by format and genre, the pie is getting split in many more ways. It may be harder to have the big hit bands and develop the artists we have in the past because there’s so many choices. The pressure is on to develop more hits, but that’s part and parcel of our industry. We can’t really depend on radio to break it. It has to have a cultural context in the market and an awareness by the listeners, so it’s not just out of the blue. Style over substance is still impacting how things are perceived before they’re proven.”
The most-played clips as monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems

For week ending JULY 7, 2002

Music & Showbiz

FILM FESTIVAL FOCUS: Two upcoming film festivals will feature a slew of music-related offerings.

First up is the annual Urbanworld Film Festival, set for Aug. 7-11 in New York. The event celebrates films by and about people of color. Movies to be screened include the following: Lions Gate documentary Biggie and Tupac, the world premiere of 20th Century Fox drama Drumline starring Nick Cannon.

In brief: The aforementioned Biggie and Tupac film—due in theaters Aug. 9—is the latest in a string of Tupac Shakur documentaries set for release this year. Earlier, two other Shakur documentaries were issued directly to video: Tupac Shakur: Before I Wake and Tupac Shakur: Thug Angel—The Life of an Outlaw. As previously reported (Billboard, Dec. 11, 2001), MTV Films and Arami Entertainment are preparing a Shakur documentary, which has the working title: Resurrection.

Mandy Moore will star in the romantic comedy/drama How to Deal. The New Line Cinema movie is currently shooting in Toronto. . . Sex Pistols frontman Johnny Rotten will be the subject of an as-yet-untitled feature film to be directed by Penelope Spheeris. The Rhino/Panacea film will be based on the singer’s 1984 memoir, Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs. MTV will premiere three music-related series for 2002-2003. First up is Crashing Waves, . . . a program that shows artists moving in with strangers for a night. The show premieres July 18 with an episode starring Master P and his son, Lil’ Romeo. Premiering in the fourth quarter this year will be artist-lauch—which follows artists while they make albums—and mtvTreatmen, a reality show following Korn’s search for a video director to helm its latest video.

Newsline...

Pressplay president/CEO Andy Schuon is named president of programming for Infinity Radio, where he will report to Infinity Chairman/CEO John Sykes... Salem Communications has sold country WGY Cincinnati to Susquehanna Radio for a reported $45 million... Top 40 WQDR Detroit PD Alex Tars adds interim PD duties for modern AC sister WDWE, where previous PD Tom O’Brien has exited... Rhythmic top 40 KBPR El Paso, Texas, names Bobby Ramos PD/MD morning host. He replaces John Candelaria, now PD at KBBF Dallas.

Compiled by Carla Hay.
RAP IT UP: All of the top three albums on The Billboard 200 are hip-hop titles, including this issue's Hot Shot Debut from Irv Gotti, a producer/executive who has had a hand in the successes of Ja Rule, Ashanti, and Jennifer Lopez. Irv Gotti Presents the Inc. enters at No. 3 with 193,000 units. Lead horse for Gotti's wagon has been "Down 4 U," featuring Ja Rule, Ashanti, Vita, and Charli Baltimore, which bullets 7-6 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay with a radio audience of 42.2 million. The album also includes the hip-hop version of Lopez's "Ain't It Punny," featuring Ja Rule and Cadillac Tah, which spent six weeks at No. 1 on Hot 100 Singles Sales and is also available on her J To Tha L-O! The Remixes, which ruled The Billboard 200 for two weeks.

Higher on the page, Nelly's new Nellyville sees a 37% decline—a much less severe drop than blockbuster rap albums often see in the second week. So, with 447,000 units, Nelly easily retains control of The Billboard 200. Eminem is in second place with 263,000, down 14.5%. The Eminem Show has never been lower than No. 2 and has sold 3.9 million copies in a mere seven weeks.

CAREER-VIEW MIRROR: With most acts, it would seem a hollow boast to say that an album was the highest-charting greatest-hits set in an act's career, but for a band with the long line of hits that Aerosmith has enjoyed, this week's start at No. 4 is noteworthy. "O Yeah! Ultimate Aerosmith Hits"—the first compilation to mine songs from both of its Columbia stints, along with its tenure at Geffen—opens with 137,000 units.

Of the four that have previously charted, Gotti's Big Ones had the highest rank, bowing at No. 6 in 1994 with first-week sales of 90,000 units. The 1980 compilation Greatest Hits has been certified 10-times platinum and has logged 352 weeks on Top Pop Catalog Albums, but in its initial chart run, the album peaked at No. 53 on the big chart. A Columbia boxed set, Pandemonia's Box, covering material from 1972-1982, peaked at No. 45 in 1991. Young Lust: The Aerosmith Anthology, which like the new O Yeah! is a two-disc set, sneak-peeked into the market late last year from Geffen/Interscope and logged one lone chart week at No. 191. in the Dec. 8 issue. Another veteran band of a different sonic stripe, Chicago, also charts with an anthology, as The Very Best of Chicago: Only The Beginning enters at No. 38 (28,000 units). It's the band's highest-charting album since Billboard switched to Nielsen SoundScan data in 1991. The band has charted five previous compilations, including 1975's Chicago Ix: Chicago's Greatest Hits, which spent five weeks at No. 1.

SURFING: In a down year for music sales, young Avril Lavigne continues to shine as a bright story. Her debut album collects The Billboard 200 Greatest Gainer for the second straight week, this time clocking an increase of 12,500 (No. 5, up 11%). Her Let Go is the first album to achieve consecutive Greatest Gainer awards since Creed's Withered at the end of 2001. Sale pricing initiated by the Best Buy chain should add to her momentum. . . .

Columbia, which dented the band's charts last week with a value-priced mini-album by new act Play (162-119, up 48%), does so this week with a low-priced remix set from Nas, which enters The Billboard 200 at No. 123 while his last full-length album rebounds 113-90 (up 22%). Following a July 4 A&E special with the Boston Pops Orchestra, Barry Manilow's recent anthology Ultimate Manilow rallies an 85-67 (up 15.6%) gain. . . .

A Saturday Night Live rerun and visits to The Tonight Show, Live With Regis and Kelly, and TRL should give her more gas.

FUTURES: Dave Matthews Band's eager fan base seems hungry for its new album, which hits stores Tuesday (16). Until then, the only way to buy the band's "Where Are You Going" (No. 39 on Top 40 Tracks) is to land the Mr. Deeds soundtrack—which wins the Faceseter for the second week in a row (100-61, up 56%)—while the band's last album, Everyday, posts an 10% increase (148-136). . . . Meanwhile, Red Hot Chili Peppers are lined up for their highest Billboard 200 rank ever. First-day sales suggest their new By the Way will do 250,000-275,000 for the week, which would be good for at least No. 2, with a fighting chance for the top slot.

HEAVEN-SENT: DJ Sammy & Yanou featuring Do's remix of Bryan Adams' "Heaven" moves 20-15 on The Billboard Hot 100, earning the Greatest Gainer/Sales award for a fourth consecutive week. The only other song to do so was Dream's "He Loves U Not" in December 2000. "Heaven" holds at No. 2 on Hot 100 Singles Sales behind Elvis Presley vs. JXL's "A Little Less Conversation," which loses 30% from its opening-week sales total. "Less" still holds a comfortable lead over "Heaven" of 19,000 units to 4,500.

THE JERSEY PHOENIX: Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band make their first appearance together on the mainstream rock chart in more than 15 years, as "The Rising" debuts at No. 53. From 1981 to 1986, Springsteen and his backing band charted 25 times, with two No. 1s: 1984's "Dancing in the Dark" and a live version of "Trapped" from 1985's We Are the World compilation. From 1987 onward, Springsteen was billed as a solo act and charted 15 times, with three No. 1s: "Brilliant Disguise," "Tunnel of Love," and "Human Touch." Additional reporting by Anthony Colombo in New York.
### Billboard 200 Chart June 29, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Label(s)</th>
<th>Flex Week Position</th>
<th>Last 2 Weeks</th>
<th>Weeks Ago</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>&quot;Total REQUESTS&quot;</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>118,316</td>
<td>110,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>&quot;Total REQUESTS&quot;</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>111,764</td>
<td>80,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>&quot;Total REQUESTS&quot;</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>109,152</td>
<td>71,875</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>&quot;Total REQUESTS&quot;</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>107,540</td>
<td>63,125</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>105,928</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>&quot;Total REQUESTS&quot;</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>&quot;Total REQUESTS&quot;</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td>102,704</td>
<td>36,875</td>
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**Note:** The table above lists the top 10 songs on the Billboard 200 chart for the week ending June 29, 2002. The data includes the title of the song, the artist(s), the label(s), the flex week position, the total requests, and the last two weeks and weeks ago positions. The chart is based on the most requested songs among radio stations across the United States.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>RIAA Certification</th>
<th>Price 1</th>
<th>Price 2</th>
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<td>Legacy...Hymns &amp; Faith</td>
<td>AMY GRANT</td>
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<td>Instant Vintage</td>
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<td>Pull My Chain</td>
<td>TORY KEITH</td>
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<td>A Day Without Rain</td>
<td>ENYA</td>
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<td>Break the Cycle</td>
<td>STAND</td>
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<td>The Places You Have Come To Fear The Most</td>
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<td>Steers &amp; Stripes</td>
<td>BROOKS &amp; DUNN</td>
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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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**Records set the chart positions in Billboard 200, Hot 100, R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, and Top Tracks are based on airplay, streaming, and sales data supplied by Nielsen SoundScan. Data is compiled over the period of May 9-15, 2002. Ratings are based on the performance of songs in one week.**
Nickel Creek Shows A New ‘Side’ On Sugar Hill

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Following up a critically acclaimed and commercially successful debut in an editor’s easy feat, but for acoustic music trio Nickel Creek, it was an enjoyable challenge.

“I don’t really know what people’s expectations for us are, because people are kind enough not to burden us with those,” 21-year-old mandolinist Chris Thile says. “Our expectations for ourselves are huge.”

Thile and fellow Nickel Creek members—guitarist Sean Watkins, 25, and his sister, fiddler Sara Watkins, 21—debuted on Sugar Hill in 2000 with an eponymous project that sold 623,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Their follow-up is This Side, a musically inventive collection due Aug. 13.

“We tried to keep the same attitude we had in recording the first one, and that was that we just wanted to make a good record, something that we would be proud of,” says Sean Watkins, who admits they were taken by surprise at the success of the first album, “In our fantasy world, we thought selling 100,000 would be epic. Needless to say, we’re just blown away.”

Sara Watkins says she wasn’t necessarily nervous about making the new record, just “really excited about the material and the potential of these songs. We laid down some fun little touches and treats. It was very rewarding. We were just trying to stay true to ourselves.”

“It’s our duty to make great music. That’s why we’re here as a band,” Thile says. “And when it comes to the new record, he cautions listeners to “expect to be uncomfortable throughout the entire record, just a little bit. That sort of pleasant uncomfortableness is what I like about it. I feel on edge, and I love to be on edge. It’s not wallpaper music. It’s not something that’s going to go well at a party for background music. It demands to be dealt with aurally. It’s more adventurous.”

‘STRANGE CHARACTER TRAITS’

Thile and his cohorts are quick to point out that while they love bluegrass, what they do is broader. “Bluegrass is where we were born, but we’ve sort of grown up in all kinds of musical areas since then,” Thile says. “It’s all about that basic ambiance and attitude that bluegrass brings with it, but we’ve added a lot of strange character traits.”

“When you listen to more than one track, it’s going to be a little different,” Thile adds, “and it’s going to be different in your music,” adds Sara, who defines the band’s sound as “progressive acoustic.”

Thile admits they are a bit hesitant to be called a “bluegrass act” because “it ticks off bluegrass people. The hardcore bluegrass purists don’t think of it as bluegrass, so we don’t like to say that out of respect for those people.” Still, he says, the band’s sound is “more bluegrass than anything else, even with this record.”

Whatever the purists think, much of the bluegrass community has embraced the trio, and it collected two awards at last fall’s International Bluegrass Music Awards show, including Thile taking top honors for mandolin player.

“We don’t really call ourselves anything,” Thile says. “We just try to mix the kinds of music we would like to listen to into what we do, which is based in bluegrass. We wanted to make the CD we always wanted to make. We wanted to make music that anybody can identify with.”

The album, produced by Alison Krauss, who was blown away by a performance of one of their songs when they introduced them, is described as “a lot of fun, with a lot of musicality, a lot of musicianship, a lot of the lyrical element that’s been there.”

“We call it ‘a band’s album,’ and we just had fun writing the songs and recording them,” Thile says. “We did some very different things, and we are trying to reach different audiences.”

“We don’t call ourselves anything. We just mix the kinds of music we would like to listen to into what we do, which is based in bluegrass. We wanted to make the CD we always wanted to make. We wanted to make music that anybody can identify with.”

—SEAN WATKINS, NICKEL CREEK

‘SPIT ON A STRANGER’

“Spit on a Stranger” is definitely one of the album’s more unusual tracks. “Pavement has some insane lyrics,” Sara says, “but it’s a great song.” “Some of them are ridiculous, but this was one of their normal songs. We played it for Alison, Chris was her idea, he’s the one who found the CD. We just had fun playing it for her. We’d never worked hard with us to get it where we needed to go gold on it.”

Paul says the label is “mounting street-date-driven promotions with pretty much every retailer out there, including Sunday circulars and [on] positionings with retail and Amazon is doing a five-day front-page exposure for us. We’re also working with retailers to set up different kinds of promotions, some enter-to-win kinds of things, possibly flyaways to some of their tour dates.”

The group will begin its tour in the fall, and the label plans to maintain high visibility at retail stores from street date through Christmas. The label is also working with Target and launch.com on a promotion. Target will sponsor a Nickel Creek spot on launch.com, which will also stream the video and include interviews with the band. Target will also run ads directing people to launch.com.

“This band crosses a lot of musical boundaries,” Paul observes. “We want to take advantage of the support we’ve got from CMT and the country outlets, but we also want to start looking at going outside of country as well to promote the band. Their management company, Q-Prime, works primarily in these areas, so we’re looking at them for a lot of insight into how to move in that direction.”

Paul says they will also utilize a street team comprising fans who are willing to hang posters, aid retail, and do whatever is needed to help the label get the word out. “We are creating a door hanger, kind of like a ‘Do Not Disturb’ [sign],” says Sara, “that has information about Nickel Creek.” Paul says. The door hanger will also direct fans to a Web site that will feature “a live audio track from one of their concerts and then some video footage from back-stage stuff that we’re not going to see other places.”

The label also plans an extensive promotion on college campuses. “One of our distributors sells to college bookstores, so we have them going into the CD college bookstores,” Paul explains. “We’re doing a listening wall, door hangers, and a coupon for a dollar off the CD. This is all going to be going on from Aug. 13 through Aug. 30, and everyone in the bookstore buying their books for the first semester.”

Nickel Creek is booked by the William Morris Agency, and its members have their own publishing companies.
From the Mountain tour—featuring acts on the O Brother soundtrack—is doing brisk business.

Meanwhile, bluegrass newcomers are bringing in a fresh new audience, and veteran country artists are rediscovering their mountain roots. Don Parton, who at one time aligned his Blue Eye imprint with Sugar Hill Records and has issued three successful projects of what she refers to as “blue mountain music.” Patty Loveless gained acclaim with her recent Mountain Soul disc, and Ricky Skaggs re-entered the bluegrass fold a few years ago and is keeping alive the traditions of such greats as Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers.

Among further evidence of the genre’s booming popularity:

• The International Bluegrass Music Assn. (IBMA) is staffing up and planning a move from its longtime home in Owensboro, Ky., to Nashville in early 2003 to make the organization more accessible to its members.

• Bluegrass records are showing new strength at retail. In recent weeks, as many as eight bluegrass titles have appeared on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart. Based on this performance, in this issue, Billboard debuts a 15-position weekly Top Bluegrass Albums chart (see page 29).

• Bluegrass-flavored acts are finding homes on mainstream country labels, including Shannon Lawson on MCA Nashville and Vince Gill on Universal Records.

• IBMA executive director Dan Hays says there are now more than 500 multi-day events featuring bluegrass music and “someplace between 800 and 500 radio stations programming the music on average about six hours per week. That number of hours per week in the last six years has more than doubled.”

One of the more unique features of bluegrass is that while such younger acts as Alison Krauss + Union Station and the Lonesome Rhymers have been turning on a new generation of fans, the genre’s pioneers continue to sell albums and concert tickets. Ralph Stanley’s eponymous new CD debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart in the June 29 issue, and earlier this year, the 75-year-old Stanley beat out several performers who regularly have hit the country radio to win the 2001 Grammy Award for best male country vocal performance for the song “O Death.”

Sugar Hill’s effort, The Grass Is Blue, won album of the year honors as well as the Grammy Award for best bluegrass album, Parton refers to what she is doing now as her own brand of “blue mountain music.” It’s certainly got elements and flavors of bluegrass, but it’s just simple, acoustic stuff,” she says.

GROWTH OF THE GENRE

Regardless of terminology, Skaggs thinks the new interest in the genre is a positive development. “The soundtrack to O Brother has done much to open doors, but it was starting to break even a few years before that,” he says.

DEFINING BLUEGRASS

Just what is and isn’t bluegrass is a thorny question that is open to many different interpretations. While the O Brother soundtrack contains such bluegrass cuts as the single “Man of Constant Sorrow,” it is not exclusively a bluegrass album. And while some enthusiasts point to young acts like Nickel Creek as the future of the genre, purists join that band in insisting they are not a bluegrass act (see story, page 85).

Rooted in gospel and old-time mountain music, bluegrass originated with the work of Bill Monroe & his Blue Grass Boys band—which, in the words of Rounder Records co-founder Ken Irwin, “put all the pieces together.”

But even the music’s stars are hard-pressed to define it. Skaggs calls it “folksy music. Music about mountain people. It's really the heart and soul of country music.” But he has an easier time describing what bluegrass is not. “It’s not the belly button, the pretty face, or the implants,” he says.

Even the music’s forefathers had a hard time providing a definition. Skaggs says, “Ralph Stanley always said, ‘Bill Monroe is bluegrass; the Stanley Brothers is mountain music.’ At that point,” Skaggs says of the finely drawn distinction, “we’re picking a fly out of pepper.” While Parton’s Blue Eyed says of the music’s popularity. Referring to Parton, Loveless, and himself, Skaggs says: “It’s a cool thing to see more people having a desire to play the music that’s in their heart after years and years of worrying about what’s on the radio.”

IBMA's Hays calls O Brother's success "the icing on the cake," but notes: "The success we’re seeing has been 10-15 years, at least, in the making."

Rounnder's Irwin agrees. "It’s not an overnight occurrence. The interest and quality have been building, and there has been a lot of really strong acts developing."

Skaggs believes Monroe’s death in 1996 helped start the genre’s rapid growth. “With Bill Monroe’s death, it was like the bluegrass music seed falling into the ground and growing,” he says. “It really has a deep root now and has borne a whole lot of fruit.”

If that’s true, then Skaggs’ label, Skaggs Family Records, is in a great position to capitalize on it, thanks to a joint-venture deal forged last year with Disney’s Lyric Street Records. As for the rest of Music City, Skaggs says: “The record companies in Nashville are still in denial that O Brother was a viable piece of music and has any validity. The people are the ones who are speaking. They are buying the records.”

Hays calls the launch of the new Billboard bluegrass chart “one of the more significant business developments in our music in the last 20 years.” Since IBMA was created in the mid-’80s, it’s something that has been on our priority list since day one.”

WSM’s Stubbs says, “I didn’t think I’d ever see a day come that bluegrass music would have its own chart in Billboard. But it’s a tremendous feat for the music, for the fans, and for the performers who have worked so hard.”

Stubbs is a bluegrass historian, fiddler, and former member of the Johnson Mountain Boys, which recorded 11 albums for Rounder in the ’80s and ’90s. He notes, “In the ’80s, if you sold 10,000 copies of an album in bluegrass, you had a hit on your hands. That’s not 10,000 in a year’s time—that’s over the life of the album. To show you how much times have changed, Nickel Creek sold 9,700 units of product in one week.” (The band sold as much as approx. 22,000 copies in one week last December, according to Nielsen SoundScan.)

“The song is Bluegrass, but it’s a seasonal music, and now we’re playing year-round,” he says. “In January, our first six shows were sold out, and they [were] turning 200-plus people away. It was amazing, and it’s not like preaching to the choir. These weren’t bluegrass people. Most of these were people who had never been to a show before, but because of the great press, people said: ‘I saw this in the paper, I wanted to come and see what it’s all about.’ Not only do they come and like the show, they are also taking home three or four CDs with them.”

“We’ve been busy for years now,” says Del McCoury, patriarch of the band that bears his name. “We’ve had more work than we could handle, but [O Brother] has given us the exposure for everything. It helps the whole picture of bluegrass.”

“This is a great art form. It’s not just a flash in the pan,” adds McCoury, whose career in bluegrass began in 1950.

Sugar Hill Records GM Bev Paul says the acts on the Down From the Mountain tour and Bluegrass Playing in the Valley tour are reaping the biggest rewards right now. “The whole festival scene is a great example of how performing live makes a difference,” she says. “From what I’m seeing, the down is happening, but it’s happening for folks who are out there doing the work an artist has to do to make a living and get exposed to audiences.”

MEDIA EXPOSURE

Tim Peterson, country music buyer at Trans World Entertainment, says his market has played a big part in the bluegrass boom. “People don’t know what they’re missing until someone finally tells them, ‘Hey, there’s an artist you’re missing,’ and they get to hear it.”

Music-video network CMT is among the media that has been surprisingly supportive of bluegrass working closely with the industry to get its music in the regular mix, telecasting a Bluegrass Rules weekend in February, and recently incorporating a Red, White and Bluegrass weekend specials and a special CMT VP of music programming and talent relations Chris Parr says.

(Continued on next page)
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“It’s a great flavor to have in your mix, and it’s a little unique to CMT, because we don’t really expect people to be hearing it on their radio station.”

After the Bluegrass Rules weekend, Parr says, “The numbers looked up and said, ‘We can get some ratings with this.’ The network expected some interest, but Parr says, “the numbers came back in, and it was much bigger. That weekend did bigger ratings than a Garth [Brooks] weekend we had on the channel. That really put it in perspective.”

Now, Parr says, “we are actively looking for things that can continue the success we’ve had with the bluegrass [programming].” Still, Parr says he empathizes with the bluegrass community, which may suddenly feel pressured to make expensive videos to garner CMT exposure. “They are making albums for very small budgets,” he says. “They can probably make one album for what some of the videos cost.” And while he says videos don’t need to be expensive to get played, he notes that Rounder having “invested a lot of money” saying Krauss has “really paid off.

THE MUSIC’S APPEAL

Pinning down the music’s appeal is a bit of a trick when you ask people to define it. Most cite its genuineness, its simplicity, its relatable lyrics, and its stellar musicianship.

“Part of the appeal is that the music is just what it’s said to be,” says Parton. “And part of it is that what’s happening with other forms of country music, and you can see why people are becoming so drawn to bluegrass. It’s a time when people are getting a little tired of prepackaged music and artists and are looking for something that appeals to them.”

“We are so frustrated with the state of pop music right now,” says Nickel Creek’s Chris Thile says. “When mainstream sucks as bad as it does now, people just have to go look for something else or just completely stop listening to music altogether, and that’s not a very good option. People get excited when they find something new and interesting and just want to hear it again, around and around, and it may be time for bluegrass to have a little fun.”

Irwin says, “Since Sept. 11, people are really stopping to think about what is real and what is not. People are realizing that traditional values are important to them, and that’s what bluegrass music is about. A lot of people are looking for something simple, and though bluegrass is not an easy music to play, it feels simpler. You don’t have the pulsating drums. The lyrics are, for the most part, pretty straightforward and relatable. There’s a strong spiritual side to bluegrass that people are relating to.”

Paul agrees that “after Sept. 11, people wanted something they could embrace musically. Music is a great healer and very comforting to people. I listened to a lot of acoustic music for weeks after that happened, just because it was something I could hang on to and sing along to, and the words are meaningful. I think the tones and sounds really do touch your soul, but on the other hand, it’s still a lot of fun. And the level of musicianship in bluegrass is astounding.”

Stubb says, “People are starved for substance, but they don’t know it because they haven’t had a chance to experience it. Once they get a taste of how great bluegrass is, it’s like a fine dessert they’ve never experienced before.”

Parton says, “People enjoy it because there’s so much loud stuff in this world from television, video games, and movies. With the electric instruments and all, I really think people love the simplicity of letting their ears take a rest and letting the music kind of seep into their ears, then on down into their souls and hearts. You can really experience the quality of the voice, the music’s not so loud. There’s just beautiful sounds. There’s nothing more beautiful than acoustic instruments and a voice singing along with that.”

“When I’m onstage and I can really hear all the instruments playing, you almost get a buzz feeling. It’s like a religious experience when all those beautiful sounds mesh together. It’s unbelievable the thrill you can get.”

Irwin says, “I believe people really are longing for something simple.” Parton continues, “We are so high-tech, which is great—you can’t stop progress, and who would want to? But in a way, it’s almost like we’re so high-tech that I believe there’s a longing in the human spirit—whether you know it or not—to have something simple. People love the simplicity of thinking there’s still dirt out there. There’s still farms out there. There’s still simple people. There’s still things to feel and see. I think it’s people’s need to hang on to simple things in this crazy, wild, rushing world these days.”

Paul says another factor behind the popularity of bluegrass is its participatory nature. “You can actually sing along to it,” she says. “People feel like they can pick up an instrument and play it themselves. They don’t need to buy amps and cords and all kinds of equipment to play along.”

A NEW PROFESSIONALISM

As the bluegrass music industry continues to grow, one factor that is helping the genre move forward is an increased professionalism among its practitioners. Though still primarily a do-it-yourself kind of industry, many top names in bluegrass now have a team to help them with career efforts. For example, McCoury has a manager (Stan Strickland) and booking agent (Bobby Cuid at Monterey Artists) and, as an artist on Skaggs’ Celli Music label, there’s a staff to support his music.

While that’s the norm in other genres of music, it wasn’t always the case. Garth Hays says, “Before, we could hardly afford a team to do things.” He says, “Bands usually do everything. Before, I tried to do my own booking, J.J. has been running for years, my own recording and mixing. It’s hard for one person to do that and then do your own promotion and publicity. You just can’t do it all. When my band, the thing we do best is onstage. We have a good team who does all that other stuff now, but a lot of bands haven’t been able to afford that. Maybe now with this popularity, they can.”

Irwin says that professionalism among bluegrass acts is also translating to “the way they dress on stage, more entertaining shows. There really has been a lot of development in that area.”

That new professionalism is attracting the notice of corporate America. Hays is seeing much more corporate sponsorship on bluegrass performances, and the music is being used in advertising campaigns for everything from wireless phones to insurance. Vincent has a sponsorship deal with Martha White Foods and travels in the Martha White tour bus. Well-known for its flour, cornbread, and muffin mixes, Martha White has had a long relationship with the bluegrass community, having previously sponsored other bluegrass and country notables, including Lester Flatt, Alison Krauss, and Tennessee Ernie Ford. Martha White is also the longest-running sponsor of the Grand Ole Opry.

The company has placed Vincent’s image on 19 million packages of blueberry muffin nancys. irwin says, “They’re baselitzing bluegrass or not really playing it.”

‘We’re a little bit on the cynical side of the whole bluegrass explosion right now,” says Nickle Creek’s Thile. “I don’t know how long it’s going to last, but the bluegrass community itself isn’t more accepting of the new people that are interested in it and aren’t more open-minded about the fact that bluegrass music can expand into.”

“We go to these bluegrass conventions, and everybody talks about how we need to get young people into the music and how we need to expand the audience and increase awareness, and yet if somebody gets into bluegrass, and a band like Hootie & the Blowfish, or something like that, they get schooled by all the bluegrass critics. But all the fans who come to see Hootie might very possibly stay and hear people like Del McCoury or Alison Krauss.”

Some bluegrass fans feel like they’re being invaded,” Thile continues. “That attitude, I catch it all the time from the music and how we need to expand the audience and increase awareness, and yet if somebody gets into bluegrass, and they’re still in bluegrass. Some of the bluegrass floor shows bring in our fan base to see us, we have people coming up to us all the time, saying things like ‘You guys really need to play more bluegrass’ or with disapproving tones [saying], ‘You guys brought a lot of young punk kids with you. That kind of attitude is going to kill the music and move it very quickly. It’s an exciting kind of music, but it’s strange that people get so protective of it. It’s a little depressing to see people don’t want to be doing it because it’s so up right now and people are so excited about it, but it seems to me like the people on the inside of the music are not doing their part.”

‘CAUTION IS THE WATCHWORD

The new, much higher profile for bluegrass music is viewed in mixed terms by the music industry. Still, the bluegrass music industry is a bit of this new-found success, because quick growth for the country format in the last 80s is following a pattern that began its slippery slide in the direction of mass-appeal, watered-down music.

Hays says the industry is being “very protective of letting the music speak for itself” and letting that authenticity of the music work its own magic rather than trying to dissect it, taste-test it, and focus-group it to death. “Caution is the watchword,” he says.

“we want to make sure that while we’re elevating the professionalism of bluegrass, we’re guarding the integrity of it.”

Irwin says, “There are many people who are concerned about potential changes to the music, where artists might take elements of it and dilute [it]. Others think if the music remains stagnant, it won’t survive.”

CMT’s Parr admits, “A lot of hardcore bluegrass will look at us and say: They’re bastardizing bluegrass or not really playing it.”

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Executives Seek Key To Turn On Music Sales

Continued from page 1

That downward drift can be seen in Nielsen SoundScan numbers, says Billboard director of charts Geoff Mayfield. He points out, “With the exception of Easter week, there has not been a single week this year when business has been ahead of the comparable week last year—and that was an artificial increase, because Easter arrived two weeks earlier this time and was thus compared to a non-holiday week.”

In the first 26 weeks of this year, the No. 1 album averaged 344,062 units vs. 371,524 in 2001—a drop of 8.2%—while the No. 10 album averaged 88,197 units vs. 80,576 scans last year—a 15.4% decline.

In contrast, in 2000, the last strong year that the industry experienced, the No. 1 album enjoyed average sales of 354,151 units and the No. 10 album averaged 94,274. What’s more, there were seven albums that year that each sold more than 5 million units, while not one album achieved this distinction in all of last year. This year, Eminem’s The Eminem Show appears likely to top the 5 million mark, with 3.6 million units recorded through June 20, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Including Eminem, so far this year, 20 albums have surpassed 1 million scans, compared with 37 in the first half of 2000.

But Jones said at the Universal One-Stop gathering that the second-half release schedule appears stronger than last year’s and could be a cause for optimism, with top albums likely to enjoy a return to the “bigger sales” of 2000. He hopes this will offset the first-half decline.

Acts with multi-platinum potential whose albums are due in the second half include Red Hot Chili Peppers, Christina Aguilera, Too Short, Shaggy, Dave Matthews Band, Bruce Springsteen, TLC, 3 Doors Down, Beach Boys, Beanie Man, and Limp Bizkit.

Another factor affecting sales appears to be the maturation of the CD album format. For the first time in its history, it was discovered that the format suffered a sales decline, falling 7.9% in the first half of the year compared with last year, when CD growth slowed to 0.8%.

“Most of this was in much more alarming than the slight decline in album sales that we saw last year,” Mayfield says. “Although album units were down by less than 3%, it was slightly ahead of 2000’s numbers, with the decline of the cassette accounting for the shortfall.”

This year, cassette sales continue to plummet, with a drop of 34.3% from last year’s first-half sales of 25 million units to 16.4 million. At mid-year, album sales break out to 94.5% CD and 5.3% cassette, with other formats—vinyl, DVD Audio, and Super Audio CD (SACD)—accounting for 0.24%.

The latter figure indicates that industry hopes for new formats to stimulate sales have so far gone unfulfilled. The “other formats” category experienced a 14.4% increase, but in units, that converts into a meager gain from 665,000 units in the first six months of this year to 774,000, which is supposed to be introduced later this summer, will ignite the consumer’s desire for a portable format that can replace their cassette.

In addition to all the other problems, the decline of the singles configuration is hurting the music industry’s retail executives, they say. They label the decline “needs to keep the singles customers happy. If you look at last year’s numbers, singles and cassette albums were responsible for most of the decline. But compound that this year, and who knows what impact [their disappearance] is having on sales.”

He states that a revival of the singles market is key to stimulating album sales and welcomes the UMVD initiative to test singles (see Retail Track, page 67).

Further analyzing the sales slump, current album sales—those that are counted within the first 18 months of a title’s release (12 months for jazz and classical), except for titles that remain in the top half of the charts, continue to decline, totaling 190 million units for the first six months of 2002—down 11.9% from the 215.6 million units they counted for in the first half of 2001. As a percentage, current album sales continue to decline, falling to 61.1% of all album sales from 62.5% last year at the mid-year point. For the first half of 1997-98, the current album category enjoyed growth, peaking at 66.4% for the full year of 1999.

Virgin Entertainment Group North America president Glen Ward says sales patterns suggest that the music business still “needs to keep the singles customers happy. If you look at last year’s numbers, singles and cassette albums were responsible for most of the decline. But compound that this year, and who knows what impact [their disappearance] is having on sales.”

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Sales on The Billboard 200 suffered an even larger decline than the overall currents category, falling 17.3% to 115.9 million units for the first half of this year, compared with 140.2 million units last year. As a percentage of total album sales, The Billboard 200 titles accounted for 37.3% at mid-year.

Meanwhile, catalog albums (titles available for 18 months or longer, with the exceptions noted above) suffered a smaller decline of 6.4%, totaling 121.1 million units in the first half of this year vs. 129.3 million last year at the same time. As a percentage of total album sales, catalog comprised 38.9%.

Breaking out catalog sales, deep catalog—titles that have been available for three years or more and are no longer in the top half of The Billboard 200—had the strongest performance, slipping only 4.6% this year to 83.8 million units.

Only Mass Merchants See Sales Gains

Analyzing album sales by where records are sold, the mass-merchants sector was the only one that enjoyed a gain in sales, growing by 3% even though total album sales were down 6.5% in the six months ended June 30, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Mass merchants, including Walmart, Target, and Kmart, generated 38.7 million units in the half, accounting for 31.1% of all album sales.

Meanwhile, chains—including Best Buy, Circuit City, Borders Books & Music, Barnes & Noble, and music specialty operations with four stores or more—suffered a 14.5% decline at the mid-year point, accounting for 61 million units, or 51.8% of total album scans. Last year, chains generated 189.3 million units in the first six months.

Similarly, independent stores (three units or less) were down 17.5% in album sales to 40.8 million vs. 49.3 million in the first six months of 2001. Like chains, independent stores continue to lose market share: Their slices of album sales dropped to 13.1%, down from the 14.9% they had last year at the mid-year point.

Even nontraditional outlets—such as online merchants, TV merchants, and concert venues—experienced an 8.0% decline in the first half of the year. That was less than the industry’s total, which means they enjoyed an uptick in market share to 3%. Overall, the total dollar amount in the business was down 10.5 million for the first six months.

Chains and independents blame the market-share shifts on mass-merchant pricing—which they called “negotiated-minded” and “counter to the best practices for pocketing cooperative advertising funds instead of spending them.”

Looking at the configuration mix at retail, mass merchants were the only ones to enjoy a CD sales increase, with up 61.6%. In the cassette format, the independent sector suffered the biggest decrease, a 48.2% drop, with the indies now accounting for 14.5% of cassette album sales, while chains are 38%, mass merchants 44.2%, and nontraditional outlets 1.4% in the first six months of 2002.

Despite those changes, Sony Music Distribution chairman Danny Yarbrough said during a panel at the Universal One-Stop convention that while he used to think that the mass merchants would be the last ones out of the cassette album format, he now believes that independent stores and the chain mail stores will be the final holdouts.

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BILLBOARD JULY 20, 2002
Billboard To Honor Isley Bros.,
Bambaataaa At R&B/HiP-Hop Meet

Billboard will present music legends the Isley Brothers and Afrika Bambaataa with its first-ever Founders Awards at this year's Billboard/AURN R&B/HiP-Hop Conference & Awards, presented by Heineken. The honors, to be presented Aug. 9, are being introduced to recognize artists for their artistic achievements and influence on others in the R&B and hip-hop genres, as judged by the editors of Billboard. The conference is slated for Aug. 7-9 at the Roney Palace in Miami Beach.

The Isley Brothers have been making music together for more than 40 years and continue to influence R&B and hip-hop acts today. Since coming to prominence with the 1962 crossover hit "Twist and Shout," they've had more than 10 top-40 hits on the Hot 100 chart and reached No. 1 on the Billboard R&B chart seven times. The Brothers scored another hit with their 2001 DreamWorks album Eternal, proving their timeless appeal.

Bambaataa, widely considered the godfather of hip-hop, helped lay the foundation for the genre's success with his work as a rapper, pioneering DJ, and master producer. His classic rap hit "Planet Rock" rose to No. 4 on the Billboard R&B singles chart in 1982 and marked the beginning of the trend of melding hip-hop beats with other genres of music. Bambaataa has also worked with many influential artists such as De La Soul, Queen Latifah, James Brown, and George Clinton.

Now in its third year, the Billboard/AURN R&B/HiP-Hop Conference will focus on issues and opportunities in urban music. Panels will examine critical topics relating to radio programming, the current financial and legal terrain, urban music in the digital age, and more. The event will also feature a Heineken Lounge, networking receptions, artist showcases, and the star-studded awards show on Aug. 9.

For more information on the conference and the awards program, visit billboardevents.com or call Michele Jacangelo at 646-654-4660. For conference registration, contact Phyllis Dama at 646-654-4643. For sponsorship and exhibitor information, contact Cebele Rodriguez at 646-654-4648.

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Billboard R&B/HiP-Hop Conference & Awards
The Roney Palace • Miami Beach • Aug. 7-9

Billboard Dance Music Summit
Marriott Marquis • New York City • Sept. 30-Oct. 2

Hollywood Reporter/Billboard Film & TV Music Conference
Renaissance Hollywood Hotel • Los Angeles • Oct. 10-12

Billboard Music & Money Symposium
The St. Regis • New York City • Nov. 12

for more info: Michele Jacangelo 646-654-4660
bbevents@billboard.com

COMING THIS WEEK: Nelson Riddle made an indelible mark on music as an arranger for such giants as Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, and Ella Fitzgerald. The stories behind these pairings are spotlighted in a series of four excerpts from Peter J. Liebenson's new book, September in the Rain: The Life of Nelson Riddle. Cole's collaborations with Riddle are the focus of the first excerpt, which will appear exclusively on Billboard.com.

Plus, Billboard.com will feature reviews of rapper Mr. Li's Emergency Rations (Definitive Jux), rapper Styles A Gangster and a Gentleman (Ruff Ryders/Interscope), and a live review of veteran progressive rock trio Rush in New York.

News contact: Jonathan Cohen • jacohen@billboard.com

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Michelle Branches Out

It's every artist's dream to play New York's Madison Square Garden at some point in their career. But it also means singer-songwriter Michelle Branch overshot her goal when she became the first singer ever to perform on the roof of the venue.

Branch recently teamed up with the Women's NBA, standing tall above the Garden marquee in celebration of the New York Liberty team's home opener for the 2002 WNBA season (against the Miami Sol)—New York won 88-82.

"It was very surreal," Branch says of the unusual nesting spot, where she hosted a free concert as thousands of basketball fans streamed into Madison Square Garden. "It was a crazy moment for me; I almost started crying.

The WNBA has also employed the 18-year-old singer—who got her career ball bouncing with hits "Everywhere" and "All You Wanted"—to appear in a television spot promoting women's basketball, as part of its "This Is Who I Am" campaign. It features Branch performing a tailored version of her song "You Set Me Free."

Branch admits that her association with the WNBA came out of left field. "It actually started when a couple of girls were at one of my concerts last year and their dad happened to work for the NBA and WNBA," she says. "They kept saying, 'Dad, I really like her.' So I guess they kept bugging him enough that he finally said he would look to get this girl involved. So I have no children to thank." With a laugh, she adds, "I never thought playing guitar would help me get involved with basketball, so this has been exciting for me."

Like Branch, women's basketball has been gaining momentum with the masses. The 2001 season concluded with the acknowledgement of the 10 millions fans to attend the game since the league's inception in 1997. More than 2.5 million fans attended WNBA games last season, while the league's combined local, national, and international television coverage reached nearly 60 million fans in 23 languages and 167 countries.

"To have a female basketball team, a female athlete, a female artist—a female anything that you can look up to is great," Branch acknowledges. "I know when I was growing up, I looked up to a lot of people, so to be a part of this is very flattering. Now let's just see if I can get season tickets."

**BackBeat**

**Meet My Invisible Friend**

Country-rock veteran Chris Hillman recently donated one of his original "Nudie's" suits to the Gene Autry Museum in Gene Autry, Okla.

**Environmentally Sound**

The Los Angeles Chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences presented its 2002 Governors Awards June 20 at the Beverly Hills Hotel, as part of its annual Membership Awards Luncheon. The event, which honors Grammy Award winners in the L.A. area who have improved the environment for the creative community, recognized the achievements and contributions of Janet Jackson, Walt Disney Music president/producer Chris Montan, and film/TV composer Thomas Newman. Pictured, from left, are Los Angeles Recording Academy Chapter president Daniel Carlin, honorary Newman, Jackson, and Montan, Recording Academy chairman Garth Fundis, and Recording Academy Western Region VP Angela Bibbs-Sanderson.

**Education Is Instrumental**

Jewel was among the artists showing support for music education during VH1 Save the Music Week on CBS' 'The Early Show' last month. Jewel performed live on the broadcast and discussed how important music education was to her when she was growing up. Now in its fifth year, VH1 Save the Music has donated more than $21 million worth of musical instruments to help restore music-education programs for nearly 400,000 students in 900 schools across the U.S.
The Hollywood Reporter and Billboard join forces for a 3-day event examining the role of music in film and television.

This event provides a dynamic networking opportunity for executives who create film and television content to meet and exchange ideas with suppliers of music for future projects.

HIGHLIGHTS

OPENING KEYNOTE: The view from the executive suite on the sometimes rocky relationship between the music business and Hollywood.

WELCOME RECEPTION: Your chance to network with top film, television, and music executives over drinks, food, and music!

EQUIPMENT DEMO ROOM: Vendors display the industry’s latest technology, products and services.

COMPOSER & SONGWRITER WORKSHOPS: Full day of programming focusing on the use of original music in film and TV production. Featuring special workshops on scoring and writing for visual media.

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PANEL TOPICS

O SOUNDTRACK, WHERE ART THOU?
As the cost of acquiring music rises, we’ll look at the tough choices soundtrack producers and music supervisors face in compiling music collections that balance creative and commercial values.

PRIME-TIME TV: THE NEW RADIO:
Prime-time TV is increasingly an essential platform for showcasing new artists and potential hits. We'll explore the success stories and the mutually beneficial ways music and TV can work together.

THE COMPOSER-DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP:
In this freewheeling dialogue, a top director and composer will describe the collaborative process and the special challenges of matching music to filmed and televised entertainment.

GETTING IN SYNC: Music supervisors are always looking for that musical diamond-in-the-rough. Record labels and music publishers control catalogs that are good as gold. This session on the fundamentals of music licensing will examine how these two worlds are making beautiful music together.

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$299 EarlyBird Registration; received by Aug 9
$349 PreRegistration; received by Sept 1
$399 Full Registration; after Sept 1 & on-site
$199 Society of Composers and Lyricists/Guild/Union

CONFERENCE FEE AND PAYMENT: Make all payments to Billboard. All registration fees are due prior to the conference. No personal checks accepted. Included in the registration fee is access to all conference events.

CANCELLATIONS: All cancellations received between Aug 20 and Sept 17 must be in writing and are subject to a 20% cancellation fee. No cancellations accepted after Sept 17 and no refunds will be issued. Substitutions may be made at any time. Refunds will be processed after the conference is over.

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