Who's Got The Best Album?

Hip-Hop Artists Shine Among Grammy Nods

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

The nominees for this year's Grammy Award for album of the year are a diverse group that closely reflects the current landscape of popular music.

It's tough to predict a winner from such a strong field of contenders, but experts contacted by Billboard all seem to lean toward OutKast's two-disc Arista set, "Speakerboxx/The Love Below.

For numerous industry players, though, there is one obvious omission in this category: "Get Rich or Die Tryin" by 50 Cent.

"There was so much interesting music released this year that to narrow it down to five is difficult," MTV/MTV2 executive VP of music and talent programming Tom Calderone says. "But all five albums deserve the nomination."

Los Angeles-based New York Times cultural correspondent/pop critic Neil Strauss concurs, adding, "It looks like what critics do with their annual top 10 lists: It covers all the genres."

Strauss also believes the five nominations "feel safe—in a good way."

Hip-hop's other hot contender is Missy Elliott's "Under Construction" (the Gold Mind/Elektra). R&B-infused pop is represented by Justin Timberlake's "Justified" (Jive), Evanescence weighs in from the world of gothic hard rock with "Fallen" (Wind-up Entertainment). (Continued on page 69)

Dance Follows Own Beat in Online Music Revolution

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

Digital download services are hot, but many high-profile players in dance music are discovering that mass-market digital sites are often cool to small labels.

So dance/electronic DJs and enthusiasts—and the independent labels they revere—are taking matters into their own hands. This month alone, several sites dedicated to dance have launched.

"We are doing what needs to be done," says Jonas Tempel, president of Beatport. "We are one with the club community. Whereas iTunes (Continued on page 29)
Top of the News

Industry government-relations leaders share their agendas for 2004.

AT&T Wireless reaches out to the Latin market with its Latin Garage offering.

Music

1. The Beat: Billboard asks Pink and other nominated artists why they find the Grammy Awards so special.
3. In the Spirit: The new year will bring some highly anticipated new releases to the gospel scene.
4. Legal Matters: A new court ruling bars the RIAA from using subpoenas to acquire the identities of file sharers.
5. Jazz Notes: Luciana Souza believes her Grammy nomination for "North and South" shows that there is an audience for non-major-label albums.

Global

EMI Music commits to the international release of French electronica act Air's third album, though it marks the end of its contract with EMI Virgin France subsidiary source.

Features

6. Mile Posts
7. Billboard Pipes
8. The Billboard BackBeat
9. Executive Turntable
10. Hits of the World
11. Classifieds
12. Market Watch
13. Charts
14. Chart Beat
15. Last Word

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I'm all about Johnny Cash and the 'legend,' but June Carter Cash for female country vocal performance confuses me."

RETAILER BRIAN SMITH ON THE COUNTRY GRAMMY NOMINATIONS

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www.billboard.com
Country Noms Seldom Mirror Popular Tastes

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Should industry awards celebrate creativity or recognize commercial success? That question always seems to be asked most frequently in the weeks preceding the Grammy Awards.

Nominations for the forthcoming show have stirred the perennial debate on Music Row as to how accurately the Grammys reflect the country marketplace. The noms include numerous acts that receive virtually no country radio or video play: Ricky Skaggs, Ray Benson, Lyle Lovett, June Carter Cash and the Oak Ridge Boys are among them.

Many of the genre's top hitmakers were overlooked in key categories. Toby Keith, for example, is not nominated for male country vocal performance, although his current album, "Shock 'Em If You Got It," debuts atop the Billboard 200 and the Top Country Albums chart.

But Keith's "Jeer for My Horses," his duet with Willie Nelson, did earn two nominations, for best country song and best country collaboration with vocals. Such omissions raise questions about how meaningful an award is if the top-selling artists aren't among the competitors.

"I don't think they reflect the marketplace at all," RCA Label Group chairman (Continued on page 31)

Holiday Week Made Retailers' Spirits Bright

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—Retailers say that an explosive Christmas week saved the holiday selling season, but the more encouraging news is that profit margins stayed strong throughout.

For some merchants, Christmas week turned a decent selling season into a good one.

"It was more than just a good week," says John Marmaduke, chairman/CEO of the 144-unit Amarillo, Texas-based Hastings Entertainment chain.

"We had the greatest percentage of sales on Christmas Eve day and the day after Christmas than we have ever had," he adds. Rob Perkins, president of the 70-unit, Atlanta-based Value Central Entertainment, agrees. "The last week was exceptionally strong." Perkins says. As a result, he expects his chain to finish the season with same-store sales increasing in the "high single digits."

SCATTERED SUCCESS

Others reported slightly different results.

Mike Dreese, CEO of the 24-unit Newbury Comics chain in Brighton, Mass., says that the week was so busy that it turned a weak holiday selling season into one in which the chain was only down about 1%.

"It's clear that everyone is shopping (Continued on page 54)
Verizon Win Won’t Stop Suits

Despite Court Ruling, RIAA Vows To Continue

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Recording Industry Assn. of America says that an appeals court decision has made it harder for copyright infringers to settle out of court.

In a Dec. 19 ruling, the court found that the trade group has no authority to compel Internet service providers to reveal the identities of subscribers who use peer-to-peer file-sharing services.

The trade group vows to continue with its lawsuits against consumers who infringe copyrights.

The decision by the three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia sides with Verizon, which had challenged a January 2003 district court ruling in favor of the RIAA.

The trade group has been serving Verizon and other ISPs with subpoenas seeking the identities of subscribers suspected of infringing copyrighted content. More than 582 individuals have been served by the RIAA for copyright infringement.

“RIAA is now able to identify alleged copyright infringers on the Internet, and醒了 its lawsuit, Verizon can now be sued for any reasonable price and in a venue of its choice,” he said.

According to the RIAA’s attorney, the ruling does not affect the viability of the RIAA’s lawsuits based on e-mail addresses of suspected infringers, a much slower process that requires significant judicial oversight.

The RIAA said it would continue its efforts to settle copyright infringement cases.

A statement from the RIAA said it was “disappointed” in the ruling but would continue to pursue copyright infringement cases.

MARRIAGES

Gwyneth Paltrow to Chris Martin. Dec. 5 in Santa Barbara, Calif. Bride is an actress. Groom is the lead singer of Coldplay.

Mary J. Blige to Kendu Isaacs. Dec. 7 in Bergen County, N.J. Bride is a recording artist. Groom is a music producer.

Deaths

Ellen E. Moraskie, 45, of cancer. Dec. 13 in Miami. Moraskie most recently held the position of senior VP of Warner/Chappell Music in Miami, where she was instrumental in signing and developing the writing careers of such prominent Latin songwriters as Franco De Vita, Sergio George and Robi Rosa. Prior to her time at Warner/Chappell, she established Sony Music Publishing’s U.S. Latin division, where she served as Latin American regional director. Moraskie is survived by both parents, two sons and three siblings.

DJ Nevins Spins Coors Deal

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

DJ/producers/remixers Jason Nevins is aware that it takes more than the dance floor to get his music heard. Earlier this year, he inked a deal with Coors Brewing Co. (Beau Box, Billboard, Sept. 13).

On Jan. 9, Coors will commence the advertising campaign for its Fine Light Beer in the U.K. with an ad created for TV and cinema.

The 60-second spot features the sounds of “I’m the Main Man,” created and produced by Nevins. The track includes a sample from T. Rex’s "Telegram Sam.”

The TV and cinema campaigns are part of the £19 million ($32.5 million) launch of Coors Fine Light Beer.

“You can’t rely solely on dance floors anymore,” says Nevins, who signed with BMG Music Publishing nearly two years ago—and whose music has been licensed to films, videogames and TV commercials. "In today’s economy, to thrive, survive and gain notoriety, you must mass-market yourself.”

Nevins also notes that “I’m the Main Man” was not signed to a label when Coors licensed it. So, he says, “the gross revenue comes to my production company [Nevco Productions] rather than a label. For one, the money is coming directly to me.”

Earlier this year, Nevins scored a top 10 hit in the U.K. with “I’m in Heaven” by Jason Nevins Presents U.K.N Y. featuring Holly James.

For Coors, the goal of the Fine Light Beer “Snowstorm” spot—an outdoor rave shot in the Rocky Mountains in Canada—was simple enough: target young adults.

“Enter Dave Bartram, head of U.K. media and marketing at BMG Music Publishing, who sent several potential tracks to the production company (Mustard London) and ad agency (the Leith Agency in Edinburgh, Scotland) working on the project.

Within one week, Bartram says both firms, along with Coors, were raving about the Nevins track. According to Coors marketing director David Preston, the brewery wanted high-energy music that had a classic feel with contemporary appeal.

"At first, we thought the T. Rex sample might be polarizing," Preston notes. "But the opposite appears to be true. There is a real fusion with REX [and the band’s founder] Marc Bolan.

"In the U.K., BMG Music Publishing controls 50% of Nevins’ and Bolan’s publishing. The latter is solely for synch licensing and going through Wizard Bahamas.

"Because of the recognizable sample coupled with Nevins’ contemporary beats, Bartram believes the Jeremy Haccoun-lensed ad, which he likens to a pop music video, will reach far beyond its core audience. ‘Don’t be surprised if this ad reaches a good cross-section of the demographics,’ Bartram says.

Bartram says he is currently shopping other Nevins tracks to several clients, including Coca-Cola and Ford. At press time, Nevins’ manager, Gary Salzman of Big Management in New York, said a verbal agreement had been reached with Gurt Records in the U.K. to release "I’m the Main Man.”

MILEPOSTS

WIRELESS COBO

Wireless costumers nationwide are getting a wide array of Latin music to their cell phone, as thanks to a series of new deals.

Most recently, San Francisco-based Faith West and Miami-based Wireless Latin Entertainment (Wilaen) have agreed to provide AT&T Wireless with Latin ring tones and graphics that can be purchased through a downloadable application called Latin Mobile.

According to Wilaen CEO Luis Samra, Latin Garage has a catalog of more than 600 Latin songs in a variety of genres, including pop, ballads and regional. The catalog comprises works from such publishers as EMI, Warner/Chappell, Sony and Peer music, as well as a host of smaller publishing houses.

Wilaen created Latin Garage, which was launched last November. It is available to Verizon Wireless, U.S. Cellular and Alltel users. The application offers cross-over songs, its focus is Latin-specific content.

"The type of music we’re offering wasn’t there before,” Samra says. “There are companies that offer Latin ring tones as part of their catalog, but they are not this specifically focused.

Latin Garage’s specialist content was a factor in its alliance with Faith West. Although Faith West usually licenses catalog and then provides it to carriers, it has a partnership in place with Wilaen.

“We consider it a full-partner- ship, and we consider them experts in Latin music,” Faith West president Carolynne Schloeder says.

She adds that more carriers are adding Latin music to their offerings as they realize the importance of providing service to the Hispanic community.

Faith West first tested Latin ring tones by offering a limited number through Modtones earlier last year. The response was positive, despite the initially small offering. “It got the carriers that there was a potential,” Schloeder says.

Following the deal with AT&T, Faith West and Wilaen are preparing to launch their service in Latin America, and conversations are under way with several major carriers there.

Although the ring-tone market has established itself in several countries, such as Japan, it is only now taking off in other markets, including Latin America, where the technology is just being introduced. Thus, the potential for Latin ring tones in that specific region is strong.

"If we market it properly and reach this target market through the right channels, we should be able to grow this [Latin] segment within the overall industry,” Schloeder says. In the U.S. alone, she adds, the ring-tone market will probably double in 2004.

In the meantime, Latin Garage continues to work in expanding its catalog. It is currently negotiating with additional publishers, including Univision.

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Fox Runs Afool Of FCC
Complaints Over Potty-Talk At Billboard Awards

BY BILL HOLLAND
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Federal lawmakers and Federal Communications Commission officials say the Fox Network might have stepped in the same doo-doo that "Simple Life" TV star Nicole Richie referenced in her award presentation comments on the 2003 Billboard Music Awards, broadcast live Dec. 10.

Washington policymakers and agency officials say they have received many complaints about the potty-talk, which Fox producers failed to bleep even with a five-second delay facility.

In the presentation spot, Richie was cautioned by her "Simple Life" co-star Paris Hilton that the show was live and "to watch the bad language."

Richie responded by joking about the "rural show of city girls infil- trating a rural town: 'Why do they even call it the 'Simple Life'? Have you ever tried to get cow shit out of a Prada purse? It's not so fucking simple.'"

The barnyard joke didn't get a big laugh from Rep. Lamar S. Smith, R-Texas, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property. Smith is the co-author of a bill to ban such words from broadcast TV.

"Yes, I've received complaints about it," he says. "I think the vast majority of the American public would consider such words objectionable, particularly to children, and the use of the words [on a TV show] would be contrary to accepted community standards."

ANOTHER FOX FAUX PAS

Fox released an apology for the technical goof up, but Brent Brezell, president of the Parents Television Council, doesn't buy it.

"These 'apologies' from Fox are wearing thin," he says. "Fox certainly had the ability to block the indecent language that aired Wednesday night during the Billboard Awards."

Brezell says it is "becoming obvious that Fox wants this indecent language on the air as a way of shocking audiences and scoring cheap ratings points."

Richie's remarks became the third time in a year that Fox included the word "fuck" in a network broadcast. "In fact it was the 2002 Fox broadcast of the exact same program that contained Cher's use of the F-word," Brezell says.

On Oct. 6, the FCC's Enforcement Bureau rejected complaints by the Par-

ents Television Council and others that Bono's use of the phrase "this is really, really fucking brilliant" on a Golden Globe awards broadcast in January 2003 failed to meet the test for indecency. The bureau ruled that Bono's indiscretion was so "fleeting and isolated," as an adjectival expletive that it was not uttered in a sexual context, that it did not break the rules.

The bill Smith co-sponsors with Rep. Doug Ose, R-Cal.—H.R. 3687—spells out in detail what is forbidden on radio and TV. It doesn't pull punch-
es, but it might confuse the grammar-challenged. It reads:

"As used in this section, the term 'profane,' used with respect to lan-
guage, includes the words 'shit,' 'piss,' 'fuck,' 'cunt,' 'arsehole' and the phrases 'cock sucker,' 'motherfucker,' and 'arsehole,' compound use (including hyphenated compounds) of such words and phrases with each other or with other words or phrases, and other grammatical forms of such words and phrases (including verb, adjective, gerund, participle, and infinitive forms)."

SPLITTING HAIRS

Of the FCC's Bono decision, Smith says the commission "is being disin-
genuous to outlaw a word but not an adjective. That's splitting hairs a lit-
tle too closely."

Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., also intro-
duced a late-session resolution con-
demning the FCC's decision regarding Bono's use of the word "fuck."

The resolution has 11 co-sponsors.

Staffers for several FCC commissi-

doners also tell Billboard they have received complaints ranging from the earlier Cher and Bono expletives on TV as well as full-blown sex talk on morning talk radio, such as on WRKR Detroit in 2003.

Retiring Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-

S.C., also authored an amendment to the FCC authorization bill in June to increase indecency fines following the WRKR incident, making the fines per-

incident rather than per-program. The bill is still pending.

Democrat FCC Commissioner Mich-

ael Copps has also suggested that broadcasters would pay more attention to current rules if the commission pulled a few licenses rather than bleeping comments on the BMAs. These follow other complaints rang-
ing from the earlier Cher and Bono expletives on TV as well as full-blown sex talk on morning talk radio, such as on WRKR Detroit in 2003.

LARS BRANDEL

BIG Gets New Ad Director

Suzanne Lang has joined Bill-

board Information Group as ad-

vertising sales director, corporate accounts.

Lang, an avid music fan, will de-

velop the non-advertising cate-

gory, a rapidly expanding seg-

ment for Billboard.

Lang previously was advertising director of Blender magazine.

Before that, she was corporate ac-

counts director at Spin magazine and entertainment manager for Gear magazine.

Lang is a graduate of the Uni-

versity of California at Berkeley. Based in New York, she reports to John Kilcullen, president and publisher of Billboard Informa-

tion Group.

Gibson Creates Digital Jukebox

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Gibson Audio, launched by the Gibson Guitar Corp. in May 2003, will introduce the Wurlitzer Digital Jukebox at the Consumer Electronics Show, to be held Jan. 8-11 in Las Vegas.

Two of the three Wurlitzer Digital Jukebox models—a floor-standing, all-in-one design featuring a Klipsch speaker system and a component version designed for integration into existing home entertainment equipment—enable users to store 1,000 CDs as Window-

ews Media files and feature a wireless touchscreen remote control. Both will be priced for less than $2,000.

The third, which will sell for less than $1,000, is a tabletop model with a built-in touchscreen interface that stores up to 500 CDs.

When a CD is inserted, the juke-

box captures and stores such infor-

mation as the artist's name, album and song titles and cover art.

Users can build personal play-

lists, create mix CDs, export songs to an MP3 player or distribute music to other Wurlitzer receivers in the home.

The Wurlitzer Digital Jukebox is expected to ship in late summer 2004. It provides access to the Wurlitzer Music Service, developed by Loudeye, which offers 100 channels of digital radio and a download store.

"From a functional perspective, I would say it's light years ahead of any-

thing on the market," says Kris Carter, president of Gibson Audio.

Carter says a unique feature is the product's interface. The wireless remote, about the size of a PDA, has a rich, graphical touchscreen interface, he notes.

"It basically gives you all the types of functionality that you could have on an iTunes or Musicmatch jukebox on a computer, except it puts it in a small device in your hand where you can sit in your normal entertain-

ment space, as opposed to [at] a computer," Carter says. "We're big believers in 'Music belongs where music belongs,' which is in your liv-

ing room."

(Continued on page 9)
'Gospel Queen' Dies

Vestal Goodman Found Fame In The '50s

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Vestal Goodman, the beloved "Queen of Gospel Music," died Dec. 30 in Nashville, Tenn., after a battle with cancer.

Goodman was an accomplished vocalist and pianist who performed on radio and television throughout her career. Her deep voice and powerful delivery made her a favorite among gospel music fans.

In her lifetime, Goodman recorded numerous albums and charted several hits on the Gospel music charts. She was a charter member of the Country Western Gospel Association and a founding member of the Gospel Music Association.

Vestal Goodman was born in 1926 in Kentucky and began singing in church choirs as a child. She went on to study at the New Orleans School of Music and later joined the Gospel music circuit.

Her first major hit was "I'm Gonna Sing of My Deliverance," which she recorded in 1955. The song became a standards in the genre and helped establish her as a leading figure in gospel music.

Throughout her career, Goodman worked with many notable artists, including Mahalia Jackson and Sister Rosetta Tharpe. She was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1988.

Goodman was also a prominent civic leader, working to promote education and social justice. She was a member of the Nashville NAACP and worked to improve conditions for African Americans.

Her legacy continues to inspire new generations of gospel musicians and fans alike.
Congress Must Step Up

Humpty Dumpty was way ahead of his time when he scolded Alice in Lewis Carroll’s “Through the Looking Glass.”

“When I use a word,” he said, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

More often than not, especially in highly contested disputes, both sides attempt to use the Humpty Dumpty rule to their advantage.

That’s where we have courts of law.

In its recent file-sharing ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., reminded us, once again, that Humpty Dumpty notwithstanding, words mean what they mean—nothing more, nothing less.

The court narrowly and literally interpreted the Digital Millennium Copyright Act in reaching its decision in the Verizon case, and it was right to do so.

But rest assured, the verdict was not a great victory for illegal file sharers, nor was it a compelling setback for the Recording Industry Assn. of America.

The court merely stated that the writers of the law did not anticipate the current state of affairs involving illegal file sharing. No matter how much sympathy one might have for copyright holders—and the court appeared to express a great deal of sympathy for them—laws should not be stretched to fit circumstances they do not address.

In this case, technology simply out-raced the law. When the act was written, Napster was the standard for file sharing, and the technology was based on storing files on a central server.

When the industry filed suit to shut down Napster, the case was a slam-dunk. But now, the software used by the most popular service, Kazaa, merely provides a means for file sharers to find each other on the Internet. They retain files on, and swap them from, their own computers.

Of course, one could argue that Congress’ intent was clear; the act was meant to prevent violations of copyright law on the Internet, which Kazaa aids and abets.

But, the law is very specific in outlining the circumstances under which its subpoena power can be used. Now, we know why finding loopholes is such a big business.

The blessing of the ruling is that it puts the ball back squarely where it belongs—in Congress.

The perennial problem with the laws on Capitol Hill is that they would rather follow than lead. And, in many cases, they avoid hard choices like the plague.

But now, the ruling makes clear that there is no escaping what needs to be done. It’s time for lawmakers to step up and resolve this issue with legislation.

The current state of affairs is intolerable. An industry that’s being ravaged, artists are being robbed of their creative endeavors—and thousands have lost their jobs. What’s more, copyright law is fast becoming a joke.

The Internet isn’t the Wild West. Property rights need to be respected.

Portnow Ready For Second Awards Show

BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—The usual panoply of nominated stars and a few new wrinkles are surfacing for the 46th Annual Grammy Awards.

On Feb. 8, the 2004 ceremony will return to the Staples Center in Los Angeles following a one-year sojourn at Radio City Music Hall in New York. For the second year in a row, the Grammys will take place on a Sunday evening, rather than on a week night as they have in the past.

"Last year, Sunday was good on every possible level," says Neil Portnow, president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, which presents the Grammys. "Of course, we look to our network partners at CBS in those situations for their guidance and input, because they're in the business of television 24-7.

"My take from them is that they're very pleased with us being on a Sunday. I would expect it'll be good for us again this year, and I wouldn't see any reason in the immediate future that we would change that."

"GRAMMY MOMENTS"

Artists who will appear on the Pierre Cossette-produced show are still being determined. But Portnow foresees a broadcast that will feature what he likes to call "Grammy moments."

He says, "That would be either the special segments that resonate in one way or another—based on something special that happened during the year or related to our nominations process—or special musical combinations that you won't see anywhere else, that only we have been able to do successfully. Examples [from 2003] are Coldplay with the New York Philharmonic or James Taylor with Vanessa Carlton and John Mayer or the Joe Strummer tribute."

Portnow does not believe that this year's heavy weighting of top nominees in the R&B and hip-hop categories will diminish the show's appeal to fans of music outside that genre.

"I actually think the nominations are pretty broad," he says. "I do think that you've got a stronger representation of R&B and hip-hop than you may have seen in the past, but if you look through the list, there's quite a bit of variety. I'm not feeling that we're challenged in terms of coming up with a balanced show."

Portnow—who made his first Grammy appearance as NARAS president at last year's awards show—is unsure whether he will appear onstage again this year. But he says it's a possibility, since NARAS is mounting a new consumer-awareness campaign (see The Last Word, page 74).

This year, the pretelecast awards ceremony—an afternoon event previously held in the main awards-show venue, at which the majority of the Grammys are handed out—will be handled differently.

(Continued on page 15)
Music

MUSIC 2004 PREVIEW

Sting’s Good Works Earn NARAS Honor

By Melinda Newman

Los Angeles—Tony Bennett, Elvis Costello, Elton John and Dave Matthews are among the artists who will pay tribute to Sting when the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences honors him Feb. 6 as the MusiCares 2004 Person of the Year.

The gala will be held at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, Calif.

Other acts paying tribute will include Charles Aznavour, Black Eyed Peas, Dido, Diana Krall, k.d. lang, Jennifer Nettles, John Mayer, Rufus Wainwright and Wynonna. Each artist will sing either a Police or Sting tune.

Money raised from the evening goes to the MusiCares financial assistance program, which aids people in the music industry financially and medically. Past events have raised more than $1 million.

Previous honorees include John, Bennett, Bono, Billy Joel, Paul Simon, Bonnie Raitt, Quincy Jones, Phil Collins and Stevie Wonder.

"With the Person of the Year, we’ve got a fortunate history of some phenomenal honorees," NARAS president Neil Portnow says. At last year’s dinner, "we honored Bono, and it was one of those incredible nights. I said, ‘Great. What are we going to do next year to top that?’ We felt that, for the benefit of MusiCares, we should seek out an individual of great stature, of great respect, but also someone who filled the bill—someone who’s not only a great artist but also humanitarian and philanthropic.

"As you begin to look at the artist community for that, some folks just stand out," Portnow continues. "Sting certainly did, and we’ve had him on our radar for a few years. We always thought he would be a great honoree, and this was the right time for all of us to do this, and he graciously accepted. We’re absolutely thrilled."

For Sting—who was recently honored with the Billboard Century Award—sending his name to the cause was an easy decision. "MusiCares looks after musicians who are less fortunate than people like myself; people who are on hard times who have given their services to the industry and have fallen foul of circumstances, people on the street or with drug problems or whatever," Sting says. "You call MusiCares up and they say, ‘Well, what do you need? Your rent paid? Your rehabilitation program?’ I think it’s important work. So I’m the figurehead this year, and I’m very proud to do that."

The MusiCares board of directors, key staff and senior NARAS management select the annual honoree.

"It’s pretty much internal and staff-driven," Portnow says. "MusiCares has its own board of directors, separate and independent of the Recording Academy. Ultimately, between the board’s suggestions and the staff’s considerations, and then I get to put my two cents in. We’ve come up with our decision."

In addition to MusiCares, Sting has a long history of supporting causes. He and his wife, Trudie Styler, co-founded the Rainforest Foundation. Among the other organizations he has endorsed are Amnesty International, Live Aid and the Juvenile Diabetes’ Carousel of Hope.

Additional reporting by Chris Morris in Los Angeles.

Grammys Great for Radio Promotion

By Marc Schifman

Packaging a promotion around the Grammys is gold for a radio station.

It’s especially effective for top 40 stations, since the format plays many of the major nominees, Infinity VP of programming Jon Zellner says.

Zellner’s KMXV Kansas City, Mo., will be knee-deep in Grammy coverage. The morning show will broadcast live from the event in Los Angeles. Contest winners will also make the trip, allowing Zellner’s station to promote a one-of-a-kind opportunity.

"You can’t buy these tickets anywhere," Zellner says. "It’s not like a flyaway to see a regular concert."

Adding to the value of the promotion, Zellner gets sound bites from nominated artists telling listeners to phone in to win the trip. They are used as production elements on the air.

"We have the nominees doing the soliciting themselves," Zellner says. "Any time radio associates itself with superstars, we’re doing a good job of selling the music message."

Zellner admits that he has had his qualms with the event in the past. "Up until last year, I’d lost faith. The Grammys were becoming less and less appeal in recent years. Last year with Simon & Garfunkel opening and [the other performers], it was a very mass-appeal show."

Not all programmers are convinced of the value in the Grammys. "I’ve found that there is not the allure as in years past," says Kelli Cluque, operations manager of rock KCXX (103.9) Riverside, Calif.

Cluque believes that between all the awards shows as well as other entertainment choices, "it’s hard for a mass of people to be excited about the same thing."

Dave McKay, PD of top 40 WPST Trenton, N.J., adds, "I’m not sure that the audience sees the Grammys as much better than any of the other shows."

While McKay does not rule out a Grammy giveaway for his station this year, he says the MTV Video Music Awards is a much bigger event, given the artists his station plays.

Grammys’ Event Week

By Margo Whitmire

Los Angeles—As the Feb. 8 Grammy Awards ceremony draws near, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences plans to celebrate the musical community here with a weeklong array of events.

While past years have featured events throughout the month of February, this year NARAS contracted the activities to seven days. "We decided to take a more direct role in designing and hosting programs surrounding the Grammy Awards," NARAS president Neil Portnow says.

Featuring concerts, workshops and educational seminars, Grammys Week pays tribute to different musical genres, tackles entertainment law issues and honors artistic contributions.

The following is a complete list of Grammys Week events. All activities will be held in the Los Angeles area. Events open to the public have the location listed. All other events are by invitation only.

- The Gibson/Baldwin Grammy High School Jazz Ensembles will perform Feb. 3 with special guest Kurt Elling at the Catalina Bar & Grill on Sunset Boulevard. The event is open to the public.

- A Salute to the Art of the Grammys will honor 3-D artist Charles Fazzino’s contributions to this year’s awards Feb. 5.

- Jazz artists Clark Terry and Gerald Wilson will perform live Feb. 4 in tribute to the American music form at the Salute to Jazz.

- Irish flutist Sir James Galway is to be honored Feb. 5 at the Salute to Classical Music.

(Continued on page 14)
BMG Takes Its Turn As Grammy Disc Distributor

BY MARGO WHITMIRE

LOS ANGELES—Ranging from the infectious buoyancy of hip-hop duo OutKast to the heartfelt rock of Warren Zevon, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences presents an eclectic array of nominated artists on its annual Grammy Awards CD compilation.

With what NARAS president Neil Portnow calls “one of the most complicated contracts in the industry,” the organization rotates distribution of the project each year among the five major. This year’s disc will be out Jan. 20.

BMG Strategic Marketing Group takes its turn this year, and executive VP Joe DiMuro says the group is “thrilled to be joining forces with the Recording Academy to bring together the best music of the year.”

He adds that “every music fan can find something to like about this collection, with the amazing range of artists and songs.”

BMG International will handle distribution outside the U.S.

The 21-track set features songs by multiple nominees Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Missy Elliott, Bon Jovi, Justin Timberlake, Eminem and Luther Vandross, among others.

Portnow explains that because the process of licensing the tracks cannot begin until after the nominations are announced, it is always a challenge to bring the compilation to the market prior to the Grammy telecast.

“We typically begin with the album, record and song of the year and best new artist categories and add other categories and recordings as we feel is creatively and musically appropriate,” he says.

During the late ’90s, NARAS released genre-specific compilations but returned to the single-compilation format in 2002.

The top-seller remains its 2000 collection, with 996,000 units sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Last year’s compilation beat out its 2002 predecessor with total sales of 552,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“We had one of the best years we’ve had in a long time, especially given the climate, sales being what they are,” Portnow says of the new CD. “Part of this has to do with, in any given year, what the nominations are like and what you have to work with. We obviously have no control over that—our voters tell us who they need to be.”

As with past compilations, the 2004 edition will deliver a portion of the proceeds to NARAS MusiCares and the Grammy Foundation.

Portnow is optimistic of this year’s project, saying, “This is going to be a very special thing that has a lot of depth, a lot of variety and a lot of appeal to a pretty broad base of music consumers.”

+Latin Grammys Grow In Stature
But Mainstream Show Maintains Importance

BY LEILA COBO

When members of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences received the list of titles to be considered for the first round of voting for the Grammy Awards, they might have been surprised by the blending of the salsa and merengue categories into one. That happened because there were too few entries in the merengue category.

Notably absent were submissions from Miami-based label J&N, which specializes in merengue, bachata and other tropical music.

J&N president Juan Hidalgo explains that the lack of entries was “an oversight because of confusion from label staff, which had sent titles to the Latin Grammys for consideration just a few months before.

While J&N says it will again submit its product next year, its absence this time around underscores the Latin Grammys’ growing importance, even in the face of the venerability and age generated by its older, more established cousins.

“There’s definitely a change from three years ago,” says Tony Moreno, president of indie MP Records, referring to when the Latin Grammys were first staged. “However, the American [mainstream] Grammys are definitely important—even if we’re a small part of it.”

“The American Grammys are definitely important—even if we’re a small part of it.”

—TONY MORENO, MP RECORDS

But I don’t think it has taken away from the main stream Grammys.

Indeed, the Grammy nominations generated a publicity blitz from all Latin-nominated labels and artists.

For up-and-coming acts in particular, a Grammy nomination automatically gives credibility and sales potential to an album that might have otherwise been unnoticed.

“One of the most important things for an artist winning any kind of nomination [for the Latin Grammys] is to use it on the press release,” says Maria Meyer, VP of Latin corporate and external affairs for the Latin Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences. “Getting a Latin Grammy nomination or a Grammy nomination is something you carry around the rest of your life.”

And getting a Grammy can be a powerful tool. Take

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Awards Show
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“We are producing and mounting the pretelecast awards at the L.A. Convention Center, right next to the Staples Center,” Portnow says. “It’ll be a little bit earlier than it has been. We’ll have a cocktail reception, and we’re going to build a separate stage and try to create a little bit more of an event out of what part of the process than we have in the past.

We really believe that people who win those Grammys are just as important as people who are on the actual telecast. We want to show that respect and build this into more of a franchise. Eventually, who knows? This may have some television viability on its own in the future.”

For now, Portnow says the show will probably continue to alternate between New York and Los Angeles.

Portnow says, “When you think of two very critical factors—our membership and where they’re located, and B, our industry partners and where they’re located—at the East Coast and the West Coast you have the most fair access to the greatest number of people in both those communities. At some point, we always want to have people have the convenience of location.

“Beyond that,” he continues, “it gets down to business issues and considerations. Both New York and L.A. are always very aggressive with us from a business standpoint. It means tens of millions of dollars in revenue. We listen very objectively and openly to proposals and ideas that come in and ultimately make a decision.”

However, Portnow does not discount moving the awards to another locale in the future.

“I don’t think we’re officially locked into any formula here,” he says.

Grammy Ratings Share

Nielsen Media Research has monitored the Grammy Awards telecast since 1974. Following are some Grammy ratings milestones.

The highest-rated show, in terms of overall ratings and share, was the 1974 telecast, which garnered a 30.3 rating/52 share. Nielsen does not have the number of viewers available for that telecast, but the show was seen in 20 million U.S. households.

The 1984 telecast registers as the most-watched ceremony. According to Nielsen, 59 million viewers tuned in to see Michael Jackson be the top winner that year.

The lowest-rated Grammy Awards was the 1995 show, which received a 11.8 rating/19 share, or 17 million U.S. viewers. The big winners that year included Sheryl Crow, Bruce Springsteen and Tony Bennett.

The highest-rated Grammy show of the 1990s was the 1993 telecast, which got a 19.9 rating/31 share, or 30 million U.S. viewers. Eric Clapton reignited that year.

So far, the highest-rated Grammy show of the new century is the 2000 telecast, which scored a 17.3 rating/27 share, or 28 million viewers. The big winner was Santana.

CARLA HAY
Crabb Clan Relishes Grammy Nod

In the life of every act, there are those landmark moments that define a career. The Crabb Family enjoyed more than its share of those in 2003. Who could forget its performance at last spring’s Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards? When the five siblings took the stage to deliver a scorching rendition of “Through the Fire,” electricity swept the venue. They won more fans at the Christian music community’s annual gathering in Estes Park, Colo., in August, and they became favorites at the Grand Ole Opry. 2004 looks to be another good year, as the group is nominated for a Grammy Award in the best Southern, country or bluegrass gospel album category for “The Walk.” Jason Crabb remains telling a friend it would be wonderful to someday be nominated, then get on the bus to head to the next gig and hear the good news.

“I just sat there numb for about 30 minutes. I couldn’t believe it,” the soulful 26-year-old vocalist says. “I’d never dreamed in a million years for this.”

Kelly, who performs along with brothers Adam, Jason and Aaron (sister Terah left the group last summer to spend more time with her husband), says, “I’m just still in shock. It’s beyond my wildest dreams.”

“The Walk,” issued in April 2003 on Daywind Records, marked a new era for the Crabb Family as parents Gerald and Kathy handed the reins to their offspring. “They worked so hard for 11 years straight. They were just ready for some time at home,” Kelly says of her parents, who still manage the group. “Dad worked a lot of overtime on his songwriting, and my dad is an evangelist as well. There was more opportunity for him to do that. And I think they finally felt like we were old and mature enough to handle it.”

Powered by Gerald’s great songs and the siblings’ incredible vocals, “The Walk” was embraced by not only the Crabb Family’s Southern gospel base but also a broader audience.

“They began in the Southern market, and that core fan base is extremely important to them,” Daywind director of marketing Susan Puckett says. “But if you listen to their music, even from the beginning, it’s Crab music. Some of their songs have black gospel leanings, the ballads are inspirational and AC. They do bluegrass, country and Southern gospel, it’s all over the place but easily identifiable as Crab music.”

A new, live Crabb album arrives Feb. 10. A studio set will follow in June and will feature new songs from Gerald and a special live recording with the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

“We want it to go to all genres of music,” Jason says. “I really don’t know what God has in store for us. Wherever he wants us, that’s where we want to go.”

The Beat

Continued from page 11

have one, and he'll have one.”

Lee is still reeling from her group’s five nominations, which include the coveted album of the year and best new artist slots. Should she leave the Staples Center with a Grammy in tow, she says, “I’ll send it to my dad for sure. My dad is a musician, he’s living vicariously through me. I let him do all the fun stuff like collect the awards.”

WHERE DO YOU KEEP YOURS? Give Audioslave’s Tom Morello credit for being multidimensional. This year Audioslave is nominated for two Grammy Awards. While they are the band’s first nods, Morello has a pair of trophies from his days in Rage Against the Machine.

So where are those statues? “Mine are in a trophy case between some of Secretariat’s hair from his mane and a tooth from a prehistoric shark,” Morello says. “It was excited by the nomination,” he says. “When I was a kid, the bands I liked the most never really got nominated for Grammys. [But] the Grammys have come a long way, and now many of the CDs that have been nominated are ones that I’m proud to have in my iPod.”

REALY, JUST TO BE NOMINATED . . . With a number of Grammy Awards already in his possession for Nirvana and Foo Fighters, Dave Grohl can afford to be gracious about being happy just to have again made the prestigious short-list of nominees.

“It doesn’t really even matter that you win. It’s just the fact that you’ve been nominated,” he says. “I’ve got enough of these things. Spread the love. Winning is great, but it’s just being there. I fly my family in, we go to the parties afterward. It’s really about being recognized that we worked hard on this thing.”

Newcomer Kelly Clarkson agrees that the nomination is enough and calls her nod in the best female pop vocal performance category the high-light of 2003.

But Clarkson admits that she’s a dark horse. “To be perfectly honest, I don’t expect to win,” she says. “It would be really cool if I did, but I’m up against a lot of great artists. I’m happy to be there. If I win, that will be cool, and you’re going to see a big old freak outstage, because I’m going to flip out if I win.”

SET YOUR TIMER: Should Black Eyed Peas win any of the three awards they are up for, don’t expect will.i.am to stop his speech when his time is up. “I was thinking, ‘Dang, we’ve been doing this ever since 1992. If we win one, we get a lot of people to thank who are responsible for us being here,’” he says. “If we win, we’re putting them up on eBay—we can get a lot.”

Legacy Plays Role In New Sets

Legacy will be more reality than theme in gospel with this year’s crop of new releases. The debuts of such artists as Kierra Sheard and Tye Tribbett are highly anticipated, and their building buzz will likely help them explode on the charts.

EMI Gospel is banking on the spring debut of Sheard, the 16-year-old daughter of Karen Clark Sheard and an heir to one of the biggest dynasties in gospel, the famed Clark Sisters. Sony is backing Tribbett, the son of gospel radio powerhouse Neicy Tribbett.

While such artists, there is little need for perfect timing, as in the case of last year’s up-and-coming gospel group Rizen. Instead, the industry will be watching, and from early indications, it won’t be disappointed.

Others sure to strike a chord include R.J. Helton, an “American Idol” runner-up who had a strong following before he was signed; Bishop Eddie Long, the latest acclaimed pastor to throw his hat into the gospel ring; and new-styled choir New Direction, which backed Shirley Caesar on her 2003 entry, “Shirley Caesar and Friends.”

All will be hoping for the kind of success that fueled Smokie Norful’s rise to the gospel forefront in 2003. But 2004 is also sure to be dominated by gospel’s growing list of heavy hitters—Yolanda Adams, Donnie McClurkin, Kirk Franklin, BeBe Winans, CeCe Winans, Kurt Carr, Melvin Williams, Tramaine Hawkins, Vickie Winans, Bobby Jones, Fred Hammond and Richard Smallwood—all of whom have new releases due this year.

Even R&B legend Smokey Robinson is releasing his first gospel set, due in March from Liquid 8 Records.

The short-list of what you can expect kicks off with the Jan. 27 bow of “WOW Gospel 2004,” the genre’s most successful compilation. The seventh and current installment of the series includes titles from Norful, Donald Lawrence & the Tri-City Singers, the Blind Boys of Alabama and Deitrick Haddon as well as gospel mainstays Bishop T.D. Jakes, CeCe Winans, Harvey Watkins Jr., Hammond and McClurkin.

Also on tap is the long-awaited sophomore release from Kim Burnell, also from Shanachie Records; the sophomore set of Michelle Williams (Jan. 13); Rikyah’s self-titled debut (Jan. 6); and the late-January release of Dream, from BeBe Winans’ new label, the Movement Group.

Events

Continued from page 12

• Featuring live performances and surprise guests, Soul to Soul: A Grammy Salute to Musical Masters will unveil the restored original 1971 music document “Soul to Soul” Feb. 5.

• The Gibson/Baldwin Grammy High School Jazz Ensembles will perform Feb. 5 at the Knitting Factory in Hollywood. The event is open to the public.

• On Feb. 6, Southern California high-school students will get an inside look at various music careers from top music professionals with the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music-sponsored Grammy in the Schools.

• Sony Music chairman/CEO Andrew Lack will keynote the Feb. 6 Entertainment Law Initiative, which will examine the relationship between the legal profession and the recording community.

• The MusiCares 2004 Person of the Year Celebration Gala will honor Sting Feb. 6 for his artistic and social contributions to the musical community (see story, page 16).

• The Gibson/Baldwin Grammy High School Jazz Ensembles will perform Feb. 7 with Eric Marienthal and Mindi Abair aboard the Endless Dreams Yacht at the Rainbow Harbor in Long Beach.

• The 46th Annual Grammy Nominees Reception will toast the nominees Feb. 7.

Latin

Continued from page 13

Miami-based Bacilos, which last year was the surprise winner of the Grammy for best Latin pop album with “Caraluna” (Warner). The win and ensuing publicity boosted the group’s sales in the U.S. and increased its standing abroad, especially in Mexico, according to the label.

Gabriella Martinez, VP of marketing for Warner Music for the Latin region, says both awards are equally important, noting, “We put the same emphasis and same resources in promoting our nominees for the Grammys and Latin Grammys.”
Verizon Ruling Misses Forest For Trees, Industry Says

The new year has barely begun, and record companies already have their backs up, thanks to a stunning new court decision.

Using a razor-sharp interpretation of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit on Dec. 19 dismissed the recording industry's subpoenas for file-sharers' identities.

The case, Recording Industry Assn. of America vs. Verizon, is now being hailed as a victory for privacy rights.

With the latest ruling, the appellate court reversed two orders of the D.C. federal district court that had directed Verizon to identify a file sharer who was allegedly infringing copyrights on 800 songs.

The RIAA filed 3,000 subpoenas in Washington, D.C., as a prelude to lawsuits against 382 individual users. The appeals court has ruled that those subpoenas are not authorized by the DMCA.

"Internet users are the winners in the Verizon case," says Wendy Seltzer, an attorney with Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF).

"The effect of the decision is that we do not lose our privacy simply by connecting to the Internet. The ruling stops the record labels from taking our free speech rights as collateral damage in the campaign against the American music fan," Seltzer adds.

The EFF filed an amicus brief supporting Verizon on behalf of 45 consumer, privacy and Internet industry groups.

But the ruling has some legal experts baffled.

"Although the court was certainly justified in performing a highly technical analysis of the statute, its result seems to miss the forest for the trees," says Jay Handlin, a partner with Howrey Simon Arnold & White in Los Angeles.

According to Section 512(h) of the DMCA, a copyright owner may "request the clerk of any United States district court to issue a subpoena to an Internet service provider for identification of an alleged infringer."

To get a subpoena, the copyright owner must include with the request a notification identifying the copyrighted works alleged to be infringed.

The notification of the infringement must include six categories of information. One is the "identification of the material that is claimed to be infringing . . . and that is to be removed . . . and information reasonably sufficient to permit the service provider to locate the material."

Verizon argued that with peer-to-peer file sharing, there is no material for the ISP to locate or remove.

Therefore, by definition, a copyright owner seeking a subpoena to identify a P2P file sharer cannot satisfy the statutory requirements because they cannot provide that category of information.

The appeals court agreed with the literal interpretation of the statute and concluded that the DMCA does not authorize such subpoenas.

In response, the RIAA has vowed it will continue to pursue individual copyright infringers.

"This is a disappointing procedural decision, but it only changes the process by which we will file lawsuits against online infringers," RIAA president Cary Sherman said in a statement.

"This decision in no way changes our right to sue on the fact that those who upload or download copyrighted music without authorization are engaging in illegal activity. We can and will continue to file copyright infringement lawsuits against illegal file sharers," Sherman stressed.

A major shift is that the RIAA can no longer notify illegal file sharers before filing lawsuits against them to offer them the opportunity to settle outside of litigation.

The RIAA will now have to file "John Doe" lawsuits based on e-mail addresses of suspected infringers, a tedious process that requires significant judicial oversight.

Critics contend the appeals court never confronts a simple question. "Why isn't the notification of infringement sufficient if, in response to the request for identification of material 'to be removed or access to which is to be disabled,' the copyright owner simply answers 'None?" " Handlin asks.

After all, the purpose of the subpoena provision is to enable copyright owners to identify and pursue legal remedies against infringers.

Let's assume a case where an ISP did have infringing material stored on one of its servers.

If for some reason a copyright owner wanted to obtain the infringer's identity but did not want to ask the ISP to delete the offending files, surely that choice would be up to the copyright owner.

The fact that a copyright owner chose not to ask the ISP to delete files should not negate the owner's ability to subpoena information that they will use to pursue the infringer, Handlin reasons.

The point of Section 512(h) is to let copyright owners discover the information they need to pursue and prosecute infringers.

Members of the record industry are asking why should that purpose be thwarted just because they do not—or, in the case of P2P file sharing, cannot—tell the ISP to delete anything? Good question.

SHERMAN: RIAA WILL CONTINUE FILING SUITS

Seltzer: Internet users won this case
There may well be some truth to the old adage “what doesn’t kill you will make you stronger,” at least as far as independent promoters are concerned. After the independent promoter ranks were thinned and turned upside down in the wake of industry consolidation, surviving labels actually fared pretty well in 2003, with most reporting increases in business over the previous year.

“More people are realizing that they’ll sell more tickets and make more money with local or regional promoters as opposed to a national tour promoter,” Mickelson says. “At least that’s what I’ve been told. Acts can do better with those of us that are really promoters and live by how well our shows do.”

MISS JACKSON TO TOUR R&B queen Janet Jackson will be the featured performer during the AOL Super Bowl XXXVIII Halftime Show, produced by MTV. Super Bowl XXXVIII will be held Feb. 1 at Reliant Stadium in Houston and will air on CBS.

Now we can’t help but observe that there has been a trend of acts that play the Super Bowl and then embark on major tours in the following months, including such artists as Paul McCartney and Tina Turner. If Jackson does tour, the prospects for success are very good. Her last tour out, in 2001, she grossed $41 million. CBS and MTV are owned by Viacom. This marks the second time MTV will produce a Super Bowl Halftime Show for the NFL; MTV produced the show for Super Bowl XXXV in 2001 when the Baltimore Ravens beat the New York Giants. That show featured Aerosmith and ‘N Sync, along with special guests Britney Spears, Nelly and Mary J. Blige.
Stadium Concerts Bring Challenges To Promoters

BY RAY WADDELL

Stadium tours, once a superstar staple of the open-air concert season, are routed less often nowadays. There are two main reasons why: Expenses can be up to five times greater than those for an arena or amphitheater show, and fewer acts can sell 30,000 or more tickets for each date coast to coast.

In 2003, the only acts playing stadiums were Bruce Springsteen and the Rolling Stones, and neither put together an entire 50-plus-market route of strictly stadium shows.

As the box-office power of those acts attest, stadiums are still a key component of the touring industry. The International Assn. of Assembly Managers (IAAM) will hold its second annual international Stadium and Management Conference Jan. 8-10 in Houston (see story, page 22).

But a decade has passed since the heyday of stadium treks. In 1994, fans flocked to stadiums to see Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones, Billy Joel/Elton John, the Eagles and the Grateful Dead.

MUCH MONEY NEEDED

Put simply, stadium shows cost more to produce— a lot more. A tour that carries 10 to 12 trucks of production into arenas will double that number for a stadium show just in sound and staging.

“You’re talking about creating a one-day infrastructure to accommodate 30,000 to 50,000 people, and that gets to be an expensive proposition,” says Brad Wavra, touring VP for Clear Channel Entertainment.

And with acts routing fewer stadium shows, the lack of experience with such events among stadium staff is an issue as well.

“The main challenge is going into a place where they don’t normally do concerts: a lot of times, except for a few markets, the [stadium] staff has never done a concert,” Lawler says. “Not only do you have to educate them, you have to bring in more of your own staff.”

POSTPONEMENTS ALSO COST

The margin of error for a stadium show is quite slim. For example, Kiss/Aerosmith with Ted Nugent (Continued on page 20)

CCE concert production executive Steve Lawler adds: “When you get down to it, you’re talking about $500,000 in extra expenses.”

Wavra says, “The staging alone is $100,000 to $150,000, and that’s a totally extra expense. Your catering goes from $8,000 to $40,000, and your staffing goes way up, as do sound, lighting and security. At a [stadium] festival show that lasts all day, it could cost 10 times as much as a regular show.”

Field covers, chairs, portable restrooms, security fencing and other nontypical show expenses also run up the tab.

“One of the biggest problems you face is when [there is] natural grass and you have to put in that Terraplas field cover,” says Louis Messina, VP with AEG Live and president of the Mesi- na Group. He has produced such stadium concerts as Ozzfest and the George Strait Country Music Festival. “That can be close to $100,000 just for rental.”

BY SUSANNE MULL

The rising importance and popularity of online ticket sales has not gone unnoticed by venue executives, and they are modifying their methods of selling tickets accordingly.

The topic will surely grab the attention of attendees at the annual conference of the International Ticketing Assn. (INTIX), which takes place Jan. 13-16 in Philadelphia.

About half of all event tickets are now sold via the Internet, according to Ticketmaster. So, many venues are increasingly embracing print-at-home ticketing software services.

Ticketmaster first rolled out this option in October 2000 for an NBA Clippers game at Los Angeles’ Staples Center. Now most major ticketing providers, including tickets.com and PacoMedia, offer the option. Buyers print bar-coded paper tickets from their home computers, and bar-code readers scan them for venue entry.

Since its launch, Ticketmaster’s ticketFast print-at-home software has gone live at a rate of 15 venues per week. So far, 1,000 Ticketmaster venues offer the service, and more than 8.5 million ticketFast tickets have been delivered to consumers.

“One of the things we’ve seen is rapid adoption of print-at-home. Any year that [rat-uns] may have hit early on seems to have gone away,” says David Goldberg, Ticketmaster executive VP of strategy and business development.

Goldberg says that ticket buyers needed to come to trust that their home computers would produce valid tickets.

(Continued on page 18)
Multiple tickets can be printed from one at-home purchase. Venue scanners will accept the first ticket, but all other tickets holding that same bar code are invalid once the first one is scanned. This feature financially protects buildings from counterfeits. But box-office executives empathize with patrons who unknowingly buy duplicated print-at-home tickets from scalpers. “You see more and more people wanting instant gratification,” says Judith Herbst, Keswick Theatre’s business manager and programming subcommittee chair at INTIX 2004. “I foresee that [more venues, including Keswick] will have print-at-home as soon as people figure out how to do it safely.”

But don’t expect the physical box office to disappear any time soon. “We’ve just had to become more efficient,” Herbst says. “Our box office doesn’t just sell tickets. We give directions, take care of the Web site and [address] complaints. Box offices are being asked more and more to think outside of the box.”

POSIBLE PROBLEMS

A number of venues—including the Denver Center for the Performing Arts in Denver and the Keswick Theatre in Glenside, Pa.—are investigating upgrading their ticketing systems to use print-at-home technology. But building executives are concerned about potential abuse of the service.

SECONDARY-MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Maureen Andersen, director of ticket sales at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and an INTIX board member, is considering a print-at-home option for her building’s patrons because she wants to build an accurate database of their event preferences. Before patrons print their tickets, the venue can ask them to provide information about their likes and dislikes. “We can find out about their buying habits,” Andersen explains.

The secondary ticketing business—separate from such primary venue ticket-provider operations as Ticketmaster—has also flourished because of the widespread consumer use of the Internet. Concertgoers can now shop for tickets to sold-out shows from such ticket resellers as online auctioneer eBay.

And marketing Carl Thomas notes that “eBay ticketing volume is growing dramatically, and that lends credibility to the secondary market. There are connotations that [selling tickets is] a dark netherworld of bad-guy brokers, but it’s part of the economy.”

Because of this growing market, INTIX 2004 will feature a session detailing eBay’s rise and its strategies for future growth. Collectively, secondary ticketing companies are scooping up tens of millions of dollars by reselling tickets (Billboard, May 24, 2003). This high-stakes operation has alerted primary ticket providers that they need to explore new pricing strategies if they want to reduce reselling activity.

In October 2003, Ticketmaster launched its first concert auction—where tickets were priced according to consumers’ bids—for a Sting charity show. The effort sought to funnel all revenue to the artist and reduce the chance of brokers profiting from the secondary market. Paciolan and tickets.com are also developing similar auction services.

“I think the real benefit is that you are keeping money with the artist,” Ticketmaster’s Goldberg says. “Our role is to try to continue to innovate and provide new services. [Auctions] are a way of appropriating the value brokers are making and [giving] it back to the rightful owners.”

He adds that auctions should gain acceptance because the result will be more tickets sold. If premier, front-of-house tickets are priced more correctly with demand, then back-of-house seats can be reduced accordingly.

“There are ways to reach new patrons and help [venues] grow their business,” Goldberg observes. Tickets.com’s Thomas believes the touring industry will gradually start using new ticketing tools that try to cap secondary-market activity. But at the time of the Sting auction, several music executives expressed concern that holding auctions would give the appearance of gouging consumers on prices (Billboard, Oct. 4, 2003).

But Thomas says, “If the music folks continue to be slow to the dance, they run the risk of having what happened to them in the digital download space. We have all these changes in the way music is consumed, [including] the ticketing industry. The ultimate payoff is getting patrons in seats.”

MORE IN-HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

The online ticketing boom is also fueling a movement among event facilities to shift from a full-service ticketing provider to a venue-managed, in-house system.

As patrons increasingly purchase tickets through the Internet, building executives say that in the future, venues may not require the staff-laden phone centers or box offices of full-service ticket companies. Managers say that if venues can attract consumers to their self-managed ticketing Web sites, they can benefit from ticket transaction surcharges. A full-service operation like Ticketmaster—still by far the most dominant provider in the industry—earns those fees for delivering services to its clients.

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”You are starting to see [venues] decide to take stuff onto themselves,” Denver Center’s Andersen says. “You can do that more with live sites—[you] have more control over your destiny.”

Venues will see a cost in time and staff if they convert to a self-ticketing business, notes Jane Kleinberg, chair of Paciolan, which provides in-house ticketing software. But her company is attempting to show to venues the lucrative upside in making that switch.

She explains that for a venue that sells 300,000 tickets per year, “we’ve been able to show that it could make an extra $600,000 to $1.8 million. A year ago, about 20% of [the country’s] arenas were aware of the self-enableable program.”

(Continued on page 20)
Thank You!

The Spirit of America Tour extends our great appreciation to these members of the Entertainment Industry whose patriotism has led them to contribute their time and talent to bring headline entertainment to America’s Military Bases. We commend their willingness to volunteer to assist in lifting the morale of the Armed Forces of the United States.

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JO DEE MESSINA
DENNIS MILLER
RIDERS IN THE SKY
DARYLE SINGLETARY
ANTHONY SMITH
MARTY STUART
TRAVIS TRITT
RHONDA VINCENT
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The Spirit of America Tour is now booking its second year. Take the opportunity to use a break in your tour to volunteer to entertain at a Military Base within the United States. The Tour will cover all of your expenses for that show. You will never entertain a more grateful audience.

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Charlie Daniels entertains 11,000 sailors at Navy Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois.

The Spirit of America Tour also extends our sincere gratitude to the following people and businesses whose help was essential to the success of the 2003 tour:

Kathy Allmand
Ginger Anderson
Stan Barnett
Sandy Brokaw
Jimmy Burton
Dana Burwell
Brooks Collier
David Corlew
Tony Conway
Duke Cooper
Bebe Evans
Mark Gurvitz
Jeff Hill
Margie Hunt
Joey Lee
Paul Lohr
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Nancy Tunick
Julia Yocum

As Is Management
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The Brokaw Company
Buddy Lee Attractions
Creative Artists Agency
Falcon-Goodman Management

The Firm
Front Page Publicity
Grass Roots Promotions
New Frontier Management
Sony Records - Nashville
William Morris Agency - Nashville
Touring

Stadiums

Continued from page 17

at Detroit’s Comerica Park was the
tion that tour. Originally scheduled for Aug. 15,
the show was lost because of the
blackout that struck the
Northeastern U.S.
The event, which sold out to
the tune of $3.3 million and 40,000
tickets, was rescheduled for Sept. 7. But
tscheduling cost $500,000,
according to Bruce Kapp, the CCF
VP spearheading that tour.
“That half-million became a show
for the next show,” Kapp said at
the time. “We—promoter and
to walk away with a half-
Million less. But it’s still a very
successful show.”

Often, Kapp says, costs associated
with postponing a show are limited to
“advertising a little bit more to let
everyone know when it is.” But in
Detroit, with stadium staging
and production already in place,
everyone ate money on the show.

Wavra says total production costs
for an elaborate stadium show can
be as high as $750,000 to $900,000,
counting everything from staging
and catering to field covers, phone
lines and extra staffing.

“You need to be ultimately con-

fident in your client’s ability to sell
tickets before you undertake a
day of stadium tours, hands often
played arenas and stadiums.

“VP tune blackout band
Continued from page 17

and for production
catering-

of $3.3

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Vegas’
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typical signage

switched to an in-house ticket-

operation

for football,

Ticketing

Continued from page 18

ment model. Now 80% are aware.”
Las Vegas’ Thomas & Mack Center
switched to an in-house ticketing
operation two years ago, and
director Daren Libonati says the
decision has been a boon to the
venue’s bottom line.

With per-ticket surcharges averaging
$5.25, “we are putting our
arms around the lion’s share of
that revenue,” Libonati says. “Ticketing
is allowing us to accomplish a lot of
goals we couldn’t before. It’s a tough
world for all arena managers, we need to start finding ways of cre-
ing [new] revenue.”

Beyond raking in ticket fee
revenue, Libonati adds that Thomas &
Mack can attract more sponsorship
funds through maintaining a
branded ticketing site. In addition
to typical signage throughout the
arena, Thomas & Mack can provide
sponsors advertising space on its
Web site.

By Susanne Ault

Stadium Managers

Trade Strategies

In its second year, the
International
Stadium Managers Conference
(ISMC) is solidifying its
importance in the world of
performance venues.
Presented by the International
Assn. of Assembly Managers, the
conference, which is set for Jan.
8-10 in Houston, will address cur-
rent challenges facing stadium
executives.

“Last year was the birth of
the JP Morgan Chase tennis tourna-
ment and a Dave Matthews Band
conzert—all within a month-long
period [this summer].”
He says that fresh attractions
that Home Depot will launch next
year include a string of motocross
dates. Also on deck at AEG is the
likely construction of two or three
new soccer facilities.

Zeidman points out that at
ISM2004 he wants to learn
more about new techniques in
managing turf. Participants will
address this subject in the ses-
tion titled “Turf, It’s What’s for
Dinner.” The discussion will include panelists as John
Strantz, sports field and grounds
manager at Reliant Stadium in
Houston.

“When you have a natural play-
ing surface, and you’re trying to
do lots of things at the facility,
your turf is going to take a beat-
ing. We’ll be looking for any new
innovative ways to protect the
turf,” Zeidman says.

Great Location
Palmer also notes that the loca-
tion of ISMC 2004 should be a
hit with attendees. Currently, the
conference is tracking healthy regis-
tration numbers, and its sponsor-
ship funds are expected to exceed the
amount earned last year.

Increasing Revenue
Helping stadium managers
bolster profits through more
diverse bookings is among the
topics set for discussion, says
Marc McCullerf, GM of the
Columbus Crew Stadium in
Columbus, Ohio.

“One of our goals is to reduce
the number of dark days at the
building,” says McCullerf, who
participate in a panel titled
“Putting the ‘Multi’ in Multi-Use
Stadiums.” He adds: “I want to look
at how other people have generat-
ed revenue.”

During the session “Learning
From New Facilities,” Lee
Zeidman, senior VP of AEG facili-
ties, will explain that the success
of Home Depot Center in Carson,
Calif., can be credited to its focus
on a varied slate of events during
2003, its debut year.

“I want to talk about the whole
concept of a complex. This is not
just a stand-alone stadium,” Zeid-
man says.

“We put together a 125-acre com-
plex that infuses lots of events at
one time. We had the San Diego
Chargers training for football, had

IEEE Thomas & Mack Center—Reaping Revenue from Its In-House Ticketing Service

In that case, they would have
a normal indoor package, and when
they played stadiums, they would
just add outdoor sound,” he

Then when they went back indoors
they would just leave the [added]
sound behind."

Today, many acts are finding they
can make almost as much money
playing arenas or amphitheaters as
they once did at stadiums, without
nearly as much risk.

“The beauty of an amphitheater
is you have capacities that can
exceed arenas because the entire
audience is located in front of the
stage,” Wavra says. “In most cases,
amphitheaters are designed to
accommodate a one-time crowd of
20,000 to 25,000 people. Sometimes
an act can make more money
from 20,000 people in a shed than
45,000 in a stadium.”

Messina agrees, citing arenas with
their more valuable seat “real estate”
as an important consideration for
top acts. “In today’s world, with the
kind of ticket prices acts like Paul
McCartney and the Stones are get-
ting, they can just make as much
playing arenas as they used to make
playing stadiums,” he says.

But when a stadium tour works,
it works big. The top grossing date
on McCartney’s 2002 tour was $1.4
million from the Tokyodome in
Japan, and Bruce Springsteen & the
E Street Band set a world record last
summer with 10 Giants Stadium
shows in East Rutherford, N.J.,
that grossed some $38 million and
drew 550,000 people.

Without a doubt, the potential
is there to make more money at a
stadium,” Messina says. “It’s about hit-
ing the long ball. There’s no singles
or doubles at stadiums, it’s all about
hitting the home run.”

“Technology allows new competi-
tors to compete in different ways,”
he says. “That tells us we need to be
better at what we do.”

Paperless Tickets

The next wave of the online tick-
eting revolution will be the paper-
less ticket, executives say. As people
increasingly check into airports with
their credit cards—where boarding
passes emerge from kiosks—concert
patrons may use a magnetic-stripe
card to enter venues. At present,
Pacolan offers a digital venue entry
card for its clients.

Participating buildings, includ-

ing Thomas & Mack, electronically
store ticket bar codes that patrons
buy online. The buyers then swipe
their venue card—which uniquely
identifies them like a credit card
and matches them with their tick-
ets—through bar-code scanners
for entry.
Tickets.com will have its own
mag-stripe venue-branded cards in
[ISMC], and IAAM planned to
show,” says Anne Palmer, GM of the
Spartans Stadium in San Jose,
Calif., and chair of the IAAM sta-
diums committee. “We had very
positive feedback from attendees
and basically took that feedback
and built the program from that.
This year will be even better.”

Reliant Stadium will be the site
of Super Bowl XXXVIII, and ISMC
attendants will be able to tour the
building during the conference
just a few weeks before the game.
Palmer notes.

“The Super Bowl XXXVIII takes place
Feb. 1.
In the works for future ISMC
gatherings is a possible European
meeting in 2006 in Germany,
which will host the World Cup
that year.

Turning the ISMC into “an
event that’s recognized globally,”
McCullerf adds, “would make it a
truly valuable resource that peo-
ple would look forward to.”
Grammys Acknowledge Work Of Souza, Corea

While it is not her first Grammy Award nomination, Luciana Souza finds her second nod in the jazz vocal album category for “North and South” (Sunnyside) just as “surprising and beautiful.” She was also nominated last year for Sunnyside’s “Brazilian Duos.”

“That was baffling, especially since it wasn’t characteristic of a jazz vocal record,” she says. “It was sung in Portuguese and was all duets. Plus, it was released on a small label. Now that says something. It’s tremendous for me and music in general. It shows that people are listening to albums other than those the major labels release.

“North and South” mixes Souza’s Brazilian roots with American songbook jazz and includes originals that bridge both worlds. “I feel like a complete hybrid,” Souza says. “I’m totally Brazilian, and I became a U.S. citizen in December.”

Souza has just finished recording her next Sunnyside project. In celebration of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda’s birthday centennial, “Neruda” features 10 of his poems to which Souza wrote music. It Street’s April.

Being nominated is old hat for pianist Chick Corea. Three nominations this year for “Rendezvous in New York” (Stretch) brings his total to 47 (with 11 trophies won). He’s up for a trio of bests: jazz instrumental album, individual or group; jazz instrumental solo; and instrumental arrangement accompanying vocalist (Bobby McFerrin).

Is it still exciting for him to be nominated? “Without a doubt,” he says. “These nominations communicate your good works to the world.”

Corea single out the best jazz album nomination as the most important acknowledgement. “This double-CD of two hours of music represented three weeks of performances,” he says of the sessions recorded live at New York’s Blue Note on his 60th birthday. “A lot of care and devotion went into choosing the tracks and mixing.”

Slated for a late-spring release is “To the Stars,” a new work by Corea’s Elektric Band, which reunited last summer for a European tour after a 10-year hiatus. “It’s a wonderful project that I passionately devoted myself to all year,” Corea says.

SNEAK PREVIEWS: The new year brings a flurry of new discs. Guitarist John Scofield makes a grand showing with two CDs: “Schorched” (Deutsche Grammophon), a classical-jazz collaboration with British composer Mark-Anthony Turnage (Jan. 13); and a live trio date on Verve with bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Bill Stewart (due in May).

Likewise, guitarist Russell Malone has a fine pair ready to roll: His “Playground” disc will open Max Jazz’s new Strings Series (March 16), and he re-ups with pianist Benny Green for their sophomore Telarc duet (June).

Also on Telarc, chanteuse Tierney Sutton pays tribute to Frank Sinatra on “Dancing in the Dark” (February), and vocalist/guitarist John Pizzarelli delivers “Bossa Nova,” produced by Russ Titelman (April).

Additional noteworthy vocal discs in the hopper include Harry Connick Jr.’s “Only You” (Columbia, Feb. 3); veteran guitarist George Benson’s “Irreplaceable” (Verve, Feb. 10); 24-year-old U.K. sensation Jamie Cullum’s “Twentieth Century” (Verve, March 16); and Kitty Margolis’ “Heart and Soul: Live in San Francisco” (Mad-Kat Records, February).

Other significant leaders delivering the first-quarter goods are alto saxist Miguel Zenón (“Ceremonial” on Märsalis Music, Jan. 13); guitarist Mike Stern (“These Times” on ESC Records, Jan. 13); trumpeter Dave Douglas (“Strange Liberation” with guest Bill Frisell on Bluebird, Jan. 27); young Japanese pianist Takashi Matsunaga (“Storm Zone” on Blue Note, Feb. 10); drummer Ted Sirota’s Rebel Souls (“Breeding Resistance” on Delmark, Feb. 24); and sophomore Ayano Haynes (his live “Fountains of Youth” on Dreyfus, Feb. 24) and steel pan player Andy Narell (“The Passage” on Heads Up in March).

Fresh band projects include “Here Comes the Bad Plus” (Columbia, March 9). It’s the follow-up to last year’s breakthrough “These Are the Vistas.” Also coming are the self-titled album by Wyables, featuring the Seattle-based duo of drummer Tucker Martine and keyboardist Wayne Horvitz (Terminus Records, Feb. 3), and two eagerly anticipated contemporary jazz discs on Heads Up by Pieces of a Dream (April) and Spyro Gyra’s “FilePath” (May).

Two intriguing live blasts from the past that have never been officially released are due from Dreyfus and Blue Note, respectively. “Dreyfus Night in Paris” (Jan. 20) is an exhilarating 1994 date by pianist Michel Petrucciani, saxophonists Kenny Garrett, guitarist Bireli Lagrene, bassist Marcus Miller and drummer Benny White. And for Miles Davis fans who yearn for the trumpeter’s fiery bebop days, there’s “Birdland 1951” (Jan. 27), three sets of sonically restored radio broadcasts with a supporting cast that includes Norah Jones saxophonist Sonny Rollins and drummer Art Blakey.

Just in time for Valentine’s Day, Narada Jazz will issue “The Love Project” (Jan. 27), a contemporary jazz compilation of romantic new standards performed by David Benoit, Jeff Lorber, Joyce Cooling, Walter Beasley and others.

THREE DOT LOUNGE: When it settles into the Ethiopian Music Festival in Addis Ababa (Jan. 12-24), the 10-piece Either/Orchestra will be the first large jazz ensemble to play in Ethiopia since Duke Ellington’s orchestra in 1933...The next time you head to the center of the jazz universe on holiday, don’t leave home without author Steve Dollar’s excellent new book, “Jazz Guide New York City” (Little Bookroom, distributed by Publishers Group West), a smartly written, insightful and comprehensive view of the city’s past and present jazz venues.

Jazz Notes

By Dan Ouellette
douelliette@billboard.com
Industry Outlook Still Positive

BY RASHAUN HALL
and GAIL MITCHELL

Opportunity is the watchword for 2004. At least that's the forecast from several players in the black music industry.

Hidden Beach Recordings president/CEO Steve McKeever downplays last year's doom-and-gloom climate. Looking ahead to new releases by Jill Scott, Mike Phillips and rock newcomer Peter Black plus projects through newly launched subsidiary Still Waters (Billboard, "Rhythm & Blues," Aug. 23, 2003), McKeever is optimistic about the coming year for his Sony Urban Music-distributed label and music overall.

"The numbers don't lie," McKeever says. "There's no question that the economy and downloading have had an effect. But I don't see this as the end. I see it as a new beginning. This is a really extraordinary time. With the uncertainty comes huge opportunity, especially for players like us, smaller independents who can be pretty nimble in terms of adapting." McKeever says he is enthusiastic about Internet opportunities.

"It's about getting music to our consumers. The economics of the digital world are going to make a difference and more palatable to people," he says. "Musically, I'm hearing more and more incredible things, partly because people don't need a record deal anymore to get into a studio. It's becoming more affordable. And people are taking more risks. A lot of the effects of some of the downsizing will make up for the opportunities that we wouldn't otherwise," McKeever notes.

CREATIVITY IS KEY

Creativity is a theme that fellow indie label founder Beni B of ABB Records heartily espouses. He believes that music is becoming more regional again and that the industry has to concentrate on that aspect. Hot spots of innovation to keep an eye on: the West Coast and Chicago. Among acts to keep an ear on: Little Brother, Coagula and Dilated Peoples.

"Artists are going to have to go back and rethink their art with respect to creativity, songwriting and production," Beni B adds. "That's what's going to shine through. Good music and live performances are also going to be key. With all else being equal, the live performance is really what's going to transcend everything."

And he also notes that the over-used term "neo-soul" needs to be "thrown out with the 2003 calendar. It's getting back to songwriting and looking for artists who can have careers. It's not about having an artist do 16 different tracks by 16 different producers."

"Look for more artist-produced albums. That's the advantage the indies have. You're able to get in there on the ground floor."

Also pointing a finger at the West Coast for musical inspiration is Virgin Records executive VP Lionel Ridenour.

"We will see West Coast hip-hop reignite in popularity," he predicts. "You'll also see good reggae music continuing to grow in exposure with real soul and R&B surfing and pushing its way into the mainstream."

With projects coming from established artists Janet Jackson and D'Angelo as well as newcomers as Jim and J-I, Ridenour is targeting more innovative ways to expose music to consumers.

"Digital music will allow us to get the music out there faster and help us take advantage of more promotional opportunities outside basic radio and video," he says.

So what does this digital revolution ultimately mean for retail? "I think top acts and their management will force EMI, BMG and Warner Music Group to follow Universal and Sony with a price reduction for CDs," says Rico Brooks, Atlanta district manager for Peppermint Music. "Reducing the CD price is just the logical way to proceed. There will be more stores closing, with most taking place during the first quarter and leveling off after that."

However, Brooks believes these closings "will provide opportunities for some independents to come in and fill voids. I also look for retailers to continue to target new product lines with DVDs, games, magazines, books and clothing."

Wonder, Kelly Observe R&B Scene

Another Grammy season is quickly approaching—faster than the accelerat ed date for the 46th annual awards show (Feb. 8).

The good news: R&B and hip-hop are well-represented in the top general field categories covering record of the year; album of the year, song of the year and best new artist. Plus, the Funk Brothers are among the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences' 2004 lifetime achievement award honorees. The veteran studio band behind Motown's instrumental magic received long-overdue recognition last year by taking home two Grammys—the first in its 40-year history.

However, as usual, there are still quibbles regarding who did and who didn't get the Grammy nod. Kudos to such R&B/hip-hop nominees as 50 Cent, Eminem, Beyoncé, Heather Headley and the venerable Luther Vandross.

But after perusing the list, several thoughts immediately come to mind: Where are Jaheim and Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz in the nomination mix? What do the female rap solo nominations say about the future status of female rappers? With no offense to those nominated, just who is in the wings to pick up the baton wielded by formidable predecessors Missy Elliott, MC Lyte and Queen Latifah?

Multiple Grammy winner Stevie Wonder embraces what's happening on the contemporary R&B/hip-hop front. But he cautions that artists need to bear in mind the concept of doing something different.

"The R&B scene is good," Wonder notes. "It's another time [from his and his peers'] era, but a great time. [Grammy nominees] Anthony Hamilton is today's version of Bill Withers. Alicia Keys is also talented. "India.Arie is an amazing songwriter, while my favorite CD now is OutKast's 'Speakerboxxx/The Love Below.' And I like Jay-Z. But artists need to take some steps to do something different in these times. They have to talk about more than just kissing a woman all over her body—although that's a wonderful thing. But we have to kiss life all over the place. Be real. We're all part of the united human family."

LaBelle 'UP' FOR GRAMMY: "Way Up There" is the title of the song sung by Patti LaBelle whose performance netted a nomination for best traditional R&B vocal. Written and produced by Tena Clark, this track honors an interesting story.

It's the only original song on Clark's CD/CD-ROM package, "Church: Songs of Soul & Inspiration," released last year (Billboard, May 24, 2003) through DMN Records/UTV. It pairs church-bred R&B female singers with classic R&B and pop songs given a gospel flavor.

But the initial gestation of "Way" was as a specifically commissioned theme song for NASA. Noted songwriter/producer Clark was still mourning the death of her mom (a songwriter in the big-band era) two months earlier when she received a phone call from NASA requesting her services. On a New York-to-Los Angeles plane ride, inspiration struck.

"It was one of those moments: boom," Clark recalls. "I'd had too much Starbucks and was too hungry to go to sleep. And the title came to me at 30,000 feet. Such a universal, childlike look at the heavens." NASA wanted to unveil the song last March for its shuttle launch and also added another caveat. Officials wanted to use the song to commemorate another special event: the centennial of flight honoring the Wright Brothers.

At the same time Clark chose LaBelle to sing the pop/AC/R&B composition, the producer was in the midst of preparing "Church.

Since the song was to be included in that latter project, it became the first track cut for "Church" when LaBelle recorded both versions last December.

The tragedy occurred when the shuttle exploded in February 2003. So instead the song debuted internationally on CNN when LaBelle performed "Way" during the shuttle memorial service at Washington, D.C.

(Continued on page 24)
Rhythm
Continued from page 22

D.C.'s Music
Ubiquitous producer R. Kelly is a double-nominated this go-round. He is up for best male R&B vocal performance for "Step in the Name of Love" and best contemporary R&B album for "Chocolate Factory." He's also the producer on the Grammy-nominated (best R&B album) "Body Kiss" by the Isley Brothers as well as album track as "Busted," which is vying for the best R&B performance by a duo or group with vocals award.

Ask Kelly about R&B's status in a seemingly all-hip-hop world, and he's quick to note that R&B isn't being upstaged. "R&B and hip-hop complement each other. It's a wonderful connection—but only if the melody is there. No matter what's going on, I believe in the magic of the melody. That's what grabs the hearts of people."

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**LATIN POP ALBUMS**

1. MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS
2. A.B. QUINTANILLA III PRESENTS KUMBIA KINGS
3. PANCHO BARRAZA
4. PEPE AGUILAR
5. OSSE BERMUDEZ
6. ANA GABRIEL
7. VICO C
8. LUPE LIVRÉ
9. RY CODDER MANUEL GALBAN
10. VARIOUS ARTISTS

**TROPICAL ALBUMS**

1. CELIA CRUZ
2. EINAY
3. SHAKARA
4. ALEXANDRE PIRES
5. LOS CADETES DE LINARES
6. OZOMATLI
7. FITO OLIVERES
8. CHAYANO
9. LOS ANGELES AZULES/LOS ANGELES DE CHARLY
10. RICARDO ARJONA
11. PLACIDO DOMINGO

**REGIONAL MEXICAN ALBUMS**

1. MANA
2. A.B. QUINTANILLA III PRESENTS KUMBIA KINGS
3. PANCHO BARRAZA
4. PEPE AGUILAR
5. OSSE BERMUDEZ
6. ANA GABRIEL
7. VICO C
8. LUPE LIVRÉ
9. RY CODDER MANUEL GALBAN
10. VARIOUS ARTISTS
Each year, with the arrival of the Grammy nominations for the two dance categories (best dance recording and best remixed recording, non-classical), we brace ourselves for the worst: a never-ending stream of bewildered phone messages and e-mails.

**Beat Box**

By Michael Paolotta
mpaolotta@billboard.com

Well, this year was definitely different. The 46th Annual Grammy Awards dance-related nominations, which were announced Dec. 4, set off no red flags.

For many, the 10 nominations mark the first time that the Grammys got it right in the dance department—or, at the very least, came very close. (Independent labels remain in the minority.)

The nominees in the best dance recording category are Cher’s “Love One Another,” Groove Armada’s “Easy,” Madonna’s “Die Another Day,” Kylie Minogue’s “Come Into My World” and Télopop-music’s “Breathe.”

For best remixed recording, non-classical—a remixer’s award—the nominees are Peter Rauhofer (for his mix of Christina Aguilera’s “Beautiful”), Maurice Joshua (Beyoncé featuring Jay-Z’s “Crazy in Love”), Martin Buttrich & Timo Maas (Tori Amos’ “Don’t Make Me Come to Vegas”), Bill Hamel (Seal’s “Get It Together”) and Masters at Work (the Latin Project’s “Lei Lo Lai”).

For the first time, I am not embarrassed by any of the nominees in the two categories, says Ron Slomowitz, a Nashville-based DJ/VJ and the guide of dancemusic.about.com. “It’s as if those doing the voting actually know what’s on in dance music.”

Indeed, the nominations in both categories represent the musical diversity that exists in clubland, from pure pop and soulful house to electro and progressive sounds.

Of course, a soulful house jam tagged as “Easy” created by an electronic duo and featuring R&B singer Sunshine Anderson, effortlessly appeals to electronic purists and house heads. For mainstream America, there are Cher and Madonna.

Still, there are still those who find the nominations less than satisfactory. “There is still real work to be done, particularly in the best dance recording category,” says Jason Bentley, a globe-trotting club DJ who also hosts radio shows on KCRW and KROQ Los Angeles. “You still find some old stalwarts there.”

That said, Bentley is enthusiastic about the Télopopmusic and Groove Armada nods. (FYI: Bentley, in one of the many hats he wears in the music industry, helped place “Breathe” in the Mitsubishi TV commercial last year.)

In the best remixed recording, non-classical, category, Bentley and others speak highly of the work done by Masters at Work and Buttrich & Maas.

While many ponder whether or not “Crazy in Love” actually needed a remix, others wonder if Hamel, a newcomer to remixing, deserved to be nominated.

“Seal is a timeless artist, and ‘Get It Together’ is a great song,” Bentley says. “But you can’t help but think that Bill may have a little way to go before being nominated for a Grammy.”

Needless to say, Orlando, Fla.-based Hamel (who founded Sunkissed Records in 1996) is certainly moved by the nomination. “Being nominated for a Grammy is something you may dream about but never actually imagine happening,” Hamel says. “To be recognized in this manner is amazing.”

Hamel has one question, though: Why wasn’t BT’s “Simply Being Loved (Sommambulist)” nominated in the best dance recording category?

For that matter, where is the nomination for Benny Benassi Presents the Biz’s “Satisfaction” in the same category? And why is Paul Oakenfold’s remix of Justin Timberlake’s “Rock Your Body” not part of the remixed category? Hmm ...

**Road to the Grammys**


DJXpress is dead, long live DJXpress.

Since signing with INgrooves Records one year ago, 3kStatic has placed tracks in three TV commercials as well as six episodes of MTV’s “Real World.”

“Is where this is critical for us,” Capone continues. “INgrooves has contacts that we don’t. This includes licensing our music and getting it on to sites like Apple’s iTunes Music Store.”

In addition to Apple’s iTunes Music Store, INgrooves has signed content agreements with Rhapsody, Music Match and Napster, among others, according to COO Rob McDaniels.

At the same time, INgrooves gives artists and labels the opportunity to showcase their music on its streaming subscription service, Thump Radio.

And artists signed directly to INgrooves Records can generate extra revenue through the company’s digital downloading service, Traktor.

“We want to work with artists and labels to exploit their content,” McDaniels says. “Everyone makes more money this way.”

Still, the halcyon days of the music industry may never return, cautions Stefan Prescott, owner of Dance Tracks, a dance specialty store in New York, and its digital offshoot, DanceTracksDigital.

“Three months ago, we thought we’d get rich quick,” Prescott says, referring to the digital download side. “Now, I see it as a way to keep feeding my family.”

**Digital**

Continued from page 3

showcases Jennifer Lopez, we highlight Full Intention.

**FOLLOWING THE BEAT**

Temple says that dance/electronic labels are enamored of Apple’s iTunes store, particularly its user-friendly form of card imaging.

“But it’s unlikely,” he says, “that Apple will market to the nightclub market any time soon.” Thus, the sudden explosion of new dance/electronic digital download sites.

They include, among others, traxsource.com, digitaljazymusic.com, dancetracksdigital.com, nufonix.com, djpress.com and beatport.com.

On average, the new digital download sites are selling individual tracks for 99 cents to $1.99, with out-of-print recordings at the highest end. Full albums hover around the $9.99 mark.

But like their mass-market counterparts, the specialized services are still working out a business model.

West End Records, for example, launched its digital download service last year. In the months since, label president Kevin Hedge has been in a quandary over one major downsides: transaction fees.

Credit card clearance companies (Paypal, Miva, Payment Tech and others) charge a 25- to 30-cent fee per transaction, with credit card companies taking anywhere from 2% to 4% “Likewise, the ‘containers’ or ‘multiblocks’ of the card imaging is necessary for the ‘container’ to be a ‘container’” says Temple.

“In a market with over-declining 12-inch vinyl sales, this distribution model makes perfect sense,” he says.

Silverman maintains that DJXpress is a professional site for DJs, who often desire more than one version (or mix) of a track. Additionally, he

**SPECIALIZATION IS KEY**

Tommy Boy Records president Tom Silverman and DJ software developer Visisononic president Joe Vangieri founded DJXpress, which offers dance labels higher profits, with no new out-of-pocket costs and no returns.

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One-Off Project Earns Grammy Nod

As chairman/CEO of Universal Music Group, Doug Morris says he has a job in which it sometimes feels as if his primary function is “cost reduction.” It’s no wonder, then, that he likes to get back into the studio every now and then to keep his hand in the creative end of the business by producing records. It’s a reminder of Morris’ early music career, in which he began as a songwriter/producer. Among his credits as a writer is the Chiffons’ 1966 top 10 hit “Sweet Talkin’ Guy.” As a producer, his best-known song is Brownsville Station’s 1973 hit “Smokin’ in the Boys Room.”

Now primarily known for his skills as an executive, Morris nonetheless was part of the success of one of the tunes vying for best country song for this year’s Grammy Awards. He produced the single version of Pat Green’s top five country hit “Wave on Wave” with Universal South senior partner Tony Brown, himself a noted producer.

“Wave on Wave” is a dark horse in a category that includes songs by Shania Twain and Brad Paisley, a Toby Keith/Wille Nelson duet and an Alan Jackson/Jimmy Buffett pairing. Morris heard the original version of “Wave on Wave” and says he “had an idea on how to adapt the song differently,” specifically by adding a guitar part not found on the album version. “I called up [Pat] and said, ‘Would you mind if I take a shot at this?’ I think he was shocked,” Morris recalls. But Green agreed and met Morris and Brown in a Nashville studio for an eight-hour session that Morris calls “the most fun I had in 2003.”

Morris insists it wasn’t like Green couldn’t have shot him down. “I would have had no problem if he said no,” he says. “He would never impose myself on anyone.”

But Morris laughs when he thinks about what the casually Green’s initial reaction must have been when the label chief showed up at the studio in “a blue blazer and a pair of slacks. He thought, ‘What the f--- is this? I think they were terrified.’

In the end, though, Green was happy with the result, according to Morris, who says Green has already enlisted him and Brown to work on another project together next year.

Morris and Brown also produced Green’s next single, “Guy Like Me,” during that Nashville session. To keep his production skills sharp, Morris says he gives himself one project per year. In 2002, he worked on a tribute to songwriter Bert Berns. The previous year, it was Latin pop artist Paulina Rubio.

While producing is its own reward for Morris, this year’s Grammy nomination for Green was icing on the cake. He admits, “I got a thrill out of it.”

ON THE ROW: Keith Greer joins Audium/Koch Records as Southwest regional promotion director. He previously held a similar position for Curb Records and, more recently, Asylum/Curb. Also, Audium/Koch has retained independent publicity firm Bozeman Media to handle publicity for the label.

Popular Tastes

Continued from page 5

Joe Galante says, “I’m not saying [the nominees] aren’t deserving of nominations or that their music doesn’t represent part of this format, but if you look at the male category this year, you are missing most of the top males.” The contenders for best male country vocal performance are Benison, Lovett, Vince Gill, Tim McGraw, Joe Nichols and Randy Travis.

“Year after year, I’m absolutely shocked at what comes out of this,” Galante says, “I don’t think it represents what is popular. Of course, the Grammys have always said it’s not necessarily what is popular, it’s about what the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences thinks is worthy, and it is their organization.”

But Galante thinks it doesn’t do country much good in the long term when NARAS is “not really on top of what’s really happening in this format.”

NARAS VP of regional management, member services, Nancy Shapiro defends the nomination process.

“We are a peer award,” she says, “It’s not about airplay or chart position or what’s commercial. It’s about the excellence of the record and what their peers think is great music.”

According to NARAS president/CEO Neil Portnow, “the voting process varies based on genre.” He says the country nominees are submissions received from managers, record labels, artists, publishers and booking agents. The NARAS staff verifies eligibility, and then they are placed on the initial round of ballots.

“The country nominations are determined by the general membership vote,” Portnow explains. “Portnow says he has not personally received any complaints about the country nominations. But he encourages those who aren’t happy with them to “recruit and make sure the voting membership is strong, relevant and up to date. That ultimately is the best way to ensure your voting process reflects the best in the marketplace in any given year. The ultimate solution to any issue any community has about nominations is to mobilize a strong voting membership.”

Not every label president is bothered by the nominations. Sony Music Nashville president John Grady, who formerly ran the more eclectic DMZ Records, is one of them.

“I’ve been on both sides of the fence. I have fed from the trough before,” Grady says. “I represented Ralph Stanley when he was winning male vocalist.” (Stanley won for “O Death,” a little-played tune from the hit “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” soundtrack, which won the 2001 album of the year Grammy.)

“I’m not about to say that any of the people in question don’t deserve their nomination,” Grady adds. “Part of the beauty of this is the purity of it.”

ARE THEY BUYING IT?

Many radio programmers and retailers agree with Galante’s concerns. Country WPOC Baltimore PD/operations manager Scott Lindy says the Grammys have not been in touch with what country radio listeners love for years.

“This is an industry award largely voted on by music business insiders,” Lindy says. “I think it’s great that artists like Lyle Lovett and Ray Benson get their due from the Grammys, but it certainly does not reflect what the majority of country fans are attracted to.”

Country WCUS Columbia, S.C., PD Ron Brooks notes that “some of the nominated acts this year did not have music that was used in any substantial quantity through radio, TV, movies, the Internet, touring or retail sales. So how is their nomination justified?”

“Unfortunately for those of us in country music and radio, the Grammy program probably doesn’t do much to further the spread of our art to the masses,” Brooks adds.

CONFUSING CHOICES

Retailer Brian Smith, VP of store operations for Marietta, Ga.-based Value Central Entertainment, agrees with Brooks.

“I’m somewhat perplexed at this year’s nominations in the country genre,” Smith says. “The nominations overall certainly seem to reflect the sales trends we are seeing in all genres except country.

“I’m all about Johnny Cash and the ‘legend,’ but June Carter Cash for female country vocal performance confuses me, given the wealth of talent exhibited this voting year,” Smith continues. “I’m also surprised by the multiple nominations for Ray Benson, although I enjoyed the record. This proves that the underdog on an indie label can get exposure, and this should do wonders for his record’s exposure, even without the help of radio.”

Even Nick Hunter, president of Benson’s label home Koch/Audium Records, admits he can understand the controversy.

“Ray Benson has received 24 Grammy nominations [in his career]. He’s very popular with NARAS,” Hunter says. “People say [the nomination process] needs to be revamped. I wouldn’t argue that point. Ray Benson deserves the country male vocalist nomination as much as Johnny Cash deserved the single award in the [Country Music Assn. Awards]. That’s no disrespect for Johnny. He was a great artist, but that record shouldn’t have even been there.”

Hunter says Keith’s absence from the male vocalist category doesn’t seem right. “I’m not particularly a Toby Keith fan, but he sells a lot of records. I think his success should be [recognized] by a Grammy, or at least a nomination.”

Smith says he’s shocked to see Nelson with two of the six nominations in the best country album category.

“Universal Music all but owns the album category [with five nominations]. With its [runaway] success at radio and on the charts I’m very surprised to not see any RCA [label group] acts involved in the album category.”

Green is thrilled to see Sony artist Patty Loveless nominated for female vocal performance, but he is also happy about June Carter Cash’s nod. “I am totally taken with that record,” he says.

RPM Management president Scott Simon takes a philosophical approach to the Grammy nominations.

“It’s like we say on the golf course: ‘Every shot makes somebody happy, either your opponent or you,’” he says. “There’s no perfect system. The Grammys have had a history of always recognizing something that is a little eclectic and a little unusual.”

“Given the way we’ve set up, we’re as close to being the best possible way to evaluate these things of any organization or any awards process. It’ll never be perfect. I’ll never make everybody happy,” Portnow says. “We never purport to be the barometer of the biggest sellers or just the most popular. As a matter of fact, that’s something that we’re proud to say we don’t represent. We represent what we believe our votes identify as the most important artistry in any given year. That’s not necessarily going to be the biggest-selling record.”

Additional reporting by Phyllis Stark in Nashville.
### January 10, 2004

#### Top Country Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sales Weeks</th>
<th>Week Ending</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<th>Sales Points</th>
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#### Top Country Songs

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<tr>
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<th>Sales Points</th>
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<tr>
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**Notes:**
- **#1** indicates the top album of the week.
- **#2-5** indicates albums in the second through fifth positions.
- **#6-10** indicates albums in the sixth through tenth positions.
- **Assets:** The Billboard charts are compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, a leading provider of sales data for the music industry. Nielsen SoundScan collects sales data from over 400 music retailers, including mass market, specialty, and internet retailers, in the United States. The charts are based on physical album sales, and do not include digital sales or streaming. The charts are released on a weekly basis, with the week ending date indicated for each album entry. Sales points are calculated based on the number of units sold, with a point awarded for each unit sold. The charts reflect the performance of albums during the week of the release date, which is typically the Friday of the week ending date. The charts are used to determine the success of albums and are a key metric for the music industry. The charts are compiled using a weighted formula that takes into account the number of units sold and the price of each unit. The charts are widely recognized as the most accurate and comprehensive source of album sales data in the United States. Nielsen SoundScan is owned by Nielsen Media Research, a leading provider of media measurement and data. Nielsen Media Research is a division of Nielsen, a global provider of information and insights for businesses and clients. Nielsen is headquartered in New York City and has operations in over 100 countries around the world. Nielsen SoundScan is a trusted and respected source for music sales data and is used by artists, record labels, and the music industry as a whole.
<table>
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<td>SARA EVANS</td>
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**Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks**

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**Billboard Hot Country Albums**

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<td>EVEN SANTA CLAUS GETS THE BLUES</td>
<td>MARTY STUART</td>
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<td>THANKGOODFORKIDS</td>
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ALBUMS

**POP**

**EARL SLICK**

*Zig Zag*

PRODUCER: Mark Plati

SANCTUARY 06706-84671

RELEASE DATE: Dec. 9, 2003

The guest-filled “Zig Zag” is the official announcement that renouned guitarist Earl Slick’s career is fully back on track. It comes after three years of playing with long-time collaborator David Lee Roth, the two of whom were also responsible for ‘70s rock band Fantasy, with which they were responsible for a seven-year stint in Lake Tahoe, where a burnt-out and bored Sick completely stopped playing. He is now more focused and has worked with other artists, including Ronnie Montrose, who was also responsible for the hit single “Zig Zag”.

**KATE RUSBY**

*Underneath the Stars*

PRODUCER: John McCusker

COMPASS 73470

RELEASE DATE: Jan. 13

A true-blooded, unadulterated folk singer, Kate Rusby delivers her fifth album of re-creating traditional tunes and original compositions that complement the rootsy sensibility of the story-based songs from her childhood. The 1999 Panoramic Mercury Music Prize winner sings with a light, airy, honeyed allure on 12 lyrical ballads, rich with crisp singing, acoustic guitar, banjo, mandolin and fiddle. Added to the mix are pennywhistles and diatonic accordion. Rusby balances the collection with sprightly numbers (the whimsical “The Good Man”) and emotive lamentations (“The Daughter of Magian”). While Rusby’s cover of a Nic Jones tune and brings sweet voice to a number she learned from her parents, Rusby shines strongly on her own songs, including “Young James” and the gently drawn title track that movingly ends the album.—DO

**DIZZEE RASCAL**

*Boy in Da Corner*

PRODUCER: Dizzee Rascal

XL RECORDINGS/MADATOR OLE060

RELEASE DATE: Jan. 20

The critically lauded debut from Britain’s great hip-hop hope. Dizzee Rascal — winner of the 2003 Pana- sonic Mercury Music Prize — is not going to be confused on this side of the Atlantic with the likes of Jay-Z, 50 Cent or DMX. Nor is this complex work likely to be embraced by those who appreciate those artists’ music. Rascal’s uncompromising brand of gritty all-rap — much like that of fellow Brit MC The Streets — is devoid of the ghetto blabber that makes the slickly produced gangsta rap of his American counterparts staples at radio. Instead, “Boy in Da Corner” is filled with menacing street tales of crime and poverty urgently told over icy electro beats, thuggish dancehall rhythms and trashy U.K. garage. It is a bold, radical statement. Adventurous listeners are in for a treat. But buzz lemmings expecting a soundtrack for mindless booty shaking are advised to look elsewhere. Again, trust —BG

**R&B/HIP-HOP**

**BRAVEHEARTS**

**PRODUCERS:** various

**II WILL/Columbia** (K606712)

**RELEASE DATE:** Dec. 23, 2003

These days, every rapper has a crew. Nas has Bravehearts. The group made its first appearance in “Oochi Wally” on the “QB’s Finest” compilation. Since then, the trio has become a duet — consisting of Wiz and Jungle. With help from Nas, the pair now makes it full-length debut. Lead single “Quick to Back Down,” produced by and featuring Lil’ Jon (not to mention Nas), effortlessly mixes hardcore East Coast lyrics with Jon’s signature crunk sounds. Similarly, the album’s title track thumps with an old-school appeal reminiscent of Gang Starr. Contrary to the album’s title, the group’s sexual romps void of any musical or lyrical depth. “Realize,” a tale of ghetto life, is simply too derivative. Unfortunately, throughout this set, the misses outweigh the hits.—RH

**AVANT**

**Private Room**

**PRODUCERS:** Avant, Steve “Stone” Huff, Warren Campbell

**Magic Johnson**/Music/Geffen/Interscope

**www.americanradiohistory.com**

**02498 61200**

**RELEASE DATE:** Dec. 9, 2003

He initially touted as the first artist signed by Magic Johnson Music, Avant, however, proved his musical mettle on his 2000 platinum debut, “My Thoughts,” featuring the hits “Separated” and “My First Love.” But 2002 follow-up “Ecstasy” was an uneven effort that came off forced and contrived. “Private Room” spotlights a more relaxed and mature Avant. The tenor still mines the sensual, sexual territory covered by such soulsters as Teddy Pendergrass, Keith Sweat and R. Kelly. This is clearly evident on the chart-climbing ballad “Read Your Mind” and the torchy “Don’t Take Your Love Away,” collaborations with longtime partner Steve “Stone” Huff. But the album is marred by the proceedings by also teaming with Warrin Campbell (Luther Vandross, Mary Mary) on “Heaven” and the intriguingly synopagation “Have Some Fun.” A lyrically stronger and vocally confident Avant clicks on more cylinders this time around.—GM

**DANCE/ELECTRONIC**

**SARAH McLACHLAN**

**Remixed**

**PRODUCERS:** Pierre Marchand, Deirium Arista 58763

**RELEASE DATE:** Dec. 16, 2003

In an about-face from her measured, introspective “Afterword,” Sarah McLachlan lets her hair down on the trance-flavored “Remixed.” While most tracks fall into a relaxed electronic rhythm, it is hard not to move your feet to such BT-mixed tunes as “I Love You” and “Hold On.” McLachlan’s chilling voice suits BT’s Graduating layers of sharp pops and lasers of sound. Dj Tiesto also adds new life to the Mc- Lachlan standard “Sweet Surrender,” with his dark, hypnotic interpretation. Some songs blend together too tightly, where it is tough to discern where one melody ends and another begins. In that sense, the album will likely appeal more to dance/electronic fans than McLachlan loyalists. Yet, by reinterpreting songs that were strong to begin with, it is tough for “Remixed” to make too many missteps.—S4

**QED**

**MOBULUS**

**PRODUCERS:** Valentin, Tom Salt

**Siren 460568**

**RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 13

This is an infectious first effort by QED, the duo of Valentin and Kristine Hendricks. Best-known for remixing tunes by such notables as Christina Aguilera (“Beautiful”) and Deborah Cox (“Something Happened On The Way To Heaven”), Valentin wrote, produced and even played on a majority of “Mobul5.” And aside from the odd ball-rocketing “Euphoria,” he has come up with quite a catchy collection of songs—the bulk of which will surely get you moving with their uplifting and energetic beats. One such gem is the high-energy remake of Del Lepard’s “Love Bites.” Overall, Valentin’s rich production and Hen- dricks’ soaring vocals make a great team, one that is sure to have people running to the dancingfloor.—KK

**LATIN**

**JOSIELITO PARRANDERO**

*Que Siga la Parranda*

PRODUCER: Guillermo Gómez

**DISCOS Fuentes 11210**

**RELEASE DATE:** Dec. 16, 2003

On this disc, Josielito Parrandero—a band consisting of José y Los Trom- amundos—does not play the Colombian music most people are accus- tomed to hearing, neither hardcore salsa, calenturro nor traditional cumbia. Instead, it blends traditional Colombian styles—cumbia, musica de carnaval—with contemporary dance swinging. Making music that is strictly designed to be endlessly danced has made Josielito Farrandro one of the most popular bands in Colombia today.

To be sure, this is not sophisticated fare, but it is irresistible, and increas- ingly more so the more the iTunes gets. There are still slow, evocative cumbias like “La Negra Llorona,” the majority of the album’s cuts are flat-clipped tracks full of double-time rhythms, including the chart topper, “El Ratón” and the country- tinged “El Hijito E’ Su.” “Que Siga la Parranda” is a nice, light introduction to a brew of pulsating, rhythm-heavy, pretentious but extremely well-executed. This didactic approach is appealing.—LC

**SALSFA FEVER**

**DISTINTO y DIFERENTE**

**PRODUCER:** Julio “Gandi” Mercè

**MP 6391**

**RELEASE DATE:** Dec. 9, 2003

“Yo Se Que Volderá a Mi” opens “Distinto y Diferente,” its hard-hitting bang dissolving into a romantic salsa song. This is truly exciting and different sound, especially when compared to the current wave of romantic or emotional, endearing with Puerto Rico’s rich. In rich sound, “Distinto” features reliably rich sound as expected, full-bodied mix, punch and flutes of electric guitar. This is the second incarnation of Salsa Fever, originally created by producer/arranger/composer Merced Mendez several years ago. This time around, the blend of styles is seamless and fun, “Tu Erro E’ Que Quiero,” for instance, is best described as salsa boog- wowieglio; “El Amor” has discreet touches of classical; and “Si Tu No Estás” arrives in a Salsa Tex Mex. The execution— including singer Alejandro Villegas’ vocals—is distinctive and ear- catching. A true treat.—LC

**WORLD**

**ABYSINIA INFINITE**

**ZION ROOTS**

**PRODUCERS:** Ejayehu “Gigi” Shubabill, Bill Laswell

**Network 24 971**

**RELEASE DATE:** Dec. 9, 2003

Ejazehu “Gigi” Shubabill and Zion Roots’ “Gigi” to world music fans— is the principle creative force behind this mesmerizing album. Since the release of her self-titled 1993 debut “Abiyinna,” Gigi has been a major force in the Western rediscovery of Ethiopian music. For “Zion Roots,” Gigi has assembled a fabulous crew of Ethiopian players, augmented by percussionist Karsh Kale and constant collaborator Bill Laswell. The tunes are enhancing mainly acoustic interpretations of the devotional and liturgical church modes of singing that Gigi grew up performing. “Zion Roots” has a raw groove (“Embe Asehafergen,” “Gole”) as it does dreamy, ecstatic melodicism (“Aba Alem Lemewen,” “Bati Bati”). “Asessema.” Best of all, these songs do not sound like anything else out there. The instrumentations combine an eerie, atmospherically indigenous “kerin” with tenor sax and talking drums. The vocals, sung in Amharic and occasionally Afgan (the latter by Afgan Omareh, rather than Amhara), cast a spell as old as Nubia itself. Distributed in the U.S. by Harmonia Mundia.—PVV

(Continued on next page)

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Susanne Ault, Leila Cobo, Deborah Evans Price, Brian Garrity, Rashawn Hall, Katy Kroll, Gail Mitchell, Chris Morris, Wes Orshoski, Dan Ouellette, Chuck Taylor, Anastasia Tsiolocas, Philip van Veek.

**ESSENTIALS:** Releases deemed by the editor to be of particular interest. Special attention is given to albums of musical merit and Billboard chart success. NEW RELEASES: Full reviews of albums of special artistic, archival and commercial interest and outstanding collections of works by one or more artists. PRODIGO: New releases predicted to be the top half of the chart in the corresponding format. CRITICS’ CHOICES: New releases, regardless of chart potential. Highly recommended because of their musical merit. All albums commercially available in the U.S. or eligible. Small album review copies to Michael Porcaro and similar review copies to Chuck Taylor (Billboard, 770 Broadway, 6th floor, New York, NY 10038) or to be written in the appropriate business.

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BILLBOARD JANUARY 10, 2004

www.americanradiohistory.com
JAZZ

* JOEL FRAIM WITH BRAD MEHDIAN

Don’t Explain
PRODUCER: Matt Ballisaris
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 13

Friends from high school when they were both in jazz-discovery mode, saxophonist Joel Fran takes on Brad Mehldau (on loan from Warner Bros.) to join together to rekindle their improvisational alchemy on this 10-song collection. Duo settings featuring the engagement, which are exhibited in abundance here as the pair freely dances, romances and converses on classics (including a scurry through “Get Happy”) and a new standard la melodic take on the Beatles’ “Mother Nature’s Son.” The relentless tenor saxophone lyricism is graced by Mehldau’s nimble keyboard embellishments, but the best arrives in stylishly threaded on their two-wind- and spiral renditions of Thelonious Monk’s “Round Midnight.” They play for the jazzmelody of Ornette Coleman’s “Turnaround,” strike to the heart of Billie Holiday’s gem “Don’t Explain” and reflect through the saxist’s gentle original “Away From Home.” More expressive and insightful than a class reunion, “Don’t Explain” documents a reaquaintance of tight friends who have lots to talk about.—DO

(Continued from preceding page)

SINGLES

Edited by Chuck Taylor

POP

* JANET Janet Megamix ’04 (4:15)

PRODUCER: Chris Cox
WRITERS: various
PUBLISHERS: Interscope
Virgin 18331 (CD promo)

It may not be a genuine peek into Janet Jackson’s upcoming March album, but Chris Cox’s “Megamix ‘04”—both the radio mix (4:15) and full-length Club Megamix version (11:21)—are more fun than anything else today. Cox skillfully weaves hits from the past decade—including “That’s the Way Love Goes,” “Got It Till It’s Gone,” “If...” “Son of a Gun” and “All for You”—into a hip, intoxicating rhythm that reminds us all why Jackson has remained a relevant fixture on the scene for nearly 20 years. (Can we have another decade, please?)! Concerned that song (that long already)? Anticipation is high at radio and retail for the skinned singer/songwriter’s latest offering. Whatever the musical value in the coming year, but in the meantime, this unusual output is pure entertainment and a rare show of innovation from a major record company. Fans will be cheering from all sides.—CT

CLASSICAL

* HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD: SWEDISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & CHORUS; EPEX-PEKKA SALONEN

Credo
PRODUCER: Síl Maclachlan
Deutsche Grammophon 471 769
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 13

The “K-Velope” label debut is a wild, untamable thing. The pianist ranges from the intimacy of John Corigliano’s solo “Fantasias on an Ostinato” to the thunderous “Credo” by Arvo Pärt. She nestles Beethoven’s “Tempest” Sonata and his “Choral Fantasy” between the mighty Mahlerian. Yet Grimaud’s diverse choices are not awkward, abrasive or fussy. Instead, they are illuminating. Sometimes the ties that bind are straightforward: Corigliano quotes Beethoven. Other connections are more contemplative, as when Grimaud underscores the spirit of struggle and reconciliation found in Beethoven and Pärt’s work. Her powerful and passionate delivery also speaks magnitudes. One might quibble with some particulars, such as Grimaud’s intense verticality in the Allegretto of “Tempest,” but this is a thought-provoking and profoundly moving project.—AI

DID YOU KNOW

Swede Pops

* JANET июля

2003

PRODUCER: Irmin Schmidt
PUBLISHERS: Temporary Residence

BLUES

* THE HOLMES BROTHERS

Simple Truth
PRODUCER: Craig Street
Alligator 4893
RELEASE DATE: Jan. 13

It seems like guitarist Wendell Holmes, bassist Sherman Holmes and drummer Poppy Dixon get more assured and exciting with each passing year. The group’s second album for Alligator is another sublime release spotlighting the trio’s gospelized harmonizing, punchy interplay and effervescent eclecticism. It’s difficult to imagine another act that could try on tunes associated with Jimi Hendrix, Bob Marley, Gilian Wilson, Jeff Reeves, Townes Van Zandt, Willie Nelson and Bruce Channel and succeed credibly on every attempt. Four estimable originals complement the covers. Guitarists Greg Leisz and Chris Bruce add some additional colors to the proceedings, but the brotherly band more than holds its own on trio, duo and solo performances. Richly soulful and as daring in its arrangements as two of their own, the Brother Holmes remain a musical force unto themselves.—CM

CHRISTIAN

* GEORGE ROWE

Think About
PRODUCER: Brian Steckler
Rocketown 826672008821
RELEASE DATE: Dec. 2, 2002

The debut from this attorney–turned–artist is like a good cup of cappuccino: light, frothy and deliciously appealing on the surface and warm, rich and even more flavorful the more one drinks. Rowe has a clear, pure voice that is perfectly suited to these soulful pop tunes. Though many of the arrangements are light and jazzsy, the lyrics express the depth of their faith and the astute observations that come from a life of self-examination. “Broken” is a prayerful request for God’s guidance. “Swerve” is an inventive number about staying on the right path. The lovely worship song “Everlasting” is the perfect single to Christian radio and serves as a solid introduction to this new singer/songwriter’s considerable talents.—DEP

* MAROONS This Love (3:25)

PRODUCER: Andy Wallace, Mark Endert
WRITERS: A. Levine, J. Carmichael
PUBLISHERS: CMG-IMages/WMG

The Holmes Brothers remain the first act of their country. When they took more than the brotherly bond, it was a success. Here, they take the road more nominal, pop. The band employs some vocal chord progressions, an irre- sistible retro piano intro, minor notes and “whoa-whoa-whooas” that take the song in surprising directions, as lead singer Adam Levine laments that “this love has taken its toll on me, she said goodbye too many times/And I have no choice, I can’t say goodbye anymore.” From the first note, this is colossal cool. Along with MTV and VH1 are in on the fun, with the band having the road in support of John Mayer with the new year. Introducing the first big hit for 2004. Pure satisfaction.—CT

COUNTRY

* PAT GREEN Gay Like Me (3:24)

PRODUCER: Doug Henry, Tony Brown
WRITERS: P. Green, D. Neuhaser, Pat Green
PUBLISHERS: Blackwood/EMI Blackwood Music/SESAC

Wanted: Radio/Universal UNR 11238 (CD promo)

Riding a wave of increased exposure generated by a Grammy nod in the country music category for “Wave on Wave,” Pat Green cuts loose with a great little record sure to shake country listeners out of those winter doldrums. The production is tasteful and true to Green’s Texas roadhouse roots. The lead guitar commands attention with its insinuating groove, while Green’s voice is an amazing instrument. Totally lacking in pretense or unnecessary polish, Green delivers a gutsy, vibrant performance that sounds like he’s having the time of his life on this terrific song about the joys of a simple, unfiltered existence. This record has so much personality, block is hard to resist. Here’s hoping it helps win more fans at country radio. Audiences deserve to hear this breath of fresh air.—DEP

GHOSTFACE KILLAH FEATURING JADAKISS AND COMP WAVE ON WAVE (4:40)

PRODUCER: RZA
PUBLISHERS: various

Wu-Tang’s Ghostface Killah has always had a way of making a strong first impression—musically. Whether it is the intricate rhyming assault of his Raekwon’s classic “Only Built 4 Cuban Links” or his solo sets for Rhyme, Ghostface always makes his presence felt on the mic. He does just that with the lead single from his Def Jam debut, “Pretty Toney.” Featuring nine rhymes and newcomer Com, “Run” is a high-energy narrative about being on the lam. Ghostface shines brightest throughout the single, while Jadakiss also drops a few lyrical jewels. Musically, the RZA-produced track, which features a driving bassline and a memorable hook, is his most inspired in recent memory. Mainstream R&B radio is already picking up on this street anthem. “Run” out and cop this one.—RH
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

PUBLISHING: ASCAP promotes Bob Candela to senior VP and CFO and Alexandra Lisovsklopp to senior VP of Latin membership in New York. They were, respectively, VP and CFO of Latin membership. ASCAP also promotes Jeanie Weems to senior VP of rhythm and soul membership and Tom DeSavio to senior VP of pop/rock membership in Los Angeles. They were, respectively, VP of rhythm and soul membership and VP of pop/rock membership.

RECORD COMPANIES: V2 Records promotes Karen Durkel to national promotion director in New York and Ted Hoekstra to national promotion director in Chicago. They were, respectively, Northeast promotion representative and Midwest promotion director.

V2 Records also names Kristie Vogel West Coast promotion director in Los Angeles and Aimee Saiger Southeast promotion director in Atlanta. They were, respectively, Los Angeles promotion representative for RCA Records and Northeast regional director of promotions for Artist Direct.

Robert "Sandy" Gunn is named senior VP of human resources for EMI Music North America in New York. He was senior VP of human resources for Vivendi Universal Games.

Arista Records names Joe McEwen VP of A&R and Ann Latora VP of finance and administration in New York. They were, respectively, senior VP of A&R for Warner Bros. Music and CFO of Metropolitan Talent/Recording.

MUSIC VIDEO: Jeffrey Keyton is named senior VP of on-air design and off-air creative for MTV and Mtv2 in New York. He was VP of on-air design and off-air creative.

RETAIL: Greg Batusic is named chief sales officer/senior VP of global sales for Gibson Guitar in Nashville. He was co-founder of the Promotional, L.L.C.

BROADCASTING: Mark Lieber is named West Coast VP/managing director of Infinity Solutions & Beyond in Los Angeles. He was president of Lieber Entertainment.

Raquel Bruno is promoted to director of talent for MTV Radio in New York. She was manager of talent.

Hello Tokyo! Sting made a special guest appearance at Universal Music Japan's annual convention at the Tokyo International Forum. Pictured backstage, from left, are UMI president/CEO Kei Ishizaka, Universal Music International chairman/CEO Jorgen Larsen, Sting and UMI senior VP of marketing and A&R Max Hole. The convention drew 1,200 attendees from retail, media and other music industry sectors. Busted, Hayley Westenra, Lena and Hibari were among other Universal acts who performed.

Reality Reaches The Garden
David Bowie, left, launched the U.S. leg of his first world tour in some eight years with a sold-out show at New York's Madison Square Garden. The concert came after a two-month tour of Europe and the U.K. Backstage, from left, are Lenny Kravitz, Meg White of the White Stripes, Bowie and actor Jude Law. The tour, dubbed A Reality Tour (after Bowie's current ISI/Columbia set, "Reality"), will hit 17 countries. (Photo: Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com)

Now, Hear This ... AVENGED SEVENFOLD
Artists to Watch
Orange County, Calif.'s Avenged Sevenfold stands at a crossroads. In one direction is the present and future: the current punk/metal hybrid known as "screamo." In the other, the past: influences of such punk bands as NOFX and Bad Religion, the '80s-metal dynamic of Judas Priest, Iron Maiden and Metallica, and a touch of goth. The five-piece band combines the past and future flawlessly on its sophomore full-length, "Waking the Fallen" (Hopeless). While vocalist M. Shadows can scream with the best of them, his powerful voice is also more than capable of melody. And guitarists Zacky Vengeance and Synyster Gates' solos and dual harmonies are equalled by the memorable riffs that they craft. The Vans Warped tour veterans, newly signed to Warner Bros., have just finished a video for the song "Unholy Confessions" and will be on the road in support of "Waking the Fallen" for the foreseeable future.

BRAM TEITELMAN

New To Manhattan
Manhattan Records bosses Aril Mardin and Ian Ralfini recently signed newcomer Keri Noble to the label. The singer/songwriter's first full-length album will arrive March 9. Pictured at the signing, from left, are Manhattan VP/co-GM Mardin; Miki Nord, Noble's Manager; Noble; and VP/co-GM Ralfini.

Remembering Joey
Fans of punk icons the Ramones gathered near the entrance to fabled downtown New York venue CBGB, where the corner of East Second Street and the Bowery was dedicated to band's late frontman, Joey Ramone. Members of the singer's family, friends and former Ramones drummer Marky Ramone, pictured above, were among those who turned out for the unveiling of the new street sign, which reads Joey Ramone Place. Ramone died in April 15, 2001, of lymphatic cancer not long before the band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. (Photos: Dan O'Connell)
NEW YORK—While consumers are still trying to get used to the idea of cell phones with cameras, Idetic’s latest venture—MobiTV—has already launched a service that enables Sprint cell phone subscribers to watch live TV, including three music video channels, through their mobile phones.

What’s more, the Berkeley, Calif.-based company is already working on an e-commerce solution that will allow viewers tuned in to the music video channels to buy the video, ring tones or music from streamed videos, says Dr. Phillip Alvelda, CEO of Idetic.

NEXT STAGE OF MUSIC DISTRIBUTION

"Using a cell phone, people will be able to watch a video streamed from a live broadcast, and buy it or a ring tone of it, or be able to order and have things like albums and music videos sent to their house," Alvelda says. "We see this kind of distribution medium as the next stage for distribution of music content. We will establish a new [e-commerce] beachhead.

He says the company is still experimenting to see what works and looking for other suitable applications, while finalizing deals to make that vision a reality. But eventually, the company will "have a broad infrastructure to support a wide range of e-commerce activities," he says.

In the meantime, Idetic is still building its partner base among cell phone services and TV channels. Sprint is the first to offer MobiTV, which provides the broadcast stream of a number of TV and cable channels, including the California Music Channel; CMC Best Lounge, which broadcasts R&B music videos; CMC USA, which features country music; and Independent Music Network, which brings international music videos from independent artists. MobiTV also carries MSNBC, CNET, CSTV (College Sports Television) and the Discovery Channel, including Discovery Kids and Discovery España.

Initially, the MobiTV service is being marketed as part of the Sprint premium offer, PCS Vision, which costs Sprint subscribers $15 per month on top of their cellular service. PCS Vision, which claims 2.7 million subscribers, also allows customers to take and receive pictures from select PCS phones, browse the Internet, check e-mail and download ring tones, videogames and screen savers, according to Idetic.

The $15 monthly charge includes an all-you-can-eat of MobiTV broadcasts.

Idetic says it is in talks with all the major carriers and services to provide a turnkey solution so they can offer cellular phone subscribers the ability to watch TV through their cell phones, providing the phones have the necessary technology.

The company is also negotiating to add offerings to its MobiTV cable lineup. "We are in discussion with all the major broadcasters," Alvelda says. "It's not clear that we need 150 channels for the phone. We are selective about who we choose," looking for channels that make sense to have available through cell phones.

There are two broad categories of channels that 

(Continued on page 35)
Kinkade Series Is Latest Licensing Coup For Madacy

Students of the Billboard Top Independent Albums chart may have noticed that several albums bearing a well-known, nonmusical name reaped major sales just before Christmas. Montreal-based Madacy Entertainment scored with four titles on the Music of Light imprint bearing the name and imagery of painter Thomas Kinkade.

The two CD Kinkade package "Treasure of Christmas," priced at $18.98 and featuring Yuletide classics licensed from EMI and Universal, climbed into the top 10 on the indie albums chart just before the holidays. Three other single-disc, budget-priced collections comprising proprietary seasonal music by the 101 Strings and others also notched strong sales.

Madacy executive VP Harris Sterling explains, "An integral part of our business is finding strong, powerful brands that mean something across America. Today people have about two seconds to decide what to buy. We want to have a strong image to capture that two seconds."

In the case of Kinkade, Madacy enlisted a name that can cut through the marketplace static with consumers. Known as "the Painter of Light," the artist has aggressively marketed his work—both original oils and print reproductions—in his own chain of retail galleries. He claims to be "America's most-collected artist."

While critics have said that Kinkade's twilit-light-dappled landscapes are nothing more than kitsch, he is an immediately recognizable name with an immediately recognizable style. "He's a very, very active licensor of his brand," Sterling says. "There are probably 20 or 30 licensees. He has four or five booths with his artwork at licensing trade shows. It's a big entity."

Kinkade markets a few of his own CD and home video titles at his galleries and on his Web site (thomaskinkade.com).

During the past two years, Madacy has released several lines of classic music packages bearing Kinkade's artwork, including "30 Best Loved Hymns," the patriotic set "God Bless America" (released after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks) and the seasonal sets "Winter," "Spring," "Summer" and "Fall." But the label has enjoyed its biggest hits with the Christmas packages.

"The pictures and imagery he paints become the CD covers," Sterling says. "We've created a slipcase where you can pull out his picture . . . It becomes a collectible piece."

While the Kinkade/Music of Light line—which will continue with new titles this year—may be Madacy's most unusual and lucrative current releases, the company has forged a number of other brand licensing deals.

At year's end, a Countdown Kids "Crayola Kids Christmas Carols" title had also hit the Top Independent Albums chart. The set is the product of a deal with the crayon manufacturer. The Crayola releases are examples of the kind of value-added packages Madacy favors. The company's initial title, "Crayola Music Box," included two discs of children's songs, a box of Crayolas and a coloring book.

Madacy has also secured agreements with the National Wildlife Federation, Life magazine, the "Chicken Soup for the Soul" inspirational franchise, Coty's Healing Garden line of relaxation products and Ford Motor and its durable Mustang. In late 2003, Madacy began releasing a line of titles bearing the logo of Care Bears, the still wildly popular toy and cartoon line.

In first-quarter 2004, Madacy, through a deal cut with cowboy haberdasher Stetson, plans a branded album of classic country songs.

Sterling says, "Why not put together a country [package] and do a [cover] shot with a classic Stetson hat?"

He says that it makes superlative sense for a label to piggyback on well-established commercial brands in any industry, since "they spend an enormous amount of money on their brands. Music is just an extension of what they do . . . For us, it all goes as lifestyle [marketing]."

Sterling adds, "It's a big country out there. Sometimes you've got to step outside of your own box and say, 'What's going on out there?'"

Cell Phone

Continued from page 37

have a place for those viewing TV through their phones, according to Alvelda. "The first is real-time breaking news," he says. "We saw large spikes for the news about Michael Jackson and Saddam [ Hussein]."

Also, there is a demand for time-critical news from the sports and financial worlds, he adds.

Secondly, "there is a lot of demand for short entertainment, such as while people are waiting in airports to board a plane or waiting on the checkout line at the supermarket."

While some are skeptical that people will want to watch TV on the small screens available on cell phones, Alvelda says the technology is still improving. "The problem is that the company has already passed the first hurdle. "The trick was to solve all the technology issues, including managing the limitations of the handset screen, and to set up the infrastructure to get the broadcast and send it through the crowded airwaves."

"Now, the frame rate is not currently as fast as people would like. But Alvelda points out that phones get better every month, as will the wireless technology."

Besides, he adds, other Web browser services can only show short video clips and can't provide the content level that MobiTV does.

In addition, Altelic has developed monitoring tools that allow the company to measure how much each channel is being watched through MobiTV. When it all comes together, Alvelda says, "we can extend brands, and sales opportunities into new markets."
Relatively Speaking, Retail Is Rebounding

Let me begin by welcoming everyone back from the holiday break and wishing all my readers a prosperous new year.

Now, let’s roll up our sleeves and get down to work, because the industry has another tough year ahead of it. The good news is that there might be a light at the end of the tunnel. But along the way, there is still going to be some pain.

Before we get to that, I want to remind everyone how far the industry has come. Fortunately, I don’t have to begin this year’s first column the way I did last year. Then, I was predicting that the industry would lose 500 stores in the first half of the year. What’s worse, my prediction was low. It now appears we lost more than 1,000 music specialty stores last year.

Will there be store closings this year? Sure, but not on the magnitude of last year. In fact, other than the usual portfolio pruning, as we head toward what some distributions financial executives have come to think of as the witching hour, also known as Jan. 10, there is only one known question mark on the account side. That question mark is Tower Records, and most executives at the majors still believe that an acquisition will occur and save the day.

Of course, Jan. 10—when payment is due in order to get the early payment discount from those majors that still offer it on inventory bought for the holiday season—has also been known to spring the occasional surprise or two.

By surprise I mean accounts that are in trouble but no one has a clue until they miss making the early payment. But those surprises have been known to occur even in the best of times.

So we head into the new year with the account base stronger than we have seen in a couple of years. Hey, and don’t forget sales have been up 12 out of the past 14 weeks of 2003, the Christmas season was pretty strong and we finished the entire year with album sales down only 4.5%. It looks safe to say the industry hit the bottom of the barrel, and we are now on the way back up.

Unfortunately, the major record labels will still suffer the throes of pain inflicted by the rehabilitation that music retailers had to undergo in order for that sector to get better.

As I have been known to occa-
sionally point out, the health of the labels is dependent on the health of the account base, and while retailers are reaping the benefits of all the store closures, the majors still are taking a beating from it.

The new year begins with almost $500 million in cost reductions happening at the majors due to the BMG/Sony merger and the Edgar Bronfman Jr.-led buyout of the Warner Music Group. After those cuts occur, if the Recording Industry Assn. of America can keep up the heat on unauthorized file sharing, the rest of the year could see the industry continue its climb back up. Sure, we will all be working harder than ever before, but who isn’t?

WIZZING AROUND: A founder of the defunct Wiz chain, Marvin Jemal is back in retail. He has opened two New York stores under the banner “the Zone.” Like the Wiz, the stores—located in mid-town Manhattan and Brooklyn—stock electronics, music and video. The chain is expected to grow to about six outlets by the end of next year.

Jemal exited the Wiz, once one of the largest R&B retailers, when it filed for Chapter 11 protection and was sold to CableVision in 1998. CableVision shut the Wiz down earlier this year.

Jay Rosenberg now has his own business, Jace! Marketing, and is working as a consultant to the startup. Rosenberg once upon a time headed up the music and video department for the Wiz.

TRANS WORLD MOVES: Trans World Entertainment is retaining key Wherehouse personnel in California. The buying and marketing executives will oversee the 113 Wherehouse stores that Trans World acquired last October (Billboard Bulletin, Sept. 30, 2003).

Kevin Milligan, who had headed up purchasing for Wherehouse, has been named VP of West Coast operations for Trans World. Violet Brown, Wherehouse’s R&B buying guru, will handle that genre as well as rock in the new Trans World setup.

Isabelle Salazar, who was Latin buyer for Wherehouse, will take that role for the West Coast stores. Milligan reports to Trans World executive VP Fred Fox.

In other news, Trans World has acquired the last Harmony House outlet, the supermarket in Berkeley, Mich. It was one of two Harmony House stores that owner Bill Thom kept open after liquidating the chain in 2002. The other store, a classical outlet, closed last year.

Downloadable
Continued from page 37

Retail Track
By Ed Christman
echristman@billboard.com

retailers aligning themselves with mobile-phone content providers.

“We get feedback that people think 99 cents is too expensive for music. But people are willing to pay £3 (5.30) for 30 seconds of a song [for their mobile phone] that they think is too expensive at 99 cents for the whole song,” noted David Hughes, VP of technology strategies and electronic music distribution at Sony Music. Hughes spoke at the “Digital Business Challenges Facing the Music Industry” session.

Thomas Gewecke, senior VP of business development for Sony Music Digital Services, predicted that “there will be a 2 billion cell-phone-installed base in 2007. That’s how many CD players there are in the world.”

Some say consumers are likely to pay more for certain mobile features.

“Your ring tone is a reflection of your personality,” said Lucy McQuilken, president of mobile content provider Chaoticom.

“Mobile content is also worth more because consumers can get it wherever they are,” she added.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL/DISTRIBUTING LABEL &amp; NUMBER</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
<th>PEAKS</th>
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<td>BAND OF BROTHERS</td>
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*Note: The table above lists the top DVD sales for the week ending January 10, 2004, according to Billboard magazine.*
Music, Games Tightened Their Commercial Bond

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

Games are serious business for the nation’s retailers. Software sales for the console, computer and portable game market will likely top $8.5 billion for 2003, while software and hardware sales will reach more than $10 billion, according to an estimate from the NPD Group, based on sales through October.

THE YEAR IN GAMES

And during 2003, the ties between the music and game industries became stronger than ever. Not only are the two sectors seeking the same buyers, but new videogames increasingly feature original and licensed music.

Electronic Arts, the top independent game publisher, has taken the lead in that trend, launching EA Trax in August 2002 with “Madden NFL 2003.”

“Since then we’ve been acknowledged as having an impact on CD sales by bands such as Good Charlotte, Nappy Roots, Fabolous, Jet, Yellowcard, Blink-182 and Queens of the Stone Age,” notes Steve Schnur, EA worldwide executive of music and audio.

In 2003, for the first time, a videogame soundtrack earned platinum certification from the Recording Industry Assn. of America. The game, “NBA Live 2003,” was creatively packaged with its companion soundtrack, “NBA Lifestyle.”

The EA game “Def Jam Vendetta” features a dozen artists who helped promote the game with subsequent album releases; it sold more than 500,000 copies as an exclusive title in the PlayStation2 format. EA’s “Medal of Honor: Rising Sun” features a soundtrack from the Hollywood Studio Symphony Orchestra, the first project under a landmark videogame agreement with the

(Continued on page 46)
“A Smoldering Penelope Cruz Steals The Movie!”
- ELLE MAGAZINE

Available February 17th Everywhere DVD’s are Sold!
the camera doesn't lie...

its the people behind it.

Now Available Everywhere DVD's are Sold!
Charting The Year

The chart recaps for the Year in Video Spotlight reflect cumulative performance on the Billboard weekly video charts for the 2003 chart year. The chart year began with the Dec. 7, 2002, issue and ran through the Nov. 29, 2003, issue.

This year’s recap menu sees the addition of Top VHS Rentals list. That information is based on the period from the Jan. 15, 2003, issue through Nov. 29, 2003. All charts—except for Top VHS Rentals, Top DVD Rentals and Top Music Video—are based on point-of-sale data as compiled by Nielsen VideoScan. Recaps for Top Music Video are based on information compiled by Nielsen SoundScan. In each case, the recaps reflect accumulated units sold for each week titles appeared on the pertinent chart.

The Top VHS Rentals and Top DVD Rentals use information from Home Video Essentials compiled and provided by Rentrak. The title recaps for these lists are based on actual rental transactions compiled from 12,000 stores for most of the chart year and projected from a sample of 3,300-5,000 stores from August through the end of the tracking period. The label and distributing label recaps for these two charts are formulated by Billboard, based on an inverse point system that gives titles points for each week they appeared on Home Video Essentials’ charts.

Although some charts are only published in Billboard every other week, all charts are compiled weekly. Points for all chart weeks, including unpublished weeks, are counted toward these recaps.

Anthony Colombo compiled the recaps with assistance from video charts manager Patrick McGowan.

Top VHS Sales

Pos. LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)
1 WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAINMENT (43)
2 WARNER HOME VIDEO (82)
3 COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT (60)
4 FOXXVIDEO (48)
5 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO (70)

Top DVD Sales

Pos. TITLE—Label/Distributing Label
1 FINDING NEMO—Walt Disney Home Entertainment/Buena Vista Home Entertainment
2 ICE AGE—Fox Video
3 MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING—HBO Home Video/Warner Home Video
4 LILLO & STITCH—Walt Disney Home Entertainment/Buena Vista Home Entertainment
5 THE LION KING (PLATINUM EDITION)—Walt Disney Home Entertainment/Buena Vista Home Entertainment
6 STAR WARS: Episode II—ATTACK OF THE CLONES (WIDESCREEN)—Fox Video
7 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS (PAN & SCAN)—New Line Home Entertainment/Warner Home Video
8 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS (WIDESCREEN)—New Line Home Entertainment/Warner Home Video
9 SIGNS (WIDESCREEN)—Touchstone Home Video/Buena Vista Home Entertainment
10 HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS (PAN & SCAN)—Warner Home Video

Top VHS Sales Labels

Pos. LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)
1 WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAINMENT
2 WARNER HOME VIDEO
3 COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT
4 FOXXVIDEO
5 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO

Top DVD Sales Distributing Labels

Pos. DISTRIBUTING LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)
1 BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT (54)
2 WARNER HOME VIDEO (41)
3 FOXXVIDEO (15)
4 COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT (5)
5 PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT (32)

Top VHS Rental Labels

Pos. LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)
1 COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT (25)
2 WARNER HOME VIDEO (25)
3 FOXXVIDEO (18)
4 TOUCHSTONE HOME VIDEO (8)
5 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO (17)

Top VHS Rental Distributing Labels

Pos. DISTRIBUTING LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)
1 COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT (25)
2 WARNER HOME VIDEO (29)
3 BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT (21)
4 FOXXVIDEO (18)
5 UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO (19)

Top Music Video Sales

Pos. TITLE—Artist—Label/Distributing Label
1 THE NEW BREED—50 Cent—Interscope Video/Universal Music & Video Dist.
2 JOSH GROBAN IN CONCERT—Josh Groban—143/Reprise Music Video/Warner Music
3 LED ZEPPELIN—Led Zeppelin—Atlantic Video
4 BACK IN THE U.S. LIVE 2002—Paul McCartney—Capitol Video
5 PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE—Rob Zombie—Geffen Home Video
6 THE BEATLES ANTHOLOGY—The Beatles—Capitol Video
7 LIVE IN NEW ORLEANS—Narah Jones—Blue Note/EMI Home Video
8 AN EVENING WITH THE DIXIE CHICKS—Dixie Chicks—Columbia Music Video/Sony Music Entertainment
9 HELL FREEZES OVER—Eagles—Geffen Home Video/Universal Music & Video Dist.
10 COLDPLAY LIVE 2003—Coldplay—Capitol Video

Top Music Video Sales Labels

Pos. LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)
1 INTERSCOPE VIDEO (7)
2 CAPITOL VIDEO (9)
3 143/REPRISE MUSIC VIDEO (1)
4 ATLANTIC VIDEO (4)
5 EPIC MUSIC VIDEO (19)
industry, with DVD really coming of age. We have seen tremendous market growth with DVD penetration and record sales in astronomical numbers. Consumers have fully embraced the DVD format and have become sophisticated enthusiasts appreciating the value-added materials technology allows us to create.

Indeed, in fourth-quarter 2003, Disney/Pixar’s feature-laden “Finding Nemo” set a first-day, first-week and overall DVD sales record, according to Buena Vista. The title sold 8 million combined units on its first day, 17 million combined units in its first week and a total of 15 million DVDs in its first 12 days on sale, breaking a raft of industry records.

WHV’s “The Matrix Reloaded” sold about 4 million combined units on its first day on sale, according to retailers. Universal’s “2 Fast 2 Furious” sold more than 4 million combined units in its first week, and “Scarface—Anniversary Edition” sold more than 2 million DVD units in its first week, according to the studio.

Sales of theatrical catalog product and TV series on DVD were particularly noteworthy.

“Scarface” is now the [biggest-selling] R-rated catalog title on DVD,” says Craig Kornblau, president of Universal’s home video arm. “That is spectacular when you consider it is a 20-year-old title.”

WHV executive VP/CM Ron Sanders says that consumers are buying DVD catalog at the same rates that they were in 2002 and 2001, when DVD penetration was lower.

“That is a major headline for the industry,” he notes. “There’s [also] been explosive growth with TV [series] on DVD. We have had very strong success with titles like ‘Smallville’, ‘The West Wing’ and ‘Friends.’

STRONG FROM THE START

From the beginning of the year, software and hardware numbers were impressive. In first-quarter 2003, a record 232 million DVDs shipped to retail—a 93% increase over first-quarter 2002, according to the DEG.

The first quarter also experienced a 24% increase in hardware player sales, compared with first-quarter 2002, with 4.4 million sold, according to the Consumer Electronics Assn. More than 43 million households had a DVD player by the end of the first quarter.

In the third quarter, 215 million DVDs shipped to retail, which the DEG reported was a 40% increase over 2002’s third quarter. Additionally, the CEA says that more than 6.4 million DVD players were sold in the third quarter, an increase of about 37% over third-quarter 2002. The DEG estimated that more than half of U.S. homes would have a DVD player by year’s end.

Rentals continued to flourish. In the first quarter, the VSDA reported record rental revenue, attributing it to the DVD format. Combined spending on DVD rental units overtook VHS rentals for the first time in the week ended June 15. Consumers rented 27.7 million DVDs that week, compared with 27.3 million VHS cassettes. This was the year in which DVD became the predominant medium in the market,” says Steve Beeks, president of Artisan Home Entertainment.

“Every studio is going to be trying to project [when] we are going to get to the point where DVD is 90% of the market. VHS inventories are going to be a big issue going forward.”

Many studios, however, are continuing to support VHS in particular categories.

“VHS is and will remain viable for some time in the children’s and fitness categories,” says Dan Gurlitz, VP of video and GM for Koch Vision and Koch Lorber. “One of the interesting things that happened in 2003 was to watch the deterioration of VHS rental pricing. I think that that actually is going to keep VHS alive a little longer.”

ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION

Despite consumers’ obvious love for videos and DVDs in particular, industry executives spoke often about the next generation of video technology. Throughout the year, the five different options for HD DVDs were debated. The two blue-ray formats are Blu-ray—backed by 10 manufacturers, including Sony, Panasonic and Pioneer—and the advanced optical disc (backed by Toshiba and NEC). Red-reader options include MPEG 4, Microsoft’s Windows Media 9 and Prionics’ backward-compatible solution.

Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, for example, is backing Blu-ray. Artisan Home Entertainment released “Standing in the Shadows of Motown” and “Terminator 2—Extreme DVD” with a Windows Media 9 HD option.

“We have always seen ourselves as one of the leaders in promoting new technology,” Artisan’s Beeks says. “We believe that Windows Media 9 is a healthy competitor to any high-definition medium.”

Other studios are not throwing their hats into the HD ring quite yet. “There seems to be a lot of confusion as to the formats and standards get ironed out,” WHV’s Sanders says. “The fear is that too much talk about these issues may hurt the sale of standard DVD.”

Many studios are starting to determine when they introduce HD into the marketplace. Estimates ranged from as early as 2005 to the more realistic 2007. Launching a studio-wide program, like with the concerted introduction of DVD, was another topic of discussion.

“The strategy issue is, when is it necessary for us to introduce high-def to the marketplace in order to keep in current

(Continued on page 46)
Games

Continued from page 41

American Federation of Musicians.

Music-driven games abound in 2003: Eidos tapped the London Symphony Orchestra for the soundtrack to "Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness." Namco Bandai released track "Use Your Fist, Not Your Mouth" on the game "Spawn: Armageddon."  

MUSIC FROM ALL GENRES

Sony Computer Entertainment

American released "Amplitude" on PS2 with music from 25 acts, including P.O.D., Weezer, David Bowie, Run-D.M.C., Pink, Blink-182 and Herbie Hancock. In turn, P.O.D. included a bonus PS2 DVD with a custom video game track with the first 1 million copies of its latest Atlantic album, "Payable on Death.

"American Idol" from Codemasters includes 43 tracks from 33 acts, ranging from the Beatles "Twist and Shout" and Otis Redding's "Sitting on the Dock of the Bay" to Madonna's "Like a Virgin" and Britney Spears' "Oops, I Did It Again." Activision's "True Crime: Streets of L.A." features a soundtrack from L.A.'s Vybe Squad, including West Side Connection (Ice Cube, Mack 10 and WC), E40, KAM, Cavaq, Eazy-E Jr. and Jay-O-Felony.

Midway Games' "Spy Hunter 2" for PS2 and Xbox offers an original theme track, "Dark Carnival," composed and performed by Vanessa Carlton.

Wind-up Cauterie provided "Choke" as the theme track for Nintendo's "1080 avalanche," the game manufacturer's first major licensed musical deal. Malaco released three CDs of hip-hop, alternative rock and electronic tracks that appear on the Microsoft Xbox game "Project Gotham Racing 2."

The trend is creating new opportun- ities for veteran musicians and producers. Nile Rodgers was a consultant for the Xbox "Music Mix," a video accessory that, among other features, allows game players to download photos, music and movies from a PC to an Xbox for customized presentation. More than 40 acts are featured on the product.

Video

Continued from page 45

consumers engaged in our product instead of looking at other options," asks Stephen Einhorn, president/COO of New Line Home Entertainment. Last year, Buena Vista tested the format for limited-play DVDs, called EZ-Ds. The discs, created by Flexplay Technologies, are playable for only 48 hours once they are removed from their packaging. EZ-Ds gradually turn from red to black and become unreadable by DVD players. Used EZ-Ds are recyclable.

Buena Vista offered EZ-D versions of eight of its video releases in select test markets in August. They were touted as a convenient alternative to renting DVDs, though most retailers believe that the rental process is sound and that EZ-Ds will only confuse consumers while the DVD format is still growing.

Some have also said that the discs revisited the failed concept of Divx, limited-play DVD discs that were introduced in the late '90s.

VIDEO ON DEMAND GETS NOTICED

Video-on-demand services drew more studio interest in 2003. The leading online service, Movielink, was launched in November 2002 as a joint venture among MGM, Paramount, Sony, Universal and Warner. Disney's Moviebeam VOD service launched in October. Unlike online sites, this service allows users to download movies to a set-top box.

Though majors strongly support VOD, many think it is only a side option for consumers right now, "It is so early for video-on-demand," Sanders says. At the studios, the beginning of 2003 brought flux in the executive suites. At WHV, its veteran president, Warren Marberfarb, known as "the father of VOD," was let go at the end of 2002 and replaced in January by one of the company's executive VPs, James Cardwell. Twenty-year veteran Eric Doctorow also left his position as president of Paramount's home video division. Former WHV executive Tom Lesinski was appointed head of the company's worldwide distribution, while Meagan Burrows was promoted to the new position of domestic president.

Fox president Patricia Wyatt stepped down in December to pursue other interests. The company's former executive VP of finance and accounting, Mike Dunn, was named as her replacement. In other major studio news of 2003, Lions Gate and Artisan, the two largest independents, announced a merger. Though the impact of this deal was unknown by year's end, as it closed in mid-December, it was expected to have a positive effect on both companies' current and future video releases.

RETAIL: SUCCESS & STRUGGLES

In 2003, retailers reaped the rewards of top video sales, though they were grappling with numerous issues of their own.

Lowball pricing by such mass-merchant chains as Best Buy, Target and Wal-Mart drove business away from specialty retailers.

The studios' strategy of shortening the theatrical-to-video release window made it more difficult for retailers to order and promote video product. Films used to arrive on video about six months after their theatrical release. Now a three- to-five month window is standard. With these smaller windows, studios hope to take more advantage of theatrical marketing dollars and of higher consumer awareness. Movielink.

In November, Universal became the first home video company to completely ban DVD screeners for retailers in an effort to thwart piracy. Retailers, surprised that they were targeted as potential pirates by the studio, countered that this could affect how they order Universal product.

The major retail stories of 2003 included the continued success of online rental company Netflix and the launch of Wal-Mart's competitive online service.

In June, New Jersey company Multi-Format sent retailers and studios numerous letters claiming that they now need a license to continue renting and selling DVDs. Multi-Format says it holds the patent on this process. Studios and retailers are still unsure about the legitimacy of the claim.

In a competitive rental market, Blockbuster faced a $120 million lawsuit from Buena Vista regarding VHS revenue-sharing payments. The day after Buena Vista filed the suit, the retailer displayed Buena Vista's "Signs" four days before the title's street date. At the time, Blockbuster said there was no correlation between the events and that it was responding to other rental street-date violators.

An antitrust lawsuit against Block- buster and five major studios was dismissed in February. A group of independent retailers had filed the suit, alleging that it had been excluded from revenue-sharing agreements. The suit was thrown out because of insufficient evidence.

"Pokémon Ruby" (Take 2), 2003 $47

10 ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT (4)

1 BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAIN- 
MENT (32)

Top Video Music Sales Distributing Labels

Pos. DISTRIBUTING LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)

1 UNIVERSAL MUSIC & VIDEO DIST. (43)
2 SONY MUSIC ENTERPRISE (41)
3 WARNER MUSIC VIDEO (10)
4 BMG VIDEO (16)
5 CAPITOL VIDEO (9)

Top Recreational Sports DVD Sales

Pos. TITLE—Program Supplier


Top Recreational Sports DVD Program Suppliers

Pos. PROGRAM SUPPLIER (No. of Charted Titles)

1 SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT (52)
2 VENTURA DISTRIBUTION (26)
3 BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAIN- 
MENT (3)
4 WARNER HOME VIDEO (8)
5 REDLINE ENTERTAINMENT (10)

Top Health & Fitness Videos

Pos. TITLE—Program Supplier

1 PILATES FOR DUMMIES—Anchor Bay Entertain- 
ment 2 THE METHOD PILATES: TARGET SPECI- 
FICS—Current Wellness 3 DARRIN’S DANCE GROOVES—Ven- tura Distribution 4 LESLIE SANSONE: HIGH CALORIE BURN—GoodTimes Home Video 5 LESLIE SANSONE: SUPER FAT BURNING—GoodTimes Home Video

Top Health & Fitness Videos Program Suppliers

Pos. PROGRAM SUPPLIER (No. of Charted Titles)

1 GOODTIMES HOME VIDEO (16) 2 AMOR BAY ENTERTAINMENT (21) 3 CURRENT WELLNESS (3)
4 VENTURA DISTRIBUTION (4) 5 ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT (5)

Top Kid Video Labels

Pos. LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)

1 WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAIN- 
MENT (27)
2 NICKELODEON VIDEO (26)
3 PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAIN- 
MENT (15)
4 ARTISAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT (4)
5 HIT ENTERTAINMENT (17)

Top Kid Video Sales Distributing Labels

Pos. DISTRIBUTING LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)

1 WARNER HOME VIDEO (19)
2 HIT ENTERTAINMENT (18)
3 PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAIN- 
MENT (41)

DVD & Games

Behind Every Business Decision

Top 10 Videogame Software Titles

Year-To-Date Through November 2003

Rank Platform Title Publisher  Intro Date Average Selling Price
1 PS2 "Madden NFL 2004" Electronic Arts Aug. 2003 $49 9
2 GBA "Pokémon Ruby" Nintendo of America March 2003 $31
3 GCN "Pokémon Sapphire" Nintendo of America March 2003 $31
4 PS2 "Zelda: The Wind Waker" Nintendo of America March 2003 $31
5 PS2 "Grand Theft Auto: Vice" Rockstar Games (Take 2) Oct. 2002 $43
6 PS2 "Cruise the Matrix" Electronic Arts May 2003 $47
7 PS2 "The Getaway" Sony Computer Entertainment (Sony) Feb. 2003 $40
8 PS2 "NCAA Football 2004" Electronic Arts July 2003 $50
9 PS2 "NBA Street Vol. 2" Electronic Arts April 2003 $48
10 PS2 "Grand Theft Auto 3" Rockstar Games (Take 2) Oct. 2001 $21

Chart provided by Billboard to NPD ForWard/MIDiS10 Video Games service. It is based on point-of-sale data from a panel of 23 chains, which represent 60% of the U.S. market, with sales projected to represent 100% of the nation's sales. This list represents sales from January-November 2003. Platforms listed above include PlayStation 2 (PS2), Game Boy Advance (GBA) and GameCube (GCN).
Air Unclear On Future
EMI Readies New Album As Act Mulls Contract

BY JAMES MARTIN

PARIS—EMI Music is fully committed to making the long-awaited third album from French electronica act Air an international success, even though the release marks the end of Air’s current contract with EMI’s Virgin France subsidiary.

Air is among a small number of contemporary French acts to acquire an international audience. According to EMI, the duo has sold 3.2 million albums to date, with 1998 debut “Moon Safari,” its 2001 follow-up, “10,000 Hz Legend,” and the soundtrack album to the 1999 movie “The Virgin Suicides,” which came out between the two official studio albums.

EMI will release the new album, “Talkie Walkie,” Jan. 26 to most international markets on Virgin France imprint Source. The Japanese release date is Jan. 21; in France it will arrive Jan. 27. In the U.S., “Talkie Walkie” will appear Jan. 27 on EMI’s Astralwerks label.

‘STANDARD CONTRACT’ SOUGHT

However, Air members Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoit Dunckel had not decided at press time whether to re-sign with Virgin France. Godin says that the pair is seeking “a standard, fair contract.”

London-based EMI Recorded Music Continental Europe pres.

Air’s new album, “Talkie Walkie,” arrives this month.

Europe’s Festivals Expected To Boom Again In 2004

BY JULIANA KORANTENG

LONDON—In business terms, 2003 was the loudest year yet for Europe’s leading music festivals. Now the continent’s major promoters want to pump up the volume this year.

The open-air rock and pop festivals occupy most of the annual music calendar from late spring to late fall in Europe. Organizers of many of the region’s leading events say the majority saw an increase in spectators and profits in 2003, prompting forecasts of another triumphant year in 2004.

Live music powerhouse Clear Channel Entertainment Europe opted to begin investing in festivals across the continent in 2001. Its 2003 results indicate that the investment is paying off.

“2003 was a record year for CCE festivals,” says London-based Michael Rapino, CEO of CCE Europe’s music division.

The company launched six new events in 2003. “We made a profit on the new festivals,” Rapino says, “which is unheard-of in start-ups.”

The six new festivals were the U.K.-based digital-music-themed Download Festival; Stockholm Calling, in Sweden; three Dutch events (Fields of Rock, Waldrock and Arrow Classic Rock); and an open-air version of previously indoor Belgian dance festival I Love Techno.

With ambitions to become Europe’s biggest concert promoter, CCE already owns, has a stake in or manages 33 European festivals, attracting an annual audience of about 2 million.

CCE’s outdoor interests in 2003 included the fully-owned Rock Werchter in Belgium, the U.K.’s Isle of Wight Festival, the majority-owned Lowland and the half-owned North Sea Jazz Festival (the Netherlands) and Pukkelpop (Belgium).

It also has a minority share in Germany’s Rock am Ring and Rock im Park festivals and manages such events as the Party in the Park at London’s Hyde Park.

Rapino says the company will continue to invest in the infrastructure and staffing of some 33 festivals in 2004. “We will definitely bring back [the] Download festival,” he adds, “and look to roll that [format] out in other markets.”

EUROPEAN EXPANSION

London-based Mean Fiddler Music Group also had a profitable year on the U.K. festival front in 2003.

“Live music was in a stratosphere of its own,” MFMG managing director Melvin Benn says. He notes that

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Hits of the World is compiled at Billboard/London.
Virgin Expanding Oz Biz With Radio

BY CHRISTIE ELIEZER

SYDNEY—The Virgin Group is planning to expand its operations in Australia by moving into music radio. Virgin Group chairman Sir Richard Branson recently told Billboard that he intends to rev up the money generation by the stock market flotation of the group’s Australian airline, Virgin Blue, into radio in Australia (Billboard, Dec. 27, 2003).

Branson picked up licenses in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane as being of particular interest to the company, although he added, “We still have to go through the process.”

Branson says Virgin is prepared to invest up to $200 million Australian ($156 million) to set up what would be Australia’s fourth national youth radio network by late 2004.

Record executives here suggest that Virgin Radio could find a ready audience in Australia with a cutting-edge format. “listeners are looking for exciting new entertainment on radio,” says Charles Caldas, CEO of leading independent label distributor Shock Entertainment.

“A station that plays music is a healthy thing,” Caldas says, “especially to a company like Shock, which is based on new music.”

Sony Music Australia chairman/CEO Denis Handlin notes that the last successful introduction of a youth radio network, Nova—launched in 2001 by the Australian arm of U.K.-based DMG Radio—forced the other major networks [Austereo and Australian Radio Network] to play new music.


THE NEED FOR PARTNERS

If Virgin is to set up a network in Australia, it will have to do so through acquisitions and/or partnerships. The only new licenses to be made available during the next decade will be the three that Branson named.

According to regulator the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), the process for the new licenses for Sydney and Brisbane will commence in February, with auctions proposed for April. The allocation process for the new license in Melbourne will commence in May.

Industry insiders say the licenses are expected to fetch $50 million Australian ($43.2 million) to $70 million Australian ($54.3 million) each at auction.

Since its 2001 launch, DMG Radio Australia, which owns more than $250 million Australian ($180 million) for the five licenses around the country, which will operate as Nova stations, DMG Radio Australia managing director Paul Thompson says he is not interested in alliances with Virgin.

Virgin Radio would enter a highly competitive radio market. A survey the ABA issued Nov. 12, indicates that between 1978 and 2002 commercial radio revenue rose an average of 8.65% a year, compared with an average of 4% annually for TV.

Virgin has denied recent press reports in Australia and the U.K. that it was purchasing 50% of publicly listed Sydney broadcaster WorldAudio.

WorldAudio operates 15 AM stations nationally. In November 2003, it issued a statement to the Australian Stock Exchange claiming it had “sent information currently in the public domain in relation to its business plans and financial status to the Virgin Group.” The statement also said: “Sir Richard Branson’s office has contacted the company.”

But a London-based spokeswoman for Virgin Group denies that there have been any discussions between Virgin and WorldAudio. She adds that Virgin is studying a variety of business options in Australia.

TO OUR READERS

Global Music Pulse will return next issue.
Festivals

Continued from page 47

the $20,000 tickets for the 33-year-old Glastonbury Festival sold out in a record 24 hours, even before anyone could know in advance what performers might be on the bill.

The $55,000 tickets offered for MPMG’s 2003 Reading Festival sold out in a week. Benn says it took one month to sell it out in 2002. He adds that MPMG’s Leeds Festival, held the same August weekend as Reading, was a hit despite being forced by environmental regulators to change venues.

MPMG is now looking to push into continental Europe. It kicked off in 2003 with Doctor Music Day, a one-day festival at Barcelona’s Olympic Stadium.

“What we want now is a camping (vernghalt) festival in Spain,” Benn explains. He also plans a simultaneous festival in Germany, similar to the Reading-Leeds scenario, where the same bills play twin events on alternate days of a weekend.

Individual major stars might fill large stadiums or arenas. But for the same $75-$100 ticket prices as a major indoor gig, a big festival can offer 50 acts handlined by international names like Coldplay, Metallica, Radiohead, R.E.M. and Red Hot Chili Peppers to an audience of between 30,000 and 100,000. All those acts are now regulars on Europe’s festival circuit.

Adding Value

In 2003, several festivals injected more life into their established events by introducing new activities. Sweden’s Hultsfred, for example, launched two new stages: the 3,000-capacity Atlantis tent and Euphoria, a 1,300-capacity outdoor stage dedicated to dance music.

Similarly, Swiss festival Open Air St. Gallen introduced Guestclub, an 800-capacity tent featuring local and international acts.

A unique selling point for annual Danish festival Roskilde is its growing reputation as a vacation destination for music fans. In 2003, the festival organized a ferry crossing for 10,000 of Roskilde festival experience, including the June 26-29 music festival.

Besides the main stage performances, Roskilde has added several new mini-festivals that will be included in its 1989 summer of four arts, a skateboard park and a stage devoted to electronic music.

The growing number of festivals means the industry has given more attention to the most popular acts—and for audiences.

Folkert Koopmans, managing director of Hamburg-based Scopio Konzertproduktionen, notes that in 2003 it added a third day to its flag-ship German festival Hurricane, solely to ensure a spot for highly coveted EMI act Coldplay.

But Koopmans concedes that the event attracted 5,000 fewer spectators in 2003, slightly hurting its profit margin.

Outside Competition

Germany’s two largest annual rock festivals—Rock im Park in Nürburg and Rock am Ring in Nurburgring—are organized by Frankfurt-based promoter Marek Lieberberg Konzertagentur. The two Greed «| am Ring festivals will take place June 4-5 this year. The 2004 edition of Rock am Ring had to switch from its original dates to avoid clashing with a Formula 1 motoring event at the same Nurburgring location.

Indeed, competition from other entertainment and sporting events in the European summer is a ever-present problem. Jan Smets, organizer of 34-year-old Dutch festival Pinkpop, notes that their three-day event did not sell out in 2003. “We had 16,000 fewer guests, because there is so much to do in the Netherlands,” he says.

Smets’ solution has been to encourage regular Pinkpop regulars to vote online for the acts they would like to see.

In addition, he plans to keep ticket prices at the same levels as they were in 2003. One disadvantage of that, Smets concedes, is that “it means we may not be able to say ‘no’ to some acts we can’t afford, even if the fans vote for them.”

Nonetheless, Rapino says, “Talent in 2003 was at a record-high level. When you have so much quality, you can remember. So filling festivals with quality talent was not an issue. “The established festivals stay true to their audience and artists,” he says. “And have taken the time to grow and nurture into established brands.”
**EMI Spain Takes Aim**

**New GM Bosé Targets Reversing Market-Share Decline**

By Howell Llewellny

**MADRID**—The new GM of EMI Music Spain has been put in charge of reversing an almost-50% decline in market share during the past two years.

Simone Bosé, who was named GM of EMI Spain’s front-line operations in November, says his long-term aim is to “reposition EMI Spain to European levels.”

The company currently has a market share of around 9% in Spain, Bosé says. “To be in line with other European EMI operations, we should have a 14% or 15% market share. In 2001, EMI Spain had a 17% market share,” he adds.

Bosé was appointed to his newly created post by Emmanuel de Buretelen, London-based EMI Music Continental Europe chairman/CEO, in a shake-up of the Spanish company’s operations.

**REORGANIZING THE ROSTER**

To revamp EMI Spain’s fortunes, Bosé wants to bring more urban and pop music to the label. “We need hip-hop, modern blues, R&B and contemporary pop-rock, plus a certain return to pop acts like [successful 1980s Spanish act] Mcano,” he says. “We don’t have [global artists like] [U.K. act] Blue and Atomic Kitten—there is too much prefabricated music [in Spain] at the moment.”

Bosé most recently headed his own label, Bajamusic. He has worked in the music industry since 1985, with spells at BMG Ariola, Sony Music Spain, Capitol EMI Music Group and PolyGram/Universal. In his new role, he oversees EMI Spain’s marketing, A&R, sales and business affairs operations.

**Bosé Wants to Bring More Pop, Urban to EMI Spain**

“EMI Spain has suffered too many interruptions recently and needs time to mark out its objectives so that all the company works in the same direction,” Bosé says.

The company also aims to develop new business in multimedia, online, mobile-phone operations and DVD, he adds.

Bosé’s leading domestic artists in Spain are Camela, Luz Casal and Enrique Bunbury. Virgin’s main domestic artists are Anamal, Emmanuel Moreno and his daughter, Estrella Moreno.

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**Indies**

Continued from page 47

“Even though our structures are more flexible, the fact that we don’t have catalog and publishing to fall back on means that we’re more vulnerable than the majors,” says Milan-based Stefano Senardi, CEO of Edel-distributed NuEnertainment.

Senardi predicts that the next 12 months will be tough for all sectors of the record industry. “Now more than ever, the independent sector is pooling its resources for distribution, promotion or even live work, he says.

**MARKET SHARE GROWING**

Nar International GM Mario Limongelli is a VP of local International Federation of the Phonographic Industry affiliate FIML. He says that overall, “the indies’ share of the Italian market stands at 20%.”

Limongelli is credited within the industry for helping lead a gradual exodus of independent labels into the organization from older rival AFI and elsewhere.

Sangiorgi estimates that there are currently 400 to 500 indie labels in Italy. “Of those, 115 are members of FIML, and 150 or so are with AFI,” he explains. Others are affiliated with a more “grassroots” group, AudioCoop.

New labels are adding to the number on the thriving Italian indie scene. For example, launched early in 2003 and has already enjoyedchart success here with model-turned-singer/songwriter Carla Bruni (licensed from French indie Naive).

“Sure, this is a risky time to go into business,” GM Marco Alboni says, “but it’s also one that presents great opportunities.”

Mauro Buttinelli, founder of Edel-distributed Rai Trade, calls launching an indie label an act of optimism, comparing it to the beginning of a love affair.

“Coming to Paenza,” Buttinelli says, “and seeing the success stories helps the smaller and younger labels understand that you can build something that will last.”

MEI has contributed to the indie growth, Sangiorgi says, by encouraging the smaller Italian labels to think and act like entrepreneurs. “Seven or eight years ago, they would have been considered losers,” he says.

Air

Continued from page 47

Sangiovis CEO Emmanuel de Buretelen says the company anticipates selling around 1 million copies of the new album worldwide.

Reflecting on the contract situation, he says EMI is in the process of changing its royalty deals to try to be more effective by landing bigger contracts. “We need to get back on track with the bigger acts. We are not the most proactive label,” de Buretelen says.

**GOOD COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL**

This new accessibility suggests that the new album “can sell as many as ‘Moon Safari’ which is 1.8 million copies,” says Air’s Paris-based co-manager Marc Teissier du Cros. He manages the band with partner Stephane Elfsass; the two also run Air own independent label, Record Makers, along with the act.

EMI France’s export division is coordinating the international marketing plan, which will target existing Air fans and attempt to reach a new audience.

The campaign will be heavily media-led: The duo has been giving interviews since early November 2003 to the music press, lifestyle magazines and national press. Internet initiatives will also tie in with the album’s release. In addition, the first 250,000 copies of “Talkie Walkie” will be included in each DVD.

The album’s lead single, “Cherry Blossom Girl,” will arrive in continental Europe and Canada Jan. 19; in the U.K., it will be available only as a download. A second single, “Surfing on a Rocket,” will be released worldwide in April.

In Europe, the aim is to get the two singles onto major radio playlists, but the U.S. focus will be on college radio. “The singles market [in the U.S.] is very difficult,” Virgin France export manager Thomas Lorain concedes.

Air will tour extensively around the album’s release. After January dates in Japan, it plays Europe in February/March, then the U.S. in April, ending up at the May 1-2 Coachella festival in Los Angeles.

The act is booked internationally by Clive Underhill Smith at London-based agency Codac and in the U.S. by Marlene Tusch-Dalloton at Los Angeles-based ArtistDirect.
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Holiday Week
Continued from page 5

later and later,” he says. Ayers, who owns the three-unit Sonic Boom chain in Seattle, says the holiday selling season does not usually start for independents until mid-December. He called Monday, Dec. 15, the “best Monday we ever had.”

Joe Nardone, VP of the Gallery of Sound in Wilkes Barre, Pa., says that while complete results have not yet been tallied, the 11-unit chain is “probably up a little, but not a huge percentage. But it’s better than being down.”

In Nashville, Scott “Perk” Perkins, VP of retail at the 24-unit Music City Record Distributors, says that for the week of Christmas, the chain eked out a single-digit, same-store sales gain. But for the season, it will post a decline.

Meanwhile, Rick Galusha, president of the four-unit Homer’s in Omaha, Neb., describes the season as “brutal.”

In the Northeast, retailers were hit with two snowstorms early in the season that slowed sales. But when that happened, “you could just feel people getting on their computer and buying online,” says one executive with a wholesaler that provides fulfillment to online stores. “We experienced a big pick-up in sales on those days.”

HEALTHY MARGINS
Retailers overwhelmingly agree that profit margins were much stronger than last year.

Newbury Comics’ Dreez says December gross profit margins climbed to 37.4% vs. 34.9% last year. Similarly, Hastings’ Entertainment posted higher margins because it did not have to get as aggressive in sale pricing as it did last year, according to Steve Hicks, VP of purchasing.

For Christmas week, album sales totaled 31.3 million versus 26 million last year, meaning sales were up a whopping 20.6% over the same week last year—although this year, Christmas fell a day later. For the five-week period beginning Nov. 24 and ending Dec. 28, U.S. album sales were 127.3 million this year versus the 123.6 million scanned last year in the corresponding period, an increase of 3%.

Music experienced a comeback at some chains. The Hastings Entertainment chain posted positive numbers for the season.

And for the first time in years, “music was a contributor,” Marmaduke says. “We are more optimistic about music than we have been in a while.”

On the subject of music sales, retailers are divided. Some say it was a catalog Christmas, while others say it was a hit-driven holiday season.

But the latter category of merchants could not point to a single dominant title. “There wasn’t one title blowing anything out of the water, but across the top, there was a pretty good mix.”

—JOE NARDONE
GALLERY OF SOUND

MARMADUKE: A LOT OF LAST-MINUTE SALES

Omaha, Neb., describes the season as “brutal.”

In the Northeast, retailers were hit with two snowstorms early in the season that slowed sales.

But when that happened, “you could just feel people getting on their computer and buying online,” says one executive with a wholesaler that provides fulfillment to online stores. “We experienced a big pick-up in sales on those days.”

HEALTHY MARGINS
Retailers overwhelmingly agree that profit margins were much stronger than last year.

Newbury Comics’ Dreez says December gross profit margins climbed to 37.4% vs. 34.9% last year. Similarly, Hastings’ Entertainment posted higher margins because it did not have to get as aggressive in sale pricing as it did last year, according to Steve Hicks, VP of purchasing.

For Christmas week, album sales totaled 31.3 million versus 26 million last year, meaning sales were up a whopping 20.6% over the same week last year—although this year, Christmas fell a day later. For the five-week period beginning Nov. 24 and ending Dec. 28, U.S. album sales were 127.3 million this year versus the 123.6 million scanned last year in the corresponding period, an increase of 3%.

Music experienced a comeback at some chains. The Hastings Entertainment chain posted positive numbers for the season.

And for the first time in years, “music was a contributor,” Marmaduke says. “We are more optimistic about music than we have been in a while.”

On the subject of music sales, retailers are divided. Some say it was a catalog Christmas, while others say it was a hit-driven holiday season.

But the latter category of merchants could not point to a single dominant title. “There wasn’t one title blowing anything out of the water,” Nardone says, “but across the top, there was a pretty good mix.”

If there was one surprise title, the OutKast album was cited by a number of merchants, though they all stopped short of proclaiming it a huge hit.

David Massry, president of the 38-unit Riton Latino chain based in Tinton Falls, N.J., says that in the Latin music area, “it was more a catalog Christmas.”

But he adds that preliminary computations indicate that the chain finished up on a same-store basis for the season.

Bryan Everitt, director of music at Hastings Entertainment, says that boxed-set and music-DVD sales were extremely brisk and that Christmas music had a “great year.”

While overall, music was stronger than expected, product diversification really paid off, retailers say.

While all merchants say that the DVD category fulfilled high sales expectations, Hastings’ Hicks adds that book sales surprised the chain.

“Books came out of nowhere and led our increases relative to where they were earlier in the year,” Hicks says. “DVD was extremely strong, but it [it] had been all year.”

And Rob Perkins says profit margin improvements at the Value Central chain were driven by product mix changes. The chain, which recently emerged from Chapter 11 protection, spent the year adding new product lines.

In trend merchandise, the hottest items were licensed from the Orange County Choppers’ reality TV show, which follows the goings-on at a motorcycle shop in Rock Tavern, N.Y.

Another hot item was the Happy Bunny, a cute rabbit that utters sarcastic comments.

DVD boxed sets were also extremely popular. Merchants who ran out of stock early in the season were out of luck. The manufacturing and assembly of boxed sets’ elaborate packaging prevented the pipeline from being replenished in time for the late Christmas rush.

Music distributors are also said to have had the same problem with boxed sets. But in a new twist, some independent distributors say they experienced reorderers later in the holiday season than they ever have before.

“I am pleasantly surprised with the high volume of orders still being sent in from accounts this late in December,” says Rob Scarcello, VP of sales and marketing at Roch Entertainment Distribution.

Retailers expect continued strong holiday sales during New Year’s week.

Rob Perkins says, “We still have another week for sales to grow. [Christmas week] benefited from the way the calendar worked. You should have a similar effect [New Year’s week].”
Surround Sound Gaining In Popularity

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Although multichannel music has not registered with consumers as much as proponents had hoped, the year 2003 ended with more promising signs for its future.

Many classic albums were released on the DVD Audio and Super Audio CD (SACD) formats, while the home theater phenomenon continued, fueled by DVD Video’s continued extraordinary success and the emergence of 5.1-channel broadcasting, exemplified by the 45th Grammy Awards telecast (Billboard, Studio Monitor, Dec. 27, 2003).

Last month, the Surround Music Award for the 46th annual Grammys went to Frank Zappa and Led Zeppelin being honored as surround pioneer and surround artist of the year, respectively, a number of DVD-A and SACD titles competed in various categories. As demonstrated by the abundance of competing recordings — mixed or remixed in surround sound for DVD-A or SACD — more engineers, producers and artists have explored the realm beyond stereo, achieving a new and more compelling listening experience.

Most adventurous mix went to DTS Entertainment’s DVD-A of “The Wrath of Shangri-La” by Insane Clown Posse, mixed by Nathaniel Kunkel and Mike Povall.

In a tie, best mix, non-orchestral went to “The Game” by Queen — also a DVD-A from DTS Entertainment, mixed by Justin Shirley-Smith and Alison Krauss and Union Station’s “Live” (Rounder), an SACD recorded and mixed by Gary Paczosa.

Steele Dan’s DVD-A of “Everything Must Go,” mixed, by Elliot Scheiner, won best made-for-surround title, while Dutch rockers Kane won horizon artist of the year with the SACD “So Glad You Made It,” mixed by Ronald Prent.

Not surprisingly, “The Dark Side of the Moon” by Pink Floyd, remixed by James Guthrie and released on SACD in 2003, took three honors, including best multichannel reissue and best of show.

A MORE NATURAL SOUND

The confluence of veteran and up-and-coming audio professionals, and of remixed classics and recordings made with surround sound in mind, bodes well for multichannel music. The latter group was exemplified by composer/remixer BT, who delivered the conference’s keynote address.

“It was film that actually got me motivated to mix a record in surround sound,” says BT, whose score for the upcoming film “Monster” was conceived in 5.1-channel sound. “But I

was interested in it prior to that. All of my favorite composers have been masters of setting, of setting a space for a piece of music. It’s much more akin to a physical place than song. Be it Wagner, Stravinsky or Cocteau Twins, or [Robert] Fripp and [Brian] Eno, all my favorite composers have been trying to make something that sounds like this, except coming out of two speakers.

“Modern recorded music,” BT continues, “is the only way that we’re ever approached by a sound source from one direction. It’s hyper-unnatural; we’re used to it now, because stereo music has been the norm since the late ‘60s, but it’s very unnatural. “Symphonic Fantastique” by Hector Berlioz was written in the 1800s and was written for the brass players [to be situated] at the rear of the auditorium. So it has been an idea on composers’ minds for literally hundreds of years, but this is the first time you’re able to experiment with that sort of thing and reach the public in the way the composer intended. I just find it extraordinarily exciting.”

‘Beautiful’ Nom Marks Lifelong Goal For Perry

“I knew when I wrote ‘Beautiful’ that this song was going to be special,” Linda Perry says. “It’s very exciting and I feel so blessed.” Perry, lead vocalist on her group 4 Non Blondes’ early-90s hit “What’s Up,” has transitioned from singer to highly sought producer. That transition notwithstanding, she remains a songwriter, and with “Beautiful” — featured on Christina Aguilera’s “Stripped” and a nominee for song of the year for the 46th annual Grammy Awards — a lifelong dream is one step from becoming reality.

“When I was 7 years old, I saw the Grammys for the first time,” Perry recalls. “I don’t know what it was, but I was just glued to the TV, completely in awe. The next day, I set a goal for myself: ‘One day, I’m going to win one of those.”’

“Beautiful,” also nominated for best female pop vocal performance, is just one of Perry’s recent, notable productions. She wrote and produced the track, which has been a hit and won several awards. By becoming a producer, Perry has found a new outlet for her creativity, and has become known for her ability to take risks and push boundaries.

That will make you unique.” It was really disappointing, because I really love that record, but it doesn’t matter because I walked away with something so much greater. He taught me everything.

Perry’s transformation from singer to producer has stimulated a profoundly positive, personal change as well, she says, one reflecting the essential collaborative skills inherent in the latter role.

“When I was Linda Perry the singer, I was not open to collaboration at all,” she recalls. “I would say it was out of a fear and insecurity about somebody trying to make something of mine better, that I wasn’t doing a good-enough job. I didn’t want to have that realization.

“When I became a producer, a whole other freedom came with that. I’m more diplomatic, patient, understanding and open to the person, she says, “because it’s not about me anymore — it’s about trying to find the person I’m with. That has been a wonderful growth in my life, because it has changed my whole perspective on everything. My whole world towards people is completely different.”

Studio Monitor

By Christopher Walsh

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www.americanradiohistory.com
TV, Film Synch Deals Boost Exposure, Revenue

BY JIM BESMAN

The second installment of a two-part Billboard survey.

During the past year, music publishers have been forced to rely more heavily on film and TV placements in the wake of declining mechanical revenue. Sony/ATV Music Publishing president Richard Bowe reports prominent TV placements, specifically “The Dead Zone,” which uses Jeff Buckley’s “New Year’s Prayer” as its main title, and Sugar Ray’s version of Joe Jackson’s “Is She Really Going Out With Him?” as the main title of “I’m With Her.”

TV commercial usages have been important for Sony of late as well, most notably Annalisa Davis’ version of Stephen Stills’ “Carry On” for Sony Electronics, which Sony Music has released as an online single in an example of “true synergy,” Bowe says.

As for film placements, he says, “as far as we’re concerned it’s one of the most important growth areas that we have—now and for the foreseeable future—so it’s the highest priority in making up for the decline in mechanical income.”

Recent successes in this area include the Elvis Presley classic “Suspicious Minds,” the main title for “In Tolerable Cruelty,” and Kazzer’s “Pedal to the Metal,” which is in “The Italian Job” and was co-written by Sony/ATV writer Brian West.

GREAT FOR CATALOG

Famous Music Publishing VP of film and TV music Stacy Palm notes that the number of soundtrack albums being released has decreased. “However, there has been an increase in the number of song spots in film and television projects,” she says, “and we have an opportunity to exploit a good portion of our back catalog as well as our current artist/writers.”

She adds that film and TV remain “one of the best ways to gain exposure on our ‘yet to be discovered at radio or MTV’ acts, especially since they reach the artists’ target demographic. These licenses can be extremely beneficial to the artists and to our company.”

Palm lists “School of Rock,” “The Fighting Temptations,” “Soul Plane” and “Bruce Almighty” among notable film usages for Famous in 2003. She adds that songs from the band P.O.D were used in a number of trailers and films, including “The Matrix Reloaded.” “Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life.”

Warner/Chappell Music senior VP of film and TV music Brad Rosenberger takes particular pride in having Led Zeppelin’s “Immigrant Song” in “School of Rock.”

“We’re very pleased whenever we can get the Zeppelin to say yes,” he says, adding that if the film’s star, Jack Black, tapped a personal plea to the band to use the song.

But while Rosenberger notes that Warner/Chappell licensed “tons of stuff” for films during the past quarter, “everyone’s concerned with budgets—and stock,” he adds that the “Godfather and Sons” episode focused on the whole Chicago blues/Chess Records legacy handed down by Arc owner Marshall Chess’ father, Leonard Chess, legendary co-founder of Chess Records.

Arc copyrights also surfaced steadily in “American Dreams,” Highey says. “Since their stories are our catalog.”

Sony Music Green president Mark Fried hails the usage of such classic catalog. “Perhaps the best news, particularly for resourceful independents, is that music supervisors and the film and television music departments they serve are as open to classic songs and hip new artists as A&R guys used to be,” Fried says.

“I would go as far as to call these folks “the new A&R,” since their creative decisions allow songs and artists exposure to the largest captive audiences available. The obvious upside in all this is that publishers are able to provide their clients both a consistent and meaningful revenue stream and a means to revitalize or expose their most promising work.”

Fried further lauds the trend by music supervisors “tired of turning to a small pool of overused hits” to actively search for “lesser-known gems performed by familiar artists.”

Hence, Spirit has recently placed Pure Prairie League’s 1980s country-crossover hit “Let Me Love You Tonight” in “How to Deal,” Noel Pagan’s ’80s dance track “Silent Morning” in “American Splendor” and Friends of Distinction’s ’70s soul classic “Going in Circles” in “Radio.”

“It’s the first time any of these songs had been synched to wide-release feature films,” Fried says. But he adds that “as record companies, major publishers and even management companies continue to consolidate and leave writers/artists limited ways and means to break out, we find that smart synth licensing is the best artist-development tool around.”

Here he singles out U.K. act Junk’s “Life Is Good” in the “Agent Cody Banks” movie and soundtrack, as well as songs by rock group the Mooney Suzuki in “School of Rock” and TV series “Smallville.”

Fried concludes, “These uses, when properly tied to Web sites and publicity machinery, went a long way in establishing a meaningful fan base for the artists.”

Words & Music

The late Rosemary Clooney was nominated for a Grammy Award many times during her illustrious career, yet never won—much to her chagrin.

“She always wanted a Grammy,” Clooney’s longtime manager, Allen Swidoff says. “But almost every time she was nominated she was in competition with Tony Bennett—and almost every time, Tony took it away.”

Clooney died June 29, 2002, but is up for a Grammy again, this time with her posthumous release “The Last Concert” (Concord), a best traditional pop vocal album nominee.

Recorded Nov. 16, 2001, in Honolulu with the Honolulu Symphony Pops and the Big Kahuna & the Copa Cat Pack big band, the concert indeed turned out to be Clooney’s last major concert performance. That the album was actually made, though, was largely due to fate, Swidoff asserts.

“The Honolulu Symphony Pops wanted an album deal, so we were doing a test recording to show the record company what they sounded like,” Swidoff recalls.

The Pops was taping its entire 2001 season to submit a representative sampler to the label. Meanwhile, Swidoff had booked Clooney on a Hawaiian vacation, at the end of which she agreed to sing a couple of concerts.

“We had no intention of making a [Clooney] record, but it was incredible how beautiful the orchestra played and how beautiful she sang,” Swidoff recounts. “There isn’t a false vocal because we didn’t think to issue it until after she passed—and we realized that we had her last recording.”

But “The Last Concert” is special for its content, too. “What makes it unique is that it’s all live and has wonderful dedications like ‘The Singer,’ a song for one of her favorite people—Frank Sinatra—that her drummer [Joe Cocuzza] wrote with pianist Vincent Falcone Jr., who also worked with Clooney. And it also has her version of ‘God Bless America’—the epitome of beauty and strength. She sang it a lot, and people always asked her to record it, but she never did, and it’s the last song on the album—recorded two months after 9-11.”

The rest of the set, Clooney continues, “is a journey of her life,” marked by stage patter that captures her story and humor—for she was one of the funniest women on the stage.

In keeping with tradition, Clooney is again up against Bennett, whose “A Wonderful World” album with K.D. Lang is nominated, as are Rod Stewart’s “At Time Goes By: The Great American Songbook, Volume II,” Barbra Streisand’s “The Movie Album,” and most ironically, Bette Midler’s “Bette Midler Sings the Rosemary Clooney Songbook.”

On noting that her career commenced before the Grammy Awards were instituted, Swidoff recalls Clooney’s last Grammy nomination, for her 2001 album “Sentimental Journey,” which also featured Big Kahuna & the Copa Cat Pack. It fell to the “Players’ Tony Bennett Sings the Blues” in the best traditional pop vocal album category. But that wasn’t the worst of it.

“She had gotten bit by a mosquito and got encephalitis and was hospitalized” with 107-degree fever,” Swidoff says. “She was in a coma, but she came out of it during the Grammys and said, ‘Do you know what I was dreaming the whole time?’ That time Tony Bennett were standing around me with Grammys in their hands and handing me one.”

Swidoff now dreams that Clooney will finally receive her long-desired and deserved first Grammy win. It should be noted, however, that in 2002, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences presented her with a Lifetime Achievement Award honoring “her unique and individual vocal style that combined skilled phrasing, subtle timing and an honest relationship with the lyric, making her one of the great interpreters of the American popular song.”

Posthumous Grammy For Clooney Would Be Her First
Year Ends On High Note

Although industry-wide album sales were down from the same weeks of last year in the two stanzas prior to Christmas, an extra gift-shopping day during the holiday frame closed 2003 on an up note.

With the holiday shifting back a day, from Wednesday in 2002 to Thursday, album sales are up a whopping 20.6% over the same week of the prior year (see story, page 5). The final week’s spurt more than compensates for the 5.8% deficit seen the week before the Christmas frame or the 9.5% gap of the year’s first week.

Further, the 31.3 million album units sold during this Christmas also exceeds those of the holiday week in 2001, when Dec. 25 fell on a Tuesday. There were 24.8 million sold that week and 25.9 million tallied during Christmas week 2002.

The strong holiday rally closes the year’s album sales down to a gap of just 3.6%, the smallest lag behind prior-year sales that the industry has seen in 24 months.

STELLAR PERFORMANCE: The seventh Incubus song to appear on Modern Rock Tracks keeps the group’s record intact, as all seven have reached the top.

"Megalomaniac" (Immortal/Epic) is No. 7 in its second chart week, after debuting at No. 10 on last week’s unpublished chart. That is the highest debut of Incubus’ career on this tally, besting the No. 25 debut of “Wish You Were Here” in the Aug. 25, 2001, issue.

When it comes to top 10 songs, Incubus is tied with Bush for the second-longest string of top 10 hits counting from the act’s first appearance on the chart. Only Green Day has performed better, with its first eight chart titles all reaching the top 10.

Of these three acts, only Incubus has an unbroken string of top 10 hits. The group kicked off its career in November 1994 with “Pardon Me,” which peaked at No. 3 in April 2000.

Next came "Stellar," which went to No. 2 in September 2000. The follow-up was "Drive," which spent eight weeks at No. 1, starting in March 2001, to become Incubus’ biggest hit to date.

"Wish You Were Here" sailed to No. 2 in October 2001. "Nice to Know You" stalled at No. 9 in March 2002, becoming the first Incubus song to miss the top three. "Warning" peaked at No. 3 in July 2002.

"MOUNTAIN HIGH:" “Go Tell It on the Mountain” (Real World/Nدارا) is in its fourth week at No. 1 on Top Gospel Albums. It’s not by the first No. 1 album for the Blind Boys of Alabama, it’s the first appearance on this chart by the septuagenarians. More amazing, the debut comes 64 years after the group’s founding.

FROZEN DOZEN: The second chart week of 2004 is a slow one, as the top 12 songs on The Billboard Hot 100 remain in place from the unpublished chart of the week before. It’s the biggest freeze at the top of this chart since Aug. 28, 1982, when the top 12 singles all held their positions from the previous issue.

This time around, the first title to show any upward movement is "Get Low" (BMG/TVT) by Lil John & the East Side Boyz featuring Ying Yang Twins. The former No. 2 song rebounds 18-13. Back in the summer of 1982, the highest-ranked song to climb the chart was Kenny Rogers “Love Will Turn You Around,” which inched up 14-13.

This month’s top 12 won’t stand another week, as “Hey Ya!” (Arista) by OutKast is likely to yield pole position after five weeks to the other song the duo has in the top two, "The Way You Move."

Another First For Elton

Is it possible to chart new ground 34 years after first appearing on a Billboard chart? If you’re Elton John, yes.

With a career stretching back to “Border Song” in 1970, John has never had a No. 1 hit on the Hot Dance Club Play chart until this issue. Granted, the dance chart was not introduced until 1976.

Ironically, Elton’s first No. 1 on this list is “Are You Ready for Love” (Southern Fried/Ultra), from the Thom Bell sessions recorded in 1977.

Over the Counter

By Geoff Mayfield
gmayfield@billboard.com

Add up the last two shopping weeks of 2003, and the 63.4 million album units sold in that period beats the same window of 2002 by 5.6%, when Nielsen SoundScan had the year’s final two weeks clocked at 60 million copies.

Although chart-topping OutKast, Alicia Keys and Britney Spears (at Nos. 1, 2 and 10, respectively) are the only acts in the top 10 to show any gain over the prior frame, the last album chart of 2003 is stronger than that which sealed 2002 in every dimension.

There are four albums above 300,000 on the current chart, compared with only one during Christmas week 2002. Each of the current top 10 surpasses 200,000, two more than we had a year ago.

The Billboard 200 also has more members in the 100,000-plus club, with 34, vs. 30 in the 2002 finale.

Finally, the No. 200 title stands at 18,000, compared with 13,500 in the last week of 2002. What a difference a day makes — especially when the day in question is an extra one before Christmas.

HIT-POP’S SEASON: One former chart-topper replaces another on The Billboard 200, as a gain of almost 12% pushes OutKast past Alicia Keys.

BMG Distribution was positioned to win, regardless of which of those two came out on top. And for the second year (Continued on page 66)
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**Hot Shot Debut**

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**Billboard 200**

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*Albums with the greatest growth this week*
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<td>THE BILLBOARD 200 A-Z (LISTED BY ARTISTS)</td>
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<td>Fred &amp; Farley</td>
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<td>Nicole Kidman &amp; The Wiggles</td>
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<td>BAD BOYS II</td>
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<td>2 FAST 2 FURIOUS</td>
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**Over The Counter**

*Continued from page 57*

In a row and the fourth time in six years, the big chart's No. 1 title during Christmas week is a resident of Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. This is the fifth straight week that OutKast's "Speakerboxx/The Love Below" shows a gain over the prior frame.

Figure this rap duo is not among those that think they are too many music awards shows, as some of its double album's recent rallies came in the wake of exposure from appearances at the American Music Awards on ABC, Fox's Billboard Music Awards and VH1's Big in '03 Awards, along with the notoriety of the act's six Grammy nominations.

This time, Christmas shopping—and post-holiday trips to the music store inspired by gift certificates or the exchange of unwanted CDs—helps OutKast earn an 11.8% rise for a holiday-week tally of 374.000. That is 15.5% more than the 313,000 copies that the soundtrack from Eminem's "8 Mile" sold when it returned to No. 1 during Christmas week 2002 but substantially less than the 398,000 that rock band Creed sold when "Weathered" held the top slot during the holiday frame of 2001.

"The Diary of Alicia Keys," meanwhile, is practically flat with the sales it achieved during the prior frame, up 0.3% in the holiday week (373,000).

Aside from Christmas-week conquests by Keys this time and "8 Mile" in the beloved frame of 2002, rapper DMX also planted hip-hop's crown atop The Billboard 200 during the Christmas weeks of 1998 and 1999, when the release dates of "Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood..." and "...And Then There Was X," respectively, were set to coincide with the holiday frame.

**PHOTO FINISH:** This marks the second consecutive week with a difference of less than 0.1% separates the No. 1 from the runner-up on The Billboard 200.

OutKast beats Alicia Keys by less than 3,000 units. On the previous chart, Keys edged country king Toby Keith by a razor-thin lead of fewer than 500 copies, topping the list with 370,000 copies.

There have only been two other weeks in Nielsen SoundScan's 12-year history when the gap between the top two titles on The Billboard 200 has been smaller than the difference that Keys and Keith saw during OutKast's unpubished win. During one week in December, 2001, Aerosmith beat the "Space Jam" soundtrack by fewer than 200 copies, while a space of about 300 units placed Keys' first album behind Eminem's D12 when the latter's set bowed at No. 1 in 2001.

The last week of the SoundScan calendar year also marks the third time in 2003 that less than 1,000 copies have stood between the big chart's top two. OutKast edged Rod Stewart by about 500 in the Nov. 15 issue, while little more than 900 units kept "8 Mile" ahead of Norah Jones in the issue dated Jan. 18.

**ROCKIN' IN RHYTHM:** In the days that follow Christmas, rap and rock titles gain traction, when younger shoppers go for edgier fare than that which parents, uncles and aunts might buy as gifts for the kids in their lives.

While the extra shopping day certainly helped overall volume, the figure that it was the fewest days after Christmas that helped 50 Cent's G-Unit rally. The Billboard 200's Greatest Gainer (15-11, up 28%) was eyed at the arena between Jay-Z (12-12, up 26%), Blink-182 (14-15, up 13%), Tupac (20-19, up 18%), Ludacris (28-29, up 14%), Chingy (22-22, up 15%), Nelly (40-28, up 29%) and Coldplay (49-36, up 12%). The big chart's percentage-based Face- sette goes to rapper Ogie Trice (170-123, up 50%).
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**Billboard January 10, 2004**

**Top Holiday Albums**

**Top Heatseekers**

**Top Independent Albums**

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*All information is for the week ending January 10, 2004 and is based on sales data collected by Nielsen SoundScan.*
Charts Reflect Return To Non-Holiday Programming

For the fourth consecutive year, the multitude of adult contemporary stations that switched to all-holiday mode has led to a Christmas song topping the AC chart. In last week’s unspun issue, Jim Bruckman wrote, “With Kristy Starling’s “Sending You A Little Christmas” jumped to No. 1 and this week dives to No. 12, as the current tracking period includes only a portion of the holiday week. “Sending” is Bruckman’s second No. 1 on the AC chart; the other, “Simple Things,” hit No. 1 thanks to a special holiday mix during the 2001 Christmas season. Other holiday No. 1s of the past few years include “The Christmas Shoes” by NewSong in 2000 and last season’s “O Holy Night” by Josh Groban, which is the only song of the bunch to stay at No. 1 for two weeks. This week’s AC chart, the par-tial-week return to normalcy results in some unusual moves, as non-holiday songs find their way back into rotation.

Songs with more than 20 weeks on the chart are awarded bullet status only if they were building in the weeks prior to the all-holiday station exodus in late November. Therefore, Uncle Kracker Featuring Dohle Gray’s return to No. 3 with “Drift Away” for a 26th week from the No. 4 slot does not merit a bullet, while Train’s “Call- ing All Angels,” which was growing before seasonal sounds invaded, does merit a bullet, as it holds at No. 3. “Drift” posts 857 detections for the week, which ties it with the No. 2-ranked song, Matchbox Twenty’s “Unwired.” Since both songs gained in popularity, the tiebreaker in this case was total stations playing the tracks, which favored “Drift” by an 89-85 margin. The last tie atop the AC chart occurred in the 1, 2001, 200 issue, when Dido’s “Thank You” edged out “There You’ll Be” by Faith Hill on a tiebreaker.

SLOW BUT STEADY: Twista, who earned his first top 10 with “Slow Jamz” on both Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and The Billboard Hot 100 during our unpublished week, moves 4-6 on the R&B list while holding at No. 9 on the Hot 100. The Chicago native, who was once named the world’s fastest rapper by "The Guinness Book of World Records," is joined on the track by Kanye West and Jamie Foxx. "Jamz" marks the return of actor Foxx on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks for the first time in nearly 10 years. He had previously charted with two tracks, "Inattention" and "Experiment," from his 1994 release, "Peep This." West, who produced "Slow Jamz" and the current No. 1, "Don’t Know My Name," by Alicia Keys, moves 14-13 on R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks with his own "Through the Wire." Twista’s set, "Kamikaze," hits retail Jan. 27, while West’s "College Drop Out" drops Feb. 3.

“HEY NOW: OutKast’s "Hey Ya" holds at No. 1 on The Billboard Hot 100 for a fifth week while maintaining its perch atop Hot Digital Tracks for a 12th week. Don’t know if you can categorize downloading tracks as holiday shopping, but this week was pretty volumi-nous, as "Hey Ya" sets a high for a title with 16,000 downloads while total volume for digital tracks sets a new one-week standard of 1.7 million paid downloads.

CHANGING LANES: One of the changes to hit our charts in 2003 was a significant reduction in the size of our country radio panel. Responding to a near-unanimous plea from label executives, we trimmed stations from our panel of 147 country stations monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems (BDS). Country label executives began lobbying us to trim the size of our panel as far back as 2002, citing a lack of return on the investment of promotional dollars, compounded by what most of them saw as a slow chart that they believed impaired the breaking of new artists.

We’d have preferred a long-term label promotion strategy that address-es the plodding pace at which many country programmers utilize new music rather than simply tinkering with chart methodology. However, we acknowledged that reviving a shrink- ing and consolidated record industry is key to maintaining the vitality of the radio community. So we employed a gradual and sensible approach to addressing the size and composition of our radio panel by revising an impor-tant current music policy.

In 1998, we established a mini-mum acceptable level of current music for stations to contribute to our country chart. At that time, stations were required to program at least one-third of their most played titles with new songs. Effective with the Oct. 18, 2003, issue, that pol-icy was revised to require stations to consistently populate their 30 most-played titles with 60% current songs. It was this elevated minimum per-cent-age that resulted in the smaller panel, which now numbers 128 sta-tions, with one other station’s defec-tion from the format.

All country stations monitored by BDS will be evaluated in this manner on a quarterly basis to maintain or earn reporting status. As a complement to that policy change, we will use a rate card for removing descending titles from the chart in the next issue. Dropping titles will now be moved to recurrent status after 20 weeks when they fall below No. 15. Previously, such titles became recurrents after 20 weeks when they fell below No. 20.

TO OUR READERS

Hitpredictor will return next week.
Ehrlich Brings Grammys To Life

Grammy producer/writer Ken Ehrlich has been part of the Grammy Awards telecast since 1980, and if there is one thing he has learned throughout the years, it is that regardless of the economic state of the music business, compelling artist stories often make the best Grammy shows. Whether it be career-defining performances or an awards sweep by an artist, Ehrlich says he remains inspired by those amazing Grammy moments that millions will see on TV and remember for years to come.

Ehrlich is part of the team behind the 44th annual Grammy Awards, which will take place Feb. 8 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. CBS will air the U.S. telecast of the show.

Pierre Cossette of Cossette Productions is executive producer, Walter Miller is producer/director, John Cossette is supervising producer, and Tisha Fein is coordinating producer. The Grammy Awards TV production team also works with a TV committee from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, the organization behind Grammy Award rules and voting.

Ehrlich says he feels more pressure from the music industry than the TV industry in booking artists to appear on the show. “The pressure comes from the record labels, managers and artists themselves,” he explains. “We deal with it as best we can, but our ultimate responsibility is to the viewers by putting on the best show possible. CBS and [CBS chairman/CEO] Les Moonves have been amazingly supportive. CBS doesn’t [dictate] to us what to do or not to do.” Ehrlich says it is not a requirement that artists who perform at the Grammys must be nominated for an award. Nor does being one of the top-selling artists of the year guarantee a performing slot. “We may opt for an act that is a charismatic live performance over a less charismatic act that has sold more records.”

The Grammy Awards is currently the highest-rated music awards show on U.S. TV. Last year the show ratings went up to a 14.7 rating/share (25 million U.S. viewers), compared with the 2002 Grammy Awards, which had an 11.1 rating/share (19 million U.S. viewers). The telecast is an important marketing tool, as several artists usually receive huge increases in record sales after being on the show. Beyond record sales, Ehrlich says he always hopes for career-defining moments that make for memorable TV.

For example, he names captivating awards sweeps (Michael Jackson in 1984, Norah Jones in 2003), Grammy performances that raise the artist to a new level of popularity (Ricky Martin in 1999, Coldplay in 2003) and unlikely collaborations (Elton John and Eminem in 2001, the Simon & Garfunkel reunion in 2003).

And what was Ehrlich’s most nerve-racking Grammy show? He says it was the 1998 Grammy Awards, which was hit by last-minute cancellations from Luciano Pavarotti and Barbra Streisand, not to mention a guy who crashed the stage during Bob Dylan’s performance.

Ehrlich says he can’t reveal yet who will perform at the 2004 Grammys. But the element of surprise, he says, will remain a Grammy constant. “We don’t know who wins until they open that envelope and announce it onstage.”
**Tickets**

Continued from page 3

plateaued—and the consumer has responded negatively.

**SETTING A TRENDS**

The Eagles are often credited with changing the paradigm for rock concert prices with their Hell Freezes Over reunion tour in 1994.

Still others consider promoter consolidation in the late 1990s as the catalyst for higher ticket prices.

“I point to 1997, when the consolidation of promoters began with SPX,” says Jerry Mickelson, co-president of Jam Productions, the Chicago-based independent concert promoter.

“They paid higher guarantees to control the business, and that led to higher ticket prices. Ticket prices went up 60% from 1997 to 2002.”

But before those three years, the Eagles prompted sticker shock across the land by asking $100 or more per ticket in most markets. Despite the high price, the tour was a virtual sellout.

Actually, Barbara Streisand had shut-tered the $100 per ticket ceiling one year earlier. But in 1994, Rolling Stones tickets still topped out at $50, and Pink Floyd was getting $75.

Eagles manager Irving Azoff offered no apologies. He was unrepentant, and he remains.

“The only people that complained were the people that were getting in for free,” he says. “If we had known all the fans were going to go, we would’ve probably gone higher.”

Azoff points out that the Eagles ticket price then was “all-in,” including facility fees, credit card and service charges. “We were the best bargain on the road that year.”

Consumers didn’t balk. So, if nothing else, the Eagles showed the world the concert market could bear, at least at the superstar level.

In the years since, $100 tickets have become commonplace. What’s more, tickets priced $250 to $500 for “special events” such as Paul McCartney or the Rolling Stones and VIP packages for $1,000 and more are increasingly becoming commonplace.

“Now we’re way down the pack,” Azoff says of the Eagles. “We haven’t moved much.”

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**Average Ticket Prices**

1993

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<th>Tour/Event</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>Bruce Springsteen</td>
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<td>Jimmy Buffett</td>
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<td>Greatful Dead*</td>
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2003

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<tr>
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<td>$75</td>
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**FOR THE RECORD**

In “The Last Word” (“Billboard,” Dec. 20, 2003), Phil Ramone should have been listed as the producer of the track recording for “The Boy From Oz.”

Contrary to the In the Spirit column that ran in the issue dated Dec. 27, 2003, the Tricity Singers are not negotiating a record deal. The North Carolina-based choir has an album slated for release from EMI Gospel later this year and remains under contract. Donald Lawrence is currently negotiating for a record contract.

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**Piracy**

Continued from page 3

sen, president of the Video Software Dealers Assn. Disney/Pixar’s “Finding Nemo” also distinguished itself in an ocean of unauthorized online movie files in November as the second-most-available film download, at 57,801 copies, BayTSP said.

In October, prior to its Nov. 4 video debut, the title was No. 1, with 45,632 copies available for unauthorized downloading.

“Our industry must not find itself in a decline five years from now because it has given a generation of youth empty reasons to justify the file sharing of movies,” Anderson says.

Indeed, in the August 2003 report “From Discs to Downloads,” the Cambridge, Mass.-based Forrester Research predicted that DVD and VHS sales will peak in 2008, with piracy experiences a 59% drop in 2008 because of downloading.

“Studios can’t compete with a free model,” says Tim McGraw. “You have to go to a ticket window, or you can’t go to a concert.”

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**STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE**

Forrester Research estimates that movie piracy is three years behind what has happened in music — although the numbers indicate the problem is growing.

The Motion Picture Assn. of America (MPAA) says that 163,000 Web sites offered pirated movies in 2002; the 2004 figure was expected to reach 200,000 sites.

Forrester’s report says that 48% of active file sharers were sharing video files by June 2003, compared with fewer than 20% in June 2002. While the majority of those video files by June 2003 were pornography (42%) or music videos (10%), 9% were TV shows, 7% were free-to-air films. The numbers are low for films and TV shows because it can take hours to download the large files. "Time is money for consumers, as much as it is for business," Anderson says. "This cost can make rental and sell-through still look attractively profitable to consumers."

But the Internet is a forum where bad intentions are a very real problem. The Motion Picture Assn. of America, which has created an illegal content task force, says that more than 7 million consumers will have broadband connections, according to Forrester, speeding the time it takes to download.

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**DOWNLOADING POLICE**

Some studios are trying to catch pirates by hiring such Internet policing companies as Los Gatos, Calif.-based BayTSP (www.baytsp.com). BayTSP turns the information over to its clients, who can then send an e-mail to that IP address or notify the user’s Internet service provider.

According to BayTSP, 75% to 85% of those who receive a takedown notice stop sharing their movie files.

BayTSP’s Ishikawa would not identify the record company or studio clients, although he says the company has done work for at least three of the seven major studios since it launched in 1999.

"When between 1/10 and 3/10 million infringements a day across movies, music, and software,” Ishikawa says.

According to Ishikawa, the most prevalent source for downloads is unauthorized content on unsecured movie theater screens with camcorders.

Some pirates are even getting into theater projection booths and plugging their PCs into sound cards to create perfect “telescopic” pirated films, he adds.

BDVS, including advance screener (Continued on page 69)
Best Album
Continued from page 3

PIRACY
Continued from page 68

Best Album
Continued from page 3

The disc also spawned a top five hit on the Modern Rock Tracks chart with "Going Under." To date, the album has sold 3 million copies.

By the end of 2003, OutKast's "Hey Ya!" and "Take Me Home, Yeah!" were certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). The album has sold more than 7 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling albums of all time.

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The disc also spawn...
‘We Have To Be Sure We Are Relevant On Every Level’

BY CHRIS MORRIS

On Dec. 2, 2003—two days before the announcement of nominees for the 46th annual Grammy Awards—Neil Portnow marked the end of his first year as president of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Long active in NARAS, Portnow took the Recording Academy’s helm following the April 2002 resignation of Michael Greene. He brought to the job diverse music-business experience in production, publishing and label operations.

Phil Ramone, chairman of the producer and engineer wing of NARAS, sees Portnow as an executive with unique personal and professional skills.

“Neil Portnow is a quiet, patient and persuasive man,” Ramone says. “He is well liked. His standards are high, and he understands the diversity of the academy.”

With the 46th annual Grammy presentation set for Feb. 8 in Los Angeles (see story, page 13), Portnow discussed the Recording Academy’s activities in a Billboard interview at NARAS headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif.

Q: You have identified the “four pillars” of NARAS as membership and awards; education; philanthropy and charity; and advocacy. Let’s start with the last of these. Has NARAS taken any new steps in the realm of industry advocacy?

A: We created the Grammy Cultural Policy Initiative, based out of Washington, D.C. office. We’ve promoted Daryl Friedman, we’ve brought in of Washington operations. In this expanded relationships on the Hill and in the political community by taking advantage of expanding that presence.

The academy is going to be coming with a campaign that will educate consumers with respect to the digital world that we have. We’ll be rolling out what we’ll call “Grammy town hall meetings,” which will be discussions of relevant issues that have advocacy-based agendas. We’re going to host meetings of the future starting early next year.

The academy is going to be coming with a campaign that will educate consumers with respect to the digital world that we have. We’ll roll it out with public service announcements for television and radio and aiming people at a Web site, which has education, helping them get informed, educated, hopefully ethical and responsible decisions about how they use their music.

Q: Many believe that the NARAS membership has always skewed older. What’s the status of membership right now?

A: In the Grammy nominations, the past two years, there’s been great recognition of the fact that there are new and younger artists out there. You look at some of the younger artists that are in major categories this year and it tells us that we’re addressing that.

We’ve been seeing younger artists that we haven’t seen before. We’ve been seeing younger artists that we haven’t seen before. We’ve been seeing younger artists that we haven’t seen before.

Q: What was the motivation for bringing MusiCares and the Grammy Foundation closer together within the organization?

A: My feeling was that we owed it to the organizations to have a more-or-less management staff. Although the missions are different and some of the activities are different, there is a lot of common ground in what they both do.

Q: What fresh strides have been taken in the realms of caregiving and education?

A: On the MusiCares side, we have a great mechanism to do that through the grants and assistance program that we offer. We’re proud that over 1,200 people were helped, and we gave out over $1.2 million last year in aid to those folks. The question going forward is, How do we expand on something that obviously works very well?

From a fund-raising standpoint, we’ve got a lot of work to do for the Grammy Foundation, because we depend on that fund-raising to grow.

Q: Is that more critical in the light of federal cutbacks?

A: Absolutely. In an environment where the priorities are more about finding things to do with mass destruction, instead of dealing with mass education and development of cultural policy, we have to take a responsibility to fill in those holes.

Q: When you came into office, you promised to “re-evaluate and reassess everything.” How has this extended into staffing?

A: I found that in certain cases we didn’t have the right people in the right chairs. In certain cases, we had great people in the organization who maybe, could be in better seats than they were. In certain cases we were lacking altogether in expertise.

I think that we did not have, in my opinion, a proper marketing focus. I recruited our vice president of marketing, Evan Greene. Evan spent his last 10 years at Disney on the features side and Columbia Pictures. He’s a guy in brand management. We have what I think is arguably the best known and most respected trademark in music in the world, which is the Grammy. The question is, How do we take advantage of that?

I also realized that although we are experts at archiving and preservation of our own assets, they are not really up to par. We have these broadcasts that we own. They’ve been sitting on for over 40 years. We have photographic story and artwork. We have events that we’ve put on nationally and in the chapters that have been videotaped. We have a “living history” program.

These are assets that really must be available, whether it be on an educational basis or a commercial basis. So we created a position, vice president of asset management, with Doug Gore, who comes from the awards department and will be taking that over. We’re going to take a look at those 1,000 boxes of goodies that we have, make sure we know what we have, get the clearance and then, we’ll be coming with those materials in the future.

In the membership service area, we promoted Angela Bibbs-Sanders to be head of the membership services department, but we also recruited Nancy Shapiro. She is going to get day-to-day responsibility for managing the 12 chapter staffs and their activities. That’s going to give us a duo approach to a job that’s huge.

Q: What’s your biggest challenge for the future?

A: In an industry that is going through such dramatic and rapid evolution, we have to be sure that we are relevant on every level. We have to be not only open-minded but forward-thinking in how we approach the world as it evolves. That may have to go with our whole process; the qualifications for the kind of records that are eligible, because that landscape is changing; the members that we want and are willing to have; because those qualifications could change.

Then we’re also dealing with a business environment where the landscape is changing dramatically, and we’re dealing with fewer and fewer large corporate entities and more independent ones. We have to be open-minded and smart and ahead of the curve on those things.

Certainly we rely on the industry for a lot of the projects that we like to do, from fund-raising activities. We have to find ways to get around those issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OutKast</td>
<td>Speakerboxx/The Love Below</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTERTAPE (12.98 CD)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alicia Keys</td>
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<td>Toby Keith</td>
<td>Shock'n Y'all</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>Now</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Sheryl Crow</td>
<td>Very Best of Sheryl Crow</td>
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<td>Josh Groban</td>
<td>Closer</td>
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<td>Hillary Duff</td>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
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<td>No Doubt</td>
<td>The Singles 1992-2003</td>
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<td>Ruben Studdard</td>
<td>Soulful</td>
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<td>Britney Spears</td>
<td>In The Zone</td>
<td>1</td>
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**WHAT A WAY TO RING IN THE NEW YEAR!**

**CONGRATULATIONS**

![Logos of various record labels]

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