HOT SPOTS

15 Reggaeton Rises
Ivy Queen’s “Diva” success exemplifies the genre’s growing strength, thanks to indie labels.

32 The Time’ Has Come
Clint Black’s first studio album in five years, “Spend My Time,” is the debut set for his Equity Records imprint.

74 Multimedia Merchant
Hastings Entertainment’s John Marmaduke calls it as he sees it in Billboard’s The Last Word.

Studios Caught In Label Crunch
Pressure Builds For Lower Rates
BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH
NEW YORK—In a market that has apparently deteriorated during the past year, a number of studios are complaining that labels are putting more downward pressure on rates than ever before.

What’s more, some studios claim they are now pressured to reduce rates even after services have been rendered; in other cases, studios complain of delayed payments from the labels.

(Continued on page 73)

Gospel’s Big Steps Into Mainstream
BY GAIL MITCHELL and DEBORAH EVANS PRICE
Gospel music’s mainstream conversion is a movement in progress. Momentum, however, is definitely building.

“On a scale of one to 10, it’s at eight.” Verity/Jive Records contemporary gospel artist Tonex says. Gospel is “accepted so much more now.” Tonex says, citing the platinum successes of Donnie McClurkin, Kirk Franklin and Yolanda Adams.

Such hits—impossible without mainstream crossover—create

(Continued on page 72)

Vickie Winans says troubled times have led to a greater interest in gospel music.

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MUSIC & MONEY
Begins On Page 41

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The Beats Go On
Dance/Electronic Hits The Spot For TV, Films, Ads
BY MICHAEL PAGELLA
FROM Jackson Avenue to Hollywood, the message is increasingly being delivered to a dance beat.

Whether it’s peak-hour rhythms for the dancefloor or laid-back sounds for the chill-out room, dance and electronic beats have become a popular choice as the soundtrack for TV films, commercials, ring tones and videogames.

"Clients want: the music that their target audience is listening to. That’s the bottom line," says Jarrett Mason, music producer at ad agency Publicis.

For dance and electronic artists, producers and DJs, the trend means greater exposure and newfound revenue from sync: licenses and performance fees.

"It’s got to be a conscious decision," says DJ Tito Trax. "Sometimes you have to turn down a gig just because it’s not a good fit.

(Continued on page 30)

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Gospel music’s mainstream conversion is a movement in progress. Momentum, however, is definitely building.

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Top of the News

6 The Winter Music Conference faces competition from rival events that will be held the same week.

10 Nielsen SoundScan and the Canadian Recording Industry Assn. are at odds over the terms of the former’s renewal contract.

Music

15 The Beat: Dave Matthews Band’s renegotiated RCA contract leaves it a free agent outside North America.

17 Legal Matters: As the artist/label business model evolves, labels may begin sharing in the proceeds of other aspects of an artist’s career.

18 Higher Ground: Indie Beach Street Records scores with its first signing, Casting Crowns.

19 Jazz Notes: Heads Up International highlights South Africa’s jazz scene with its “Africa Straight Ahead” compilation.

20 Touring: Clear Channel Entertainment’s festival division plans to launch three new festivals in 2004.

22 R&B: Mix-show Dis Clinton Sparks and Irie use radio as a springboard for other endeavors.

25 Latin Notes: Alexandra Guzmán’s recent hardship influences her new album, “Lipstick.”

32 Country: Clint Black leaves the majors behind as he releases “Send My Time” on Equity Records, a new label he co-founded.

40 Songwriters & Publishers: The Academy Award-nominated songs on “The Cold Mountain” soundtrack stir interest in sacred harp music.

59 Studio Monitor: Roland’s new VS Series of digital audio workstations now feature Massenburg DesignWorks’ EQ plug-in.

Retail

37 Some in the consumer electronics industry debate whether Apple Computer’s iPod Mini is properly priced.

38 The Indies: Koch Records spins a slew of new acts, including Melissa Manchester, Abra Moore and Jimmie’s Chicken Shack.

39 Retail Track: Virgin Entertainment Group North America experiences a misstep with its holiday supplier payments.

48 Home Video: Toy companies benefit greatly from licensing opportunities when films are released on DVD.

Global

51 Universal Music France secures its dominance in local repertoire with the acquisition of French indie label Trema.

53 Global Pulse: Scotland’s Franz Ferdinand makes a top five bow on the U.K. charts with its self-titled debut.

Programming

71 Tuned In: The Tube: A roundup of winners who last year topped such TV talent contests as “Born to Dive” and “Fame.”

Features

21 Boxscore

50 The Billboard BackBeat

50 Executive Roundtable

35 Billboard Picks

52 Hits of the Week

56 Classifieds

61 Charts

61 Chart Beat

61 Market Watch

74 The Last Word

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The labels still don’t quite totally understand that the consumer is in the driver’s seat now, but they are beginning to get it.”

HASTINGS ENTERTAINMENT’S JOHN MULLIN

ARTIST & COMPANY INDEX

(SIGNIFICANT MENTIONS IN THE NEWS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Guzmán</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>321 Studios</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan “Baby” Williams</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Apple Computer Inc.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casting Crowns</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Avex Inc.</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clint Black</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Beach Street Records</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton Sparks</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Cherry Lane Music Publishing Co.</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Matthews Band</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Clear Channel Entertainment Inc.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ Irie</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Fox Cable Networks FX</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estopa</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Heads Up International Ltd.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Koch Records</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franz Ferdinand</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Marvel Enterprises Inc.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy Queen</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>MTV Networks</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Simpson</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>RCA Records</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Manchester</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Sheppard Mullin Richter &amp; Hampton LLP</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norah Jones</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>S.M. Entertainment Group</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula Rubio</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Toy Specialists Inc.</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Thump Records Inc.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha Sokol</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Trema</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipknot</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>V2 Records Spain</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teena Marie</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Virgin Entertainment Group North America</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rubio Rules
Charts

Single, Album Soar

BY LEILA COBO

Three years ago, Paulina Rubio burst onto the U.S. Latin scene as a Mexican import with no assurances of success in the United States.

But how things have changed.

On Feb. 10, Universal Music Latino released her Spanish-language album, “Pau-Latina,” as a worldwide priority. The project debuted this issue at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart. It also bows at No. 1 in Mexico.

First single “Te Quise Tanto” is No. 1 on the Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart.

“This album was ready to be released last November, but we were very clear in that we wanted to launch 2004 with it,” says Jesús López, chairman of Universal Music Latino America/Iberian Peninsula. “And this is the first time in her history that she has a No. 1 song in U.S. radio.”

The success was not a surprise. Rubio’s album “Paulina,” which was originally released in 2000 in Mexico, became the biggest-selling Spanish-language disc in the United States for 2001, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It has sold close to 2 million copies worldwide.

Rubio’s follow-up to “Paulina” was her English-language crossover bid, “Border Girl,” which sold 270,000 copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and garnered worldwide attention.

It also caught the eye of Caresse Henry, Madonna’s manager, who began representing Rubio after that project.

Knowles’ MWM Joins Labels Seeking Veteran R&B Acts

BY GAIL MITCHELL

Turning his attention from contemporary to classic acts, Mathew Knowles has signed the O’Jays to a multiple-album deal through his Sony Music-distributed Music World Music (MWM) label. The trio’s first album under the pact is due this summer.

MWM’s move is the latest in a series of initiatives by labels to sign veteran R&B acts, many of whom can still sell out concert venues.

Def Soul Classic signed Patti Labelle last year. The first single from the project will be released shortly.

Support Grows For Low-Power FMs

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Radio analysts say that music makers and music listeners will benefit if Congress is successful this year in authorizing noncommercial low-power FM stations (LPFMs) to share the airwaves in densely populated urban communities with established radio stations.

“It’s a start—if you’re a local performer or band and you get a chance to get a couple of your tracks on your low-power community station, then it’s a start,” says veteran analyst Tom Taylor, editor of Inside Radio. “If you get played in rotation on one of them, that’s a start. If you sell some records, it’s more of a start.”

The Future of Music Coalition is an indie-artists group that has led the fight for greater radio diversity and music choice. Spokesman Michael Bracey observes, “The overwhelming interest in LPFM stations in the rural areas where they’ve already appeared shows that citizens don’t want to sit back and just ‘receive content.’ They want to get involved and produce; they want to play music that isn’t on the radio.”

Opponents of radio consolidation won two rounds in February. On Feb. 20, the Federal Communications Commission sent a letter to Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, saying it had analyzed an outside engineering study mandated by Congress to determine if LPFMs would cause undue interference with big city stations.

The report by the Mitre Group agreed with an earlier FCC study, which found the problems would be minimal.

McCain then announced that he would introduce legislation to bring LPFMs to cities as an alternative to radio consolidation.

“Four years ago, broadcasters masqueraded their concern about competition from new low-power FM stations in grossly exaggerated claims of interference,” he said. “Today, the FCC has stripped the broadcasters of this disguise, and it’s clear that these stations would cause virtually no interference and recommending the removal of certain limits on such stations.”

The National Assn. of Broadcasters calls the Mitre report flawed and still argues that “shoe-horned” LPFMs will cause signal interference.

However, McCain, who heard testimony about the downside of consolidation (Continued on page 72)
**Hip-Hop's In Fashion**

**Clothing Lines Court Genre's Stars For Endorsement Deals**

**BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA**

Many R&B/hip-hop artists, including Pharrell Williams and Jay-Z, are trading their casual attire for Dolce & Gabbana suits. However, others remain committed to casual threads. Witness the following.

Universal Music hip-hop artist/Cash Money Records co-founder Bryan “Baby” Williams (aka Birdman) has partnered with leading urban footwear brand Lugz to create the Birdman athletic shoe. And urban outfitter Clench has clinched a deal with rapper Baby Bash, another Universal artist, who is the new face of the company’s spring 2004 line.

Similarly, RTB Apparel is unveiling its inaugural line, Rap Throwbacks, that features rappers’ original artwork and song titles on jerseys. “What we’re seeing now is an increase in hip-hop’s demography,” says Knox Robinson, editor-in-chief of music/lifestyle magazine The Pader. “Jay-Z, who has worn it all, can easily step into prep attire today. But a 16-year-old kid still wants to dress like a delinquent.”

Hip-hop is a culture that transcends demographics, adds Rodney Bonds, who launched RTB with his wife, Kna. Last summer, “There are those who want to wear.

(Continued on page 69)

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**Fantasy For Sale**

**Sources: Indie May Go For $65M-$85M**

**BY ED CHRISTMAN**

NEW YORK—An investment banker is shopping leading independent label Fantasy Records, sources familiar with the situation say. They also note that the auction process is heading into the due diligence phase.

The label, known for a strong catalog that includes Creedence Clearwater Revival and many jazz and soul greats, is being shopped by New York-based Harris Nesbit Gerard. One of the partners, Manny Gerard, a longtime analyst of the music and entertainment industry, is overseeing the process. About 15 companies participated in the first round of bidding, but sources suggest they have been whittled down to about five suitors.

Among the parties said to be interested in the label are Rykodisc, Concord Jazz and Redux Records, the company Joe Bianco and Anil Narang launched to acquire catalogs. Sources also suggest that Sanctuary Group and a group that includes a former label president are also interested in Fantasy.

According to sources, the label generated total revenue of about $30 million in 2002, about half of that was from the United States and the other half was from worldwide licensing of its records. In addition, its publishing holdings are believed to have generated about $2.5 million in net publisher share (NPS).

While Fantasy owners, led by label chairman Saul Zaentz, are believed to be asking for about $100 million, sources say the offers likely ranged from $50 million to $85 million, depending on what the 2003 financial results show. Sources suggest that in the United States last year, Fantasy had $14 million in total sales, $11 million net.

The bidding procedure so far is being characterized as informal, since the book being used to shop the label is said to have only included financial data up to 2002.

The label and its investment banker are said to be setting up a conference room with 2003 results at the company’s headquarters in Berkeley, Calif., so bidders can perform due diligence and make informed offers.

Since Fantasy has long been a private company, the presentation of its fiscal data is expected to be messy, resulting in a long due diligence process, which might result in the final valuation being discounted, sources suggest.

Supposedly, label sales and licensing in 2002 produced about $10 million in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, so if the catalog is assigned a multiple of four to six, its value equals $40 million to $60 million.

If one adds the $2.5 million in NPS and gives it a multiple of 16, its value equals $40 million to $60 million. When added together, the 2002 numbers suggest a sale price range of $80 million to $100 million.

(Continued on page 58)

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**In Miami, Confabs Crowd Dance Floor**

**BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA**

For 18 years, the global dance music community has converged in Miami Beach for the Winter Music Conference. But this year is different.

The WMC now must compete with a new concurrent Miami Beach event, the M3 Summit. The WMC will take place March 6-10 at the Wyndham Resort; M3 runs March 5-9 at the Nash Hotel and other South Beach venues.

But there’s more. Other competing events in Miami that week include the Ultra Music Festival on March 6 and the third annual DanceStar USA 2004 Awards: The American Dance Music Awards March 9. Both will take place at Miami’s Bayfront Park.

As in previous years, the WMC’s program includes seminars and panels, remixing and editing workshops, demo-listening workshops, poolside artist performances and DJ sets, an exhibit hall, and an awards ceremony.

Perhaps because of the new competition, conference directors Lou Posserini and Bill Kelly have tapped Joe Granda, president of Granda Group of companies, to help expand the conference’s Latin music content.

These developments come at a time when many industry observers are questioning the validity and relevance of the conference itself.

“With this new competition, it seems as though the WMC organizers knew they had to shake things up a bit,” says Orlando Puerta, dance and lifestyle marketing director of Warner Bros. “Over the years, the conference got stale; M3 may very well reinvigorate the WMC.”

M3 is the brainchild of David Prince, a journalist and founder of the influential Miami Master List; Mark Mangian and Sascha Lewis of e-mail

(Continued on page 58)

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**Billboard Charts Return To Rolling Stone**

**NEW YORK—**Rolling Stone magazine is set to resume publishing a portion of The Billboard 200 chart, beginning with its March 18 issue that arrived on newsstands Feb. 27. Rolling Stone will publish the top 40 albums from The Billboard 200.

Under the terms of the nonexclusive deal, Rolling Stone can publish up to three Billboard charts. The chart information published in Rolling Stone will appear only in the magazine’s print edition and will not appear on rollingstone.com.

New York-based Rolling Stone is a biweekly publication owned by Wenner Media, which is headed by the magazine’s editor-in-chief/publisher Jann Wenner. Founded in 1967, Rolling Stone is the leading U.S. music consumer magazine. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, its paid circulation is 1.3 million.

Billboard VP of licensing and events Howard Appelbaum brokered the deal with Rolling Stone. “We are thrilled to have our charts appear in Rolling Stone. This arrangement fits perfectly with our strategy of extending the Billboard brand to consumers via top-tier licensing partners,” Appelbaum says.

Headquartered in New York, Billboard is owned by Dutch multimedia company VNU, which also owns Nielsen SoundScan, the company that provides U.S. and Canadian record-sales chart data for Billboard. Billboard publishes its charts weekly, and Rolling Stone will publish the most recent chart information available by Rolling Stone’s press time.
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- THE late Vestal Goodman
Gospel Music Hall of Fame Inductee

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"ROCK OF AGES," "MAJESTY," "I'LL FLY AWAY," "HE LEADETH ME," "BECAUSE HE LIVES,
"HE TOUCHED ME," "WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS," "IN THE GARDEN,
"PRECIOUS MEMORIES," "HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW," "AMEN," "YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE," "LEAN ON ME," "JUST AS I AM" and many, many more.

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Radio Hops On 'Idol' Wagon

Clear Channel Outlets Among Stations Holding Talent Contests

BY SUSANNE AULT

Now in its third season, Fox TV's "American Idol" has attracted tens of thousands of aspiring superstars to its auditions. Yet Clear Channel Radio and many other stations think there are plenty of diamonds left to be found in the rough. Radio Star, an "Idol"-styled contest launched Feb. 16 at 70 Clear Channel top 40 and adult top 40 stations (Billboard, Feb. 28), is a legitimate A&R vehicle, according to its organizers, who are hoping to find the next Kelly Clarkson, Ruben Stad- dard or Clay Aiken.

The winner of the contest receives a Sony Music recording contract, a looking agent at William Morris Agency and opening slots at 40 stations WHTZ (Z100) New York and KJOY Los Angeles' holiday concerts, as well as other prizes. Additional station participants might also be added. "There definitely a lot of talent out there waiting to be discovered," believes Joel Kliman, senior VP of promotion at Sony-owned Epic Records. "We are going to be serious about it ... Artists who sign here are long term. We have always been kind of a label." Once each participating station picks its winner—determined by listeners' votes—a panel of Sony staffers, recording artists, radio programmers and other industry executives will select a group of semifinalists from the pool of station victors.

The semifinalists will compete on a syndicated weekend show running from March until May, winning a trip to meet the producers and record a 45. Listeners across the 70 markets will vote for the ultimate winner through ratemethemusic.com. Kliman says that he and other organizers are hoping that Radio Star becomes an annual event. Other stations are also taking it upon themselves to find the next big thing. R&B hip-hop station WCGI Chicago is playing "Close to You," sung by its talent-search winner Maurice Ma- hon, every 90 minutes, PD Elroy Smith says, additionally, Clear Channel adult top 40 station KSZN Los Angeles held its own singer search, Be a Star 2002, where winner Colen Armstrong won a three-song demo deal with Hollywood Records. He has yet to record an album, however.

Smith says he envisioned his contest as equal parts publicity blitz and (Continued on page 73)

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BILLBOARD MARCH 6, 2004

CRIA, SoundScan At Odds; Labels Ponder New Chart

BY LARRY LEBLANC

TORONTO—Canada's five major-label affiliates no longer collectively subscribe to Nielsen SoundScan because of disagreements over the terms of a renewal contract between the U.S. data service and the Canadian Recording Industry Assn.

Nielsen SoundScan's one-year agreement with CRIs Class A members—Universal Music Canada, Sony Music Canada, EMI Music Canada, Warner Music Canada and BMG Music Canada—ended Dec. 31, 2003.

The situation only affects CRIs Class A members; they have not received weekly Nielsen SoundScan sales data since Jan. 1. The majority of Canada's professional URAA-affiliated label and distributor members remain Nielsen SoundScan clients.

MULLING OPTIONS

Last summer, CRIs began exploring alternatives for providing and marketing music sales data in Canada.

The group, which represents 95% of the labels and distributors in Cana- da, asked several firms, including Nielsen SoundScan and market research agency Millward Brown Group, for proposals.

CRI has remained in talks with both firms last fall, but sources indicate that CRIs discussions with Nielsen SoundScan recently ended.

Neither CRI president Brian Robertson nor major-label heads would discuss with Billboard past negotiations with Nielsen SoundScan. However, the talks have been "acrimonious," sources say.

Rob Sicco, Nielsen SoundScan president/music COO for East Coast oper- ations, downplays the situation: "I don't think that there's any rea- son that we won't come to an agreement between CRI and SoundScan," Sicco says.

Meanwhile, CRI has proposed to Canadian music retailers a joint venture to compile, oversee and market a Canadian chart, set to launch by fall.

The project involves seeking spon- sorship of the chart and launching a weekly network TV show and a weekly syndicated radio show. Retailers have not made a decision.

"There's nothing to do with Sound- Scan," Robertson emphasizes. "The SoundScan issue is a contractual issue for the collection of sales data. The chart is a separate marketing initiative." What CRI proposes is similar to how the British charts are compiled and overseen by the Official U.K. Charts Co., a joint venture between the British Phonographic Industry and the British Assn. of Record Dealers.

As in the U.K., monies derived from the sale of the Canadian chart to those who want to license it from sponsorship deals would be split between the labels and retailers. At present, most Canadian music retailers are paid to provide sales data to Nielsen SoundScan.

According to some retailers, several major-label executives have indicated that such a joint venture is cruel for Canada's major labels to fully develop and market a national chart with a lucrative sponsorship tie-in.

But Nielsen SoundScan contends that CRI was given the right to market such a chart last year. "CRI members (Continued on page 58)
First of all...

You saw the video first on VH1.
You heard the record first on VH1.com.
Then came the 1 million sold.
Congratulations Norah.

First come. First served.
A Stern View Of Free Speech

Wow, what a shocking week for news. Osama captured? Peace in Iraq? A cure for the common cold?

Nah…

Howard Stern’s show was suspended on six Clear Channel radio stations, because the shock jock supposedly violated the conglomerate’s decency standards.

In the wake of the controversy, Clear Channel president/CEO Mark Myas not only worked overtime apologizing for Stern’s show, but he appeared ready this week to abrogate all programming decisions to the U.S. government.

He said his company would support any host whose show causes the Federal Communications Commission to issue a “notice of apparent liability.” That’s bureaucratic lingo for a proposed fine. But this isn’t about money. Stern’s show rakes in big bucks for the stations that air his program.

It’s about corporate responsibility, or the lack thereof, to the public and, most importantly, to the First Amendment.

For the past few months, the nation has been in a broader debate about indecency over the airwaves. The whole thing would be hilarious if the stakes weren’t so high. Freedom of speech is fundamental to our democracy, especially in a time of war and political upheaval. And that includes speech that may be offensive or indecent.

No one can refute that Stern has an audience. Listeners should be entitled to hear what they want to hear.

Dr. Paul Levinson, chairman of the Department of Communication & Media Studies at Fordham University, framed the debate this week on CNN.

The debate about indecency on the airwaves would be hilarious if the stakes weren’t so high.

“The government roared, and the media are beginning to run away like scared little mice,” he said. “And I think Thomas Jefferson would turn over in his grave if he were seeing what [Clear Channel] is doing today.”

This issue has clearly gotten out of hand, thanks to a curse of coincidences. It should come as no surprise that Congress—which can’t balance a budget, say no to special interest or get out of its own way on most issues—is moving at light speed on this one. It’s an election year.

Then, there is the broadcast shown round the world. The Super Bowl was sold as “family fare.” So, offended viewers at least had grounds to complain when Janet Jackson flashed her breast. But that’s a lot different than Stern. Everyone knows what his show is about, and it is never portrayed as anything else.

Stern, on the same show that compiled Clear Channel to act, suddenly vowed to back a Democrat after years of supporting Republican pols like New York Gov. George Pataki, former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani and President Bush. Clear Channel Radio president/CEO John Hogan is a huge Bush supporter. Was that a factor?

Maybe so, maybe not, but you can see how these things can get very messy, very quickly. So where do you draw the line if you’re a company like Clear Channel or the U.S. government?

You don’t. You simply leave it up to a discerning public to turn the radio dial to another station if they’re offended.

Does something make you jump and shout? Write a letter to the Editor! Mail to Keith Girard, Editor-in-Chief, Billboard, 770 Broadway, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y., 10003, or e-mail to letters@billboard.com. Include name, title, address and phone number for verification. Letters should be concise and may be edited. Names can be withheld, if requested, at the discretion of the editor. All submissions published shall become the sole property of Billboard, which shall own the copyright in whole or part, for publication.
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Dave Matthews Band Cuts New RCA Deal

Dave Matthews Band (DMB) has re-signed with RCA Records for North America, the group's label home for 10 years.

However, the protracted negotiations brought about some major changes to the relationship, Billboard has learned.

While the terms of the contract weren't disclosed, according to sources, the renegotiation resulted in the band becoming a free agent outside the United States and Canada. It was formerly signed to RCA worldwide.

DMB now has control of its masters outside of North America and is free to make its own deals for catalog and future projects in the rest of the world. Sources stress this could include continuing to work with RCA outside North America.

The deal will include the new studio album for which DMB is currently in preproduction.

The new multi-year pact also gives the band the ability to distribute live recordings online. RCA reps said the deal's terms were confidential and declined to comment.

According to the label, DMB has sold more than 30 million albums.

We caught up with Matthews at BMG North America chairman/CEO Clive Davis' Feb. 7 pre-Grammy Awards party. Perhaps he wasn't far off the mark when we asked him how the pending merger between BMG and Sony affected him.

"I don't pay much attention to what they're doing up there," he said with a grin. "But eventually our little record company [BMG-distributed ATO Records] will swallow up the rest of them. Slow, but steady; baby steps. And then I'll throw a party. It will be a hayride."

SAVOY EXPANDS: At a time when many labels are contracting, Savoy Label Group is starting a new imprint, 429 Records. Named after the label's street address in Santa Monica, Calif., 429 will focus on triple-A artists.

The label's first signings are the Warren Brothers, who were formerly on Nashville's BNA Records, and Scottish act Cosmic Rough Riders, whose album "Too Close to See Far" (Measured Records) has sold 150,000 copies in the United Kingdom, according to SLG president Steve Vining.

The Warren Brothers album "Well Deserved Obscurity" drops April 6; Cosmic Rough Riders' "Too Close to See Far" will be out June 1.

"We looked at triple-A [radio] and really like what's going on there," Vining says. "It really seems now that you're able to make a connection between artists and that format selling records, and I don't think that has always been the case."

Vining says 429 will announce three or four more signings this quarter.

The imprint will be run by existing SLG staff, including senior director of marketing Sheila Volpe, who will handle A&R and promotion. Sales and marketing will be run by Vining and director of sales Dave Wiese.

Pop artists Joan Armatrading and Paul Carrack remain on SLG's Denon imprint.

(Continued on page 17)

Reggaetón Acts Rise Up On Indie Labels

BY LEILA COBO

Six years ago, rising reggaetón artist Ivy Queen had it all: a record deal with Sony Discos and a promising debut album that included a single with Wyclef Jean.

But the album, "The Original Rude Girl," fizzled. Ivy Queen was dropped from Sony, and her Jean duet was all but forgotten.

This time around, Ivy Queen's story is quite different. Her new, independently distributed album, "Diva," has scanned more than 10,000 copies since its release late last year. In early February, it was re-scored as "Diva: Platinum Edition" under Universal Music & Video Distribution and debuted at No. 25 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart.

Although UMVD has given her a boost, Ivy Queen's true commercial success has been at the hands of an indie label, Miami-based Real Music Group.

And she's not alone. Reggaetón has outgrown its regional Puerto Rican roots and gained a footing as a mainstream Latin genre with domestic and international success.

Today, the Top Latin Albums chart is peppered with reggaetón acts.

And every single one of them is signed to a small, independent label.

The indies offer a quick reaction time that the majors cannot deliver, according to Sofia de la Cruz, GM for VI Music, whose label roster includes such major reggaetón names as Don Omar and Magnate & Valentino.

"This is a very fast-moving genre, and it needs a reaction time of virtually hours," she says. "I can't wait until an executive sees me, gives me the appointment with the A&R [department] and decides to sign him. Also, these are very young artists. They need a lot of direction. So the degree of closeness is bigger."

MUSIC FOR AND FROM THE STREETS

Loosely described as a danceable mix of reggae, dancehall and hip-hop, reggaetón (Continued on page 16)

Ivy Queen started her label, Imperio Music, to help promote her reggaetón sound.
has been going strong in Puerto Rico for almost 10 years. The music has less lyrical depth than rap, al-
though reggaetón artists like Tego Calderón typically include some rap on their albums, while such rap
artists as Vico C incorporate reggaetón in their music.

TAILOR-MADE LABELS
In general, however, reggaetón was initially associated with raw, often vulgur lyrical content, which, cou-
pled with the genre's street vibe and origin, made it hard to market in the mainstream. Until recently, when
lyrical content was softened, major labels had not looked at reggaetón. But entrepreneurs and artists saw
an opportunity, and on many occa-
sions, independent labels were cre-
ated specifically in response to an artist's local success.

“It's a genre you have to truly
respect, because it comes from the
street,” says Luis González, who
managers Calderón. “First you have
the artist, then the label. That’s what
happened with [Calderón and his
label] White Lion.”

That is also what happened with
Ivy Queen, who after her Sony stint
created indie label Imperio Music
with her partner, Omar Navarro.

“I've been doing this music for 11
years, and I always thought the time
was right,” says Ivy Queen, who is
savoring her recent success. “Many
people think we’re new. They don’t
know the history behind these ar-
ists. That’s why we decided to make
our own label. You get tired of other
labels promising you castles.”

Ivy Queen and Navarro teamed
with Real Music, a label that Jorge
Guadalupe and Anthony Pérez cre-
ated last year. Pérez is the executive
producer of several TV shows, in-
cluding “The Room,” an urban music
and lifestyle program that airs on
the mun2 network.

Real Music's first product was a
compilation disc, “Jazmín, Vol. 1,”
which Pérez released on his own after
several majors turned him down. He

says. He later picked up Ivy Queen.

Even though Real has signed a
distribution agreement with UMVD,
"this music is promoted very differ-
ently from any other act," Pérez
says. [Major] labels practically have
a manual [to market their acts].

“Now what you see, for example, is
an event promoter becoming an artist
manager. The industry is changing. We’re using street teams, concerts,
clubs, underground DVDs and auto
shows to promote the music. And
really, that’s where the genre belongs.
It belongs to the street.”

Mindful of that fact, major labels
have talked a lot about venturing into reggaetón. But instead of doing it directly, to date they have done so
through licensing and distribution deals with the independents.

“We want to take advantage of the
credibility these people have in the
street,” John Echevarría, president of Universal Music Latino, told Bill-
board late last year after he signed a
joint venture deal with urban indie
label Gutiérrez Brothers Music, whose
artists include Don Dinero.

“We give them our distribution
machinery and finance their pro-
ductions, and they take care of street
marketing and more specialized
marketing,” he continues. “What they
hiring is knowledge of the
street. We give them the structure.
But these are specialized markets
where big companies have few
chances [otherwise].”

Indeed, the Gutiérrez deal is pos-
sibly the most involved major-
label venture in reggaetón. More
typical are straight-ahead distri-
bution arrangements.

UMVD, for example, also distri-
butes VI Music product, but the label
takes care of all marketing and pro-
motion. BMG distributes White
Lion, Calderón's label. And although
BMG provides some promotional support, White Lion does the bulk of
the work.

“Because White Lion is an indie,
the manager works very closely with
the label,” González says. “It’s more
of a family affair. Multinationals are
used to controlling an artist’s
career, and this kind of artist isn’t
used to that.”

CLOSE-KNIT BUSINESS TIES
This “family affair" atmosphere
extends to many realms.

Ivy Queen, for example, benefits
from Pérez producing an important
reggaetón show on TV. Artists on VI
Music profit because its parent com-
pany, Vidal Investments, also owns
a major Puerto Rican distributor—
Distribuidora Aponte—and Puerto
Rican retail chains Pentagrama
Musica and Music Zone, which com-
bined total 22 stores.

"Obviously, we sell our artists in
our stores," VI Music's De la cruz says.

As for Calderón, he works closely
with Actium Group, a Puerto Rico-
management, production company
that puts together Puerto
Rico's Primios Tú Musica (Puer-
To Rico's national music awards)
and includes the TV production
company behind the popular show
"Anda Pa' Caro . . ."

As successful as they may be on
their own, indie labels are quick to
point out that major distribution is a big
factor in the widespread recognition
of reggaetón and the sales jump the
genre has seen outside Puerto Rico.

The UMVD deal, De la Cruz says,
“has increased our sales by 50%.
Many Puerto Ricans who now live in
the U.S. can buy the albums. UMVD
 gave us the access to many outlets
we didn’t have before.”

NOT YET MAINSTREAM
Still, reggaetón remains largely a
gRASSROOTS genre. Spanish-language
to has been, for the most part,
slow to pick it up. However, some
tropical stations have reggaetón shows
in addition to their regular programming. When the music
does get on the air, it often does not hap-
pen through traditional promotion.

According to Kid Curry, PD for
reggaetón top 40 station WUPW
Miami, labels are not really serv-
ing him with reggaetón singles. The
tracks he gets, including Ivy
Queen's "Tuya Soy" and "Te Quiero
Pap,
"have come to me by word-
of-mouth.

"We try to find our own stuff, but
there’s no doubt in my mind that
this reggaetón thing is real,” Curry
says. "The target demo [of younger
listeners] sits up and says, "We love
this stuff. Of the possible 15 to 16
songs on my heavy rotation, three
of them are reggaetón songs.

Direct involvement from major
labels, as opposed to just distribu-
tion or joint ventures, would now
seem to be the logical next step.

But De la Cruz does not see that
happening just yet.

"It's a culture you have to learn,”
she points out. "They have to come
in and really learn the genre
to develop it, and I think there's still
a lot of developing to do around it.
They want to enjoy the benefit of having artists
like these but have someone else
deal with them.”

Ivy Queen adds, "It happened to
me with my previous company. You
can’t sell diamonds if you’re not in
the jewelry business. But labels today
are far more open than before."
A Metamorphosis: The Entertainer As An Enterprise

It's no secret that musicians today are increasingly becoming business enterprises unto themselves. And as recording artists have more opportunities to monetize their musical careers, their relationships with record labels will change, observers say.

As the artist/record label business model takes a more integrated approach, labels will begin to share in the proceeds of other aspects of an artist's career, says Robert A. Darwell, a partner with Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton in Los Angeles. The firm advises MGM, Playboy, Warner Bros., and Sony Pictures.

As a result, not only will labels participate more in licensing and merchandising, but much like an agent or manager, they may also benefit from the brand development of the artist they support, some observers note.

Darwell believes labels will increasingly receive a portion of an artist's income from activities across multiple platforms, including but not limited to a percentage of the income received from commercial endorsements, licensing and merchandising, and even fees from outside acting services.

The launch of MTV has enabled recording artists to metamorphose into multimedia performers actively involved in all forms of audio-visual entertainment.

And recording artists are now embracing commercial endeavors that were once snubbed as "sellouts," such as commercial endorsements, merchandising and other licensing activities, Darwell notes.

Recording artist Eve is an excellent example. She has achieved a remarkable level of success as a recording artist, court, contending that the record labels were using strong-arm tactics to blackmaill a settlement out of her. Scimeca sued under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, or RICO.

Scimeca is one of 531 individuals the Recording Industry Assn. of America is targeting in its latest round of lawsuits. Scimeca is accused of illegally selling music from peer-to-peer networks.

Her attorney, Bart Lombardo, says he was stunned by the RIAA's aggressive tone in its legal notices to individuals.

According to Lombardo, the letters sternerly alert the accused that their copyright-piracy liability is clear and warn that refusal to settle could result in penalties of $125,000 per occurrence.

Meanwhile, the RIAA downplays the letters' alleged threatening tone. "We are always open to settlement discussions. If someone prefers not to settle, they have the opportunity to raise their objections in court. We stand by our claims," a spokesman says.

Scimeca's teenage daughter downloaded music files using a screen name registered in her mother's name. Scimeca says the teenager had been working on a school project.

The family's Internet account was registered to Scimeca, whose name was turned over to the RIAA by service provider Cablevision.

CLOAK-AND-DAGGER ALERT: U.S. Sen. Kevin Murray, D-Calif., has introduced legislation that would require software companies to notify computer users before installing spyware on their machines.

Spyware records such user information as system preferences, personal passwords and Internet usage.

The issue is a growing point for users of peer-to-peer applications, because most P2P firms do not notify users that spyware is bundled with the application download.

As a result, the software is covertly installed on their computers, and the P2P companies then sell the collected data to third parties.

OVER IN ASIA: As illegal file sharing decimates the Asian music industry, new legitimate services are popping up in the marketplace.

Singapore's Soundbuzz has created a music store and portal. Meanwhile, Apple's iTunes Music Store and Rosto's Napster are also planning to move into the Japanese market this year.

The legitimate space in Asia is suffering from lagging consumer interest and a reluctance by established artists to license their music.

The Beat

Continued from page 15

STUFF: After more than a decade together Sixpence None the Richer has broken up to pursue individual interests. The band began its career in the Christian music community, then achieved mainstream success with the singles "Kiss Me" and "There She Goes." Word/Reprise plans to release a compilation of hits and previously unreleased material this summer. . . . The Beastie Boys are in the studio wrapping up a new album that the trio expects to release June 15 on Capitol. It will be the act's first studio album since 1998's "Hello Nasty". . . . Artist managers Bill Siddens and Howard Lapidus have merged their respective companies to form Core Entertainment Organization. Their roster includes former Alice in Chains guitarist Jerry Cantrell, composer Kurt Bestor and several music clients signed outside the United States, as well as Tom Green and Mark Wahlberg.

Additional reporting by Deborah Evans Price in Nashville.
Indie Beach Street Records Lands A Hit With Casting Crowns

A year ago, if anyone had said a country artist would start a little boutique label, sign an unknown band and produce a hugely successful debut album, few might have thought that was believable.

However, that is just what has happened with Casting Crowns on Beach Street Records, the label that Sawyer Brown frontman Mark Miller launched last summer.

Casting Crowns’ debut single, “If We Are the Body,” has been a huge radio hit, propelling sales of the band’s self-titled album to 168,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The Georgia-based group has also been recognized with four Dove Award nominations for new artist of the year and pop/contemporary album of the year as well as pop/contemporary song and song of the year for “If We Are the Body.” The track has been on the Billboard Hot Christian Adult Contemporary chart for 29 weeks and is still in the top five.

Lead vocalist/principal songwriter Mark Hall admits it has been an amazing ride. The accolades are appreciated, but Hall says the feedback from fans has been the most gratifying part of the experience.

“It has been the conversations with people after concerts and the e-mails—I read them all and try to answer every one of them. Just the ministry that’s taking place between me and someone in Okinawa totally blows my mind,” he says of receiving mail from as far away as the Japanese island. “I’ve been encouraging someone in the Netherlands who heard ‘If We Are the Body.’ Because of radio and music, the ministry of a song I wrote for 25 kids is on the other side of the world somewhere. That still amazes me.”

“Casting Crowns” was released Sept. 30, 2003, on Beach Street and was leading worship for a youth group. Hall relocated to Atlanta, continuing his role as a youth pastor. A friend played a tape for Mark Miller, who was impressed with Hall’s writing and the band’s sound. He made the band Beach Street’s flagship act.

NEWS NOTES: Independent Christian labels and artists are gearing up for the Christian Indie Artists Summit. The event will be held March 5-6 in Nashville and will include such speakers as ASCAP VP Dan Kenne, veteran manager Mike Smith and producer Brent Milligan. For more information, visit ciasummit.com.

More than 6,000 people attended the National Religious Broadcasters Assn.’s 61st annual convention Feb. 13-18 in Charlotte, N.C. Representatives from 37 countries attended this year’s event, and it marked the first year that sessions were translated into Spanish. Among the highlights of NRB 2004 was a prerelease screening of Mel Gibson’s film “The Passion of the Christ.” Also, talk-show host Janet Parshall hosted a policy session with North Carolina representatives Richard Burr (R-Winston-Salem), Walter B. Jones (R-Farmville) and Mike McIntyre (D-Lumberton).

After 40 years with the Imperials, Armond Morales is retiring. Ian Owens becomes the new bass voice for the legendary group. He previously performed with the Cumberland Quartet.

Morales was the only remaining original member of the group. He plans to move to Hawaii and sing with the Classic Voices, an act that comprises other retired members of the Imperials, on limited dates.

Guitarist Joey Avalos has joined Inpop rock band Sky Harbor.
Compilations Spotlight South Africa’s Robust Jazz Scene

Pianist Abdullah Ibrahim and trumpeter Hugh Masekela are well-known in the United States, but their native South Africa is even more of a hotbed of jazz activity than such fame suggests.

I witnessed this first-hand last year at the North Sea Jazz Festival in Cape Town. The revelations included guitarist Philip Tabane and Jimmy Dludu, female vocalist Busi Mhlongo and trombonist Jonas Gwangwa.

That’s just the tip of the iceberg. The compilation disc “Africa Straight Ahead,” released Feb. 24 on Heads Up International, showcases the crème de la crème of South Africa’s robust jazz scene. Highlights include tracks by pianists Hotep Idiza Gakele and Bhekis Mseleku and saxophonists Zim Ngqawuwa and McCoy Mrubata.

The CD also features American artists collaborating with their South African counterparts. This year, he takes the band Hiroshima to Cape Town for the April 9-10 North Sea Festival.

LOVE: THIS IS COMPPELLING MUSIC

of Dave Brubeck.

The younger Brubeck is also a longtime jazz teacher at the University of Natal in Durban.

Leads Heads Up president Dave Love, a frequent visitor to South Africa, says, “I continue to be mesmerized by the vision and instrumental facility of South African jazz musicians. They’ve studied jazz and incorporated it into the diverse musical elements of their culture.

DARIUS BRUBECK: PART OF COLLABORATION

LE JAZZ AU BAR: In early February, chanteuse Dee Dee Bridgewater opened Le Jazz Au Bar in New York with a week of her exhilarating Kurt Weill repertoire. Onstage in the elegant, intimate space at 41 E. 58th St., she gushed, “Don’t you feel like you’re in a cozy living room? I could live here. This place is so beautiful, and it’s thanks to Howard Stein, who is sharing his passion for jazz.”

Former rock impresario and owner of disco Xonon, which rivalled Studio 54 from 1978 to 1984, Stein has been operating the midnight to 4 a.m. nightlife spot Au Bar since 1987. He and his partner, son Michael Stein, have expanded the club’s scope to include jazz earlier in the evening.

“Jazz and the disco business can work in harmony,” the elder Stein says. “We’re showcasing a variety of jazz in a comfortable, attractive, retro environment. Because of Aflar, I have the luxury of presenting music I truly adore.

Upcoming shows include a three-day birthday bash for pianist James Williams with vocalist Vanessa Rubin, vibist player Stina Harris and saxophonist Jimmy Heath (March 4-6) and a showcase for vocalist Kevin Mahogany with special guest saxophonist David “Fathead” Newman (March 11-14).

GOOD MUSIC/GOOD WORKS: Keyboardist Keiko Matsui delivers 11 originals on her 14th studio album, “Wildflower,” which bowed Feb. 24 on Narada Jazz. This year her international 45-city tour is dedicated to the United Nations World Food Programme, which raises funds and awareness to feed the children of Africa.

Elsewhere, contemporary jazz guitarist Richard Smith, whose eighth solo CD, “Soulediﬁed,” was released in December on A440 Music Group, has founded Guitar Masters Workshop, a community outreach program of lessons and classes for at-risk youth in South Central Los Angeles.

THREE DOT LOUNGE: Sony Classical has signed singer Jane Monheit, who will release her new album produced by Al Schmitt in the fall . . . Pianist Brad Mehldau will premiere a new work composed for soprano Renee Fleming during Carnegie Hall’s 2004-2005 season.

Other jazz headliners include Abdullah Ibrahim, Greg Osby, Michael Brecker, Lizz Wright and Fred Hersch . . . Double brother duo, Branford Marsalis’ “The Steep Anthology,” a 10-tune package that culled his Columbia Records career, streets March 2 on Legacy, while Wynton Marsalis’ Blue Note Records debut, “The Magic Hour,” arrives March 9 . . . Also on March 9, Concord Jazz will release the two-disc “Lullabies of Birdland—A Musical Autobiography” to accompany the publication of “Lullaby of Birdland: The Autobiography of George Shearing” (Continuum Publishing) . . . Percy Heath, veteran bassist with the Modern Jazz Quartet and Heath Brothers as well as sideman for countless jazz icons including Charlie Parker and Coleman Hawkins, remarkably makes his solo recording debut at the age of 80 with “A Love Song” on Daddy Jazz Records.
CCE Division Plans New Festivals

BY SUSANNE AULT

Clear Channel Entertainment has spouted a new festival division.

Though the road is full of exciting events—comprising the upcoming 2nd edition of the Vans Warped tour (Billboard, Feb. 28), CCE's own long-running Ozzfest (billboard.biz, Feb. 14) and Lollapalooza—CCE believes there is room for fresh fest concepts.

The first order of business for Jim Lewi and Frank LoPresti, senior VP and VP of CCE's festival events group, respectively, is to roll out three new live events in 2004.

Lewi previously was chief of tour production company LiveWorks, and LoPresti has acted as executive director for the CCE-produced Rib America Festivals (billboard.biz, Feb. 13). They report to CCE Music co-CEO/President Dave Lucas.

The inaugural event under Lewi and LoPresti's winging will be the May 27-31 Showbarn Amphitheater tour, which is one of six currently planned editions of the outdoor food and music showcase. Rib America will stop in two new cities, Chicago and Louisville, Ky., this year.

**USING A EUROPEAN MODEL**

CCE also plans to adapt its European festival accomplishments for the American market. CCE kicked off six new festivals in Europe last year, including the Download Festival in Scotland. Its 2004 edition, headlined by Metallica and Linkin Park, plays June 2-3 at Glasgow Green.

"What has been successful [in the United Kingdom] we'd love to be able to do here," Lucas says.

CCE owns 33 amphitheaters in the United States, while there are more open-field venues in Europe. LoPresti says, so copying the U.K. model for the States will be "a challenge and a little bit of a lot is required to break new ground.

Lewi and LoPresti are still in the brainstorming phase for the fest/group division. Among the ideas is crafting two lifestyle-centered events. Each would be in the vein of the skateboard/ punk-themed Vans Warped tour, but activities would be geared toward the Hispanic audience for one and the urban audience for another.

The division's productions—summer-long festivals like Ozzfest and weekend-style festivals like Bonnaroo—may play at CCE-owned amphitheaters and non-CCE outdoor venues.

"You can run out of places to go," Lewi says of the crowded festival conditions. "What we need to do is change the format. How do we do different types of entertainment? How do we all do this in a different way? We want to create our own mold," LoPresti adds. "We are niche guys, sure. We have to find what nobody else is doing."

Slipknot's Route Takes In Jäger Tour, Ozzfest

BY RAY WADDELL

Raucous Roadrunner rock band Slipknot will tour hard in 2004, marking the nine-piece band's first stretch of road work in more than two years.

Largely due to headlining slot on the Jägermeister Music tour in March, Slipknot will reach out and touch its fans, affectionately referred to as "maggots," in a more intense setting than the band has been in in years. Then, Ozzfest second-stage dates await, starting in July.

The venues for both scenarios were a strategic decision.

"It was really important for us to go back to the 3,000- to 4,000-seaters and reconnect with the fans that got us here in the first place," Slipknot drummer Joey (#1) says. "When we toured [for our album] 'Iowa' [in 2001 and 2002], it was all stadiums and arenas.

Slipknot will be joined by Fear Factory, Chimaira and another Jägermeister-sponsored band beginning March 30 at the Hard Rock Live in Orlando, Fla. Rich Levy at Clear Channel Entertainment is producing the tour.

The Jägermeister tour always has really good routing, and it has built a name for itself with bands like Slayer and whatnot," Joey (#1) says. "Ticket sales have been astronomical, and it's going to be really great for the kids to see us in these-size venues."

Michael Arfin, Slipknot's agent at Writers & Artists Group International, agrees. "Ticket counts so far on the Jägermeister tour are beyond encouraging," he says. "I'm hearing promoters say this is the best lineup they've seen on the Jäger tour."

Slipknot's self-imposed hiatus came after years of hard touring. "We had been going non-stop every day since 1995," Joey (#1) explains. "We did an 18-month tour on the first record, then didn't take any time off and went right into writing the next record."

Following the Iowa tour, the members of Slipknot worked on different side projects, including Stone Sour for Corey (#6) and James (#4)—which had a top 10 hit on the Modern Rock and Mainstream Rock Tracks charts with "Bother" in 2002—to My Surprise for Shawn (#6) and Murderdolls for Joey (#1). "We wanted to explore different realms, and I think it was really healthy for the band," Joey (#1) observes.

The upcoming Slipknot album on Roadrunner is all but done and should drop by the end of May. "All the classic Slipknot elements are there, but I think people will be surprised at how adventurous we were," Joey (#1) says. "The hip-hop-fueled Anger Management tour has not hit the road since 2002, which leaves a void in urban-themed events. Plus, the Latino audience demographic has been rapidly increasing in the United States (Billboard, Aug. 23, 2003). CCE has produced festivals for years without a specialized division. Yet Lucas says that there is much to be tackled when breaking ground on new projects.

"I know of about a dozen ideas they have... Now, we actually have a team [where] festivals is what they do from the time they wake up in the morning until they go to bed at night," Lucas says. "This could include anything from one-off tours to huge 800- to 1,200-acre sites, to celebrations with cities to concertgoers at amphitheaters."

Marc Geiger, an agent at William Morris Agency, has already met with Lewi and LoPresti to exchange ideas about new tours. Sessions have also been held with Creative Artists Agency music head Rob Light and booking agents at Monterey Peninsula Artists.

"Is there room for more tours? Well, if you do Bonnaroo 2, you're working in a crowded market," Geiger says. "But there are 20 other possibilities."

**INVESTMENT OF TIME NECESSARY**

He believes that if Lewi and LoPresti are granted the permission to make risky decisions, CCE's festival division can accomplish its goals.

"In the first year, most festivals don't click. CCE needs to let Jim experiment. [Tours from] Warped to Ozzfest built over five years," Geiger observes. "If Jim and Frank are judged by first-year results and not in the position to make a real investment, it won't be a success. But if CCE allows them to build over a multi-year framework, then it will be highly successful."

Lewi agrees that nurturing fest ideas will prove most fruitful. "It's something that you'll have to build over time. A lot of these festivals you see once and they go away," he says. "Part of the problem is that art is something that you can't force on someone."

He says that they will ease into the process by being budget-conscious with talent and production. The fest's initial evolution would more likely be a one-day event in a small-medium amphitheater than a two-day event in a field holding $0,000-plus people.

"We are all in the principle in the creative process is passion," Lewi believes. He notes that one of the few non-artists to successfully launch a new tour franchise was Kevin Lyman and the Vans Warped tour.

"All were headed by artists—H.O.R.D.E. and Lilith Fair [and Lollapalooza]," Lewi says. "That's why we're absolutely looking at partners. We've had multiple conversations with artists about creating properties surrounding them."

Lewi dislikes festivals that are strictly built for business' sake and that lack a clear vision to attract crowds.

"Bonnaro— that is a great event... with a certain energy," Lewi says. "Where it is coming from is somewhere more than just putting a rock show in a field."

Highlighting the jam-band culture, Bonnaroo 2003 drew 80,567 fans and grossed $11.5 million, according to Billboard Boxscore. That is the second-highest concert total of the year behind Bruce Springsteen's 10 sold-out nights at Giants Stadium on Feb. 28, March 1 and March 3, 2004.

Overall, Lewi adds, "We are working on every idea we can possibly think of. We'll be reaching out to agents, managers, record labels. The reality is that we're looking for entertainment... it's something that we think we can build over time."

Additional reporting by Ray Waddell in Nashville.

Slipknot will follow up the Jäger run, which wraps May 4 at the Fillmore Auditorium in Denver, by opening for Metallica in Europe, then will play Ozzfest.

"Ozzfest is going to be phenominal," Joey (#1) predicts. "The first tour we ever did was Ozzfest in 1999. We blew open after that, so Ozzfest holds a place in the history and heart of Slipknot."

Slipknot played the Ozzfest main stage in 2001. "This is going to be like a homecoming," Joey (#1) says. "The cool thing is, we're going to play the second stage, which, again, is all about getting back to the fans. One of our proudest moments was when we were added to the line-up. We're so glad to be back out on the circuit. We're ready to kick ass again!"
MTV Goes Global With Spears Deal

MTV has rolled out its first global tour sponsorship in the MTV Presents Britney Spears Onyx Hotel Tour 2004, which begins March 2 at the San Diego Sports Arena and will play more than 20 cities in North America before visiting Europe, Latin America and Asia later this year. MTV's sponsorship will include a number of on-air, online and onstage components to support Spears as she tours behind her multimillion-dollar Jive Records release “In the Zone.”

There are not that many artists that appeal to every territory with an MTV channel, but Britney Spears is one of the select few, says Joe Armena, VP of music marketing and promotion for MTV. "We have been waiting for the opportunity to make a global splash, and the Britney tour is it."

As part of the all-media sponsorship, MTV will be in all advertising and on every ticket throughout the tour, as well as have a presence onsite with interactive promotions and venue signage. In the United States, three episodes of MTV’s "Total Request Live" will be dedicated to behind-the-scenes action on the tour, and tour spots will run worldwide. MTV.com will feature exclusive downloads, streaming video and ticket and merch auctions benefiting the Britney Spears Foundation.

"For the better part of the rest of the year, we’ll be on the road with Britney," Armena says. "This is more support than we’ve ever given an artist in the U.S., let alone all over the world."

Why Spears? "We love the association with Britney; she has always been a core part of this channel," Armena says. "And our fans love Britney."

SUMMER OF ROCK, PART II: Last year was the busiest hard-rock summer in years, with Ozzfest, Summer Sanitarium, Lollapalooza, a much-hyped Kiss/Aerosmith double-bill and dozens of smaller tours on the road vying for the money and time of rock fans. Even in that super-competitive environment, Ozzfest more than held its own, grossing $23.5 million and drawing 481,857 people. As first tipped on billboard.biz, Ozzfest 2004 will indeed include headliner Ozzy Osbourne, along with Judas Priest featuring Rob Halford, Slayer and Slipknot (see story, page 28). Other stars on the bill are Norwegian black-metal band Dimmu Borgir, Superjoint Ritual (featuring Phil Anselmo, formerly of Pantera) and Black Label Society (fronted by Ozzy guitarist Zakk Wylde). On the second stage will be Hatebreed, Lamb of God, Lacuna Coil, God Forbid, Bleeding Through, Areyyu, Every Time I Die and Unearth. Since the inaugural run in 1996, Ozzfest has grossed $146.5 million from 236 shows that have drawn 3.8 million headbangers. Ozzfest is produced by Jane Holman at Clear Channel Entertainment, and the tour is booked by Creative Artists Agency. Ozzfest’s 26-date run begins July 10 at ctown.com Meadowlands Music Theatre in Hartford, Conn. Finishing Sept. 4 at Sound Advice Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Ozzfest won’t be alone in bringing metal to the peeps outdoors. Also first tipped in billboard.biz, the third Projekt Revolution tour, with a lineup featuring tour founders Linkin Park with Korn and Snoop Dogg, will play amphitheaters from late July into September, with promoter deals cut in each market. Linkin Park wraps its hugely successful Meteor on tour with P.O.D., Hoobastank and Story of the Year March 15 at the Forum in Los Angeles. Meteor is averaging $41,913 per night, according to Billboard Boxscore. Linkin’s tour is managed by Rob McDermott at the Firm and booked by Michael Arfin at Writers & Artists Group International.
Mix DJs Hone Craft On Radio

BY RASHAUN HALL

Mix-show DJs aren’t just for the weekends anymore. Veterans like Funkmaster Flex and DJ Clue have used their cachet to land deals in the worlds of music, cars, TV and fashion.

Now, a new generation of mixers is using radio as a springboard to make names for themselves.

Clinton Sparks is among the crop of multitasking newcomers. He recently became the first DJ to have a live weekly radio show on three different stations in three different states. Sparks can now be heard live every week on WJMN (Hot 97.7) Boston, WERQ (92Q) Baltimore and WZMX (Hot 93.7) Hartford, Conn.

Meanwhile, DJ Irie is the official DJ for Heineken-sponsored events and the Miami Heat basketball team. And this is on top of his duties as an on-air personality at WEDR (99 Jamz) Miami. Not bad for a guy who never wanted to be a mix-show DJ.

“I thought radio mixers were corny,” Irie says. “I was already doing three of the hottest parties in the city. I wasn’t on the radio or anyone’s mailing list. I was just grading it out—listening to a lot of the stuff that radio DJs played. It wasn’t where I wanted to be. I was looking at being a station manager. The DJ thing was just a hobby.”

That “hobby” has since opened a number of doors for the Miami native.

“One of the [Heineken] execs was a frequent visitor of Level nightclub,” Irie says, “and I was the resident hip-hop DJ there. ’Another guy heard me when I was doing a Gerald Levert party on the beach,’ he continues. ’Little did I know that he was one of the top assistants to [then-Miami Heat coach] Pat Riley. So I did his birthday party. By the time the idea came up, both gentlemen referred me.’

Even with the two recommendations, Irie was not convinced that he wanted the job. “I was intimidated,” he says. “I didn’t think that what I knew to do in the clubs and on the radio would work. I had been to a Heat game and saw [a different] kind of people there. They weren’t the same people in the clubs. There was a young crowd, but the season ticket-holders and people who spent the real money were 40- and 50-year-old white people. I didn’t know what to play for those people. So I blew off the first three meetings. I didn’t have any idea how huge it could be. When I finally did go in, my eyes finally opened up to what it could be.”

Irie’s three-year stint as the team’s DJ has afforded him other opportunities with the NBA. He DJ’d events during the NBA’s recent All-Star weekend for the third consecutive year.

“Irie says his budding reputation helped him land the Heineken gig.

“The Heineken situation came about [through] relationships I’ve had with radio with Def Jam reps. It was suggested that I DJ a party that [Heineken] threw with BMW. That’s when I made my first contacts with Heineken. Our relationship grew from there. Now anything that they have going on, whether it’s a music level or a function, always try to get me involved,” he says.

Irie is also actively involved in Miami-based marketing firm Urban Marketing Group, clients include Vitol Group, Elektra, Jive and Universal.

Like DJ Irie, Sparks is another mixer gaining a lot of attention with his steadfast work ethic. The Boston native began his career as bit writer/stunt guy for top 40 WJMJ Boston.

(Continued on page 23)

New Approach To Old-School Acts

Joining Music World Music (see story, page 5) as a haven for veteran R&B acts with new music is Thump Records.

Jay King (Club Nouveau, Timex Social Club) is the director of the label’s classic R&B division. The confirmed artist roster thus far includes Lakeside, Midnight Star, Michael Cooper, Lenny Williams and Club Nouveau.

A key selling point is that the new division’s acts will own their masters.

“This wasn’t a cake walk,” King says of the nearly year-long discussions between himself and Thump CEO Bill Edmonds. “We debated back and forth. I said, ‘The only way this is fair is if the artists can own their masters.’”

Walker notes, “We’re not charging marketing and promotion on them, so they’re being paid royalties from the first to the last record sold. At the end of five years, that record comes back to the artist. Then he can make his own distribution deal and sell it himself.”

The albums begin rolling out in May at two CDs per month. King hopes to release 13 albums this year and a minimum of 20 the next year.

“When you put the ‘old school’ moniker on these artists, it makes them sound like they’re not relevant,” King adds. “We’re still making great music and in great voice. We may not sell 1 million anymore, but there’s a lot of money out here for us in our twilight years.”

BALL OF CONFUSION: EMI Music/The Right Stuff is releasing what it’s calling a “lost album” by the O’Jays, “Together We Are One,” April 6. The lead single at radio is “I Know What You Are Doing.”

Originally recorded with Eddie Levert, Walter Williams and Sammy Strain, the tracks were rediscovered by the trio’s longtime producers, Gamble & Huff.

Both Levert and Williams stress that despite a press release to the contrary, they did not reunite in the studio with Gamble & Huff to complete the project.

“There was no new collaboration between us and it has been done in recent years,” Levert says. These songs stem from the ’70s into the ’80s. Canned songs that didn’t make an album. I can’t deny that it’s me and Walter, but it’s dated stuff.”

Williams adds, “They asked us to be involved after the fact, so we declined. I haven’t heard the updated material. These songs were rejects—not good enough then and not good enough now.”

INDUSTRY NOTES: Justin Timberlake is no longer co-hosting ABC-TV’s upcoming “Motown 45” special (Rhythm & Blues, Billboard, Jan. 31), citing scheduling conflicts because of a movie he is filming with Morgan Freeman and Kevin Spacey called “Edison.”

Sources say that Mary J. Blige and the Four Tops are among the slated performers and that an offer has been extended to Janet Jackson. The special will be taped April 4 at Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles for airing in May.

Speaking of the Four Tops, the group celebrated its 50th anniversary Feb. 25 at Detroit’s Roostertail. Lead singer Levi Stubbs is recovering from a mild heart attack and a stroke. Event proceeds benefited the Gwendolyn B. Gordy Fuqua Fund.

From the “Where are they now?” department, former Columbia and Warner Bros. label executive Demetrie Gordy is now GM at Music World Entertainment/Sanctuary.

Patti LaBelle and Bobby Blue Bland will be among those receiving Communications Awards during the National Assn. of Black Owned Broadcasters’ 20th annual dinner.

The event will be held March 12 in Washington. D.C. LaBelle will receive a lifetime achievement award; Bland is being honored as a music pioneer.

ALL ABOARD: Don Cornelius has yet to announce this year’s special awards honorees, but by now everyone should know that Beyoncé and Luther Vandross top the list of nominees for the 18th annual Soul Train Music Awards, with four and three nominations, respectively. For a complete list of nominees, visit billboard.com/awards.

The two-hour Tribune Entertainment-syndicated special will be broadcast live March 29 from International Cultural Center in Los Angeles. Alicia Keys and Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds will co-host.
### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums - March 6, 2004

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<th>Week Ending Date</th>
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V2 Spain Does Not Limit Itself To ‘Indie Sound’

BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN

MADRID—The newly formed V2 Records Spain has signed a Mexican ranchera singer.

Sokol, former actress and presenter of a Mexican TV music program, is the first artist signed to V2 since former Virgin Records Spain managing director Lydia Fernández set up the label last October.

Sokol is slated to release the album “Por un Amor” March 22 in Spain and in U.S. Latin markets, Mexico and the rest of Latin America in June, according to Fernández.

‘OPEN TO GOOD MUSIC’

“I know ranchera has a backing in Spain, because one or two ranchera-style albums by Spanish artists have sold well here in recent years,” Fernández says.

“V2 Spain is open to any type of music that is good, regardless of where it is from,” says Fernández, who signed many Cuban and world music artists as head of Virgin Spain.

Fernández plans to take Sokol on a Latin American and U.S. promo tour in June, prior to a theater tour in Spain that kicks off in September.

She is booked for presentation gigs in March, April and May at Madrid Latin jazz club Calle 54 and will play an open-air concert in Madrid in July.

“Por un Amor” is a pleasant, harmonious acoustic set with a skeletal instrumental accompaniment of guitar, violin, cello and trumpet.

Sokol, who has just settled in Madrid, is known in Mexico for her album “11:11,” which she released in 1996 on Sony Mexico.

“As an artist, Sasha is in line with our policy of not following any geographic or genre bias,” V2 Spain A&R manager Patricia Munn says.

“We want to approach wider genres, not just an indie sound.”

In addition to Sokol, V2 Spain has signed Seville flamenco singer La Tana, who is touring the United States and Canada with Paco de Lucia this month. Other signings include Spanish singer/songwriter Carlos de France and Spanish pop-rock artist Yuri Mendez, whose untitled debut album is scheduled for release March 29.

De France’s first album is due in April, while La Tana’s debut CD is slated for September.

Labels, Video Channel Dispute Fee Collection

BY GUSTAVO GOMEZ

BOGOTA, Colombia—Six multinationals that operate in Colombia have set an important precedent in the realm of music video rights.

Sony, EMI, Universal, Warner, BMG and local label FM have opted to directly charge national TV network Channel 13 for the performance rights to their music videos.

Channel 13 is a youth-oriented channel that roughly 60% of the programming is music videos. It is based here in Colombia’s capital and is seen in approximately half of the country.

Channel 13 GM Darío Montenegro says, “According to a contract signed on Jan. 26, 2004, between Colombia’s Assn. of Phonographic Producers and Artists (Acinpro) and Channel 13, we’re authorized to use the music, in accordance with the laws that regulate authors’ rights in Colombia.”

However, legal representatives for the labels take a different stance. They say that while labels have allowed performance-rights societies like Acinpro to collect where recorded music is concerned, no such agreement exists with videos.

As a result, TV channels that air music videos for entertainment rather than for informational purposes have to pay performance-right fees directly to the labels.

Representatives for Acinpro contend that they are the only ones who can collect performance fees. They argue that in Colombia there are no laws governing authors’ rights when it comes to music videos, and therefore, they fall under the same jurisdiction as audio rights.

In addition, they point out that there is no discussion to be had as long as no law exists. Until then, a video is merely an audio recording with synchronized images.

As a result of the dispute, two weeks ago Channel 13 took off the air all the videos from the litigating labels.

Pinzón, Romero & Asociados, the law firm representing all six labels, met with representatives of Channel 13, and it was determined that it was not clear to either party whether or not Acinpro had the rights to collect the performance fees.

Subsequently, Channel 13 and the labels agreed to take the issue to Colombia’s National Office of Author’s Rights and have it determined who should be collecting.

In the meantime, Channel 13 has said it will stand by its decision not to air videos from Sony, EMI, Warner, BMG, Sum and FM.

Hard Times Help Guzmán Keep Her Edge Sharp

By Leila Cobo

Guzmán: I went through many things.

While most rock ‘n rollers mellow as their careers progress, Alejandra Guzmán’s music gets rowdier with each passing year.

The Mexican singer, long labeled a roquera (indeed, she won a Latin Grammy for best rock solo album in 2002), has nevertheless sported more of a pop sound in the past. Not so with her upcoming album “Lipstick,” due March 23 on BMG U.S. Latin.

The harder edge on the album corresponds, at least in part, to hard times. Last year, Guzmán had a miscarriage, and the experience led her to write the words for tracks like “Cree en Mi,” which deals with overcoming difficulties, and “Mi Luz,” a track written to God.

“It talks about seeing the light when you’re in darkness,” Guzmán says. “And well, I went through many things.”

“Lipstick” was produced by Desmond Child, who provided Guzmán with much of the repertoire, including tracks like and other songwriters wrote during song camps.

Many tracks were originally in English, and Guzmán participated in their translation to Spanish.

“I have to like the melody and the idea,” she says of recording songs originally in another language. The translations, she adds, “aren’t exactly what the song [originally] said, but stories that I tell and that are mine.”

One track on the album remains in English, which is new territory for Guzmán.

“Why record in English? Because everybody’s doing it,” she says with a laugh. “And I had to try it too.”

THALIA’S GREATEST: You may think a Thalía greatest-hits album had been done before. Not so. Or at least, not in recent years.

The disc, currently at No. 2 for the second consecutive week on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart, is the Mexican diva’s first collection of hits from her EMI days. “Greatest Hits” contains 10 tracks and a whopping 10 videos, appropriate for a particularly visual artist. The collection is available in CD, DVD and CD/DVD combo format.

DURANGO LIVE: On the heels of its phenomenally successful “De Durango a Chicago” (Disa), Grupo Montez de Durango is preparing to release its first live album.

“En Vivo Desde Chicago” streets March 23 and will be released in CD and DVD format as well as a CD/DVD combo. It is slated to be the first of a series of live concert releases to be put out by Disa and is the first live DVD the company will release.

“We’re going to brand it, and we’re going to have probably between 10 to 12 of these releases before the end of the year,” says Jeff Young, Disa executive VP of sales and marketing.

The bonus for Disa’s Live series is the price.

The DVDs will probably retail for $8.99-$11.99, while the combo will probably be about $14.99. The label is able to keep the price that low in part because it owns the publishing to the songs recorded by Montez.

“En Vivo” will include 12 live tracks recorded at a concert in Chicago last November plus four videoclips.

GOOD DEEDS: Twenty students will receive scholarships to prestigious Belén Jesuit Preparatory in Miami, thanks to a benefit concert for Ricardo Montaner.

The intimate show took place Feb. 12 and was organized by Belén in conjunction with the Latin Recording Academy. More than $100,000 was raised.

IN BRIEF: Sony Music Publishing/ATV has signed composer Rafael Ferro to an exclusive worldwide administration deal. Ferro, who has been Julio Iglesias’ musical director for 30-plus years, has co-written such Iglesias hits as “La Carreta,” “Corazón de Papel” and “Abrázame.” Ferro was previously signed to APA in Spain.
Again... WINNER OF THE GRAMMY AWARDS FOR BEST MEXICAN / AMERICAN ALBUM

JOAN SEBASTIAN
The Legend Continues...

Vander Music - Edimusa Publishing
edimusa@edimusa.com.mx
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**$GREATTEST GAINER$**

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**$PACESETTER$**

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### Billboard Hot Latin Tracks

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<td>Chayanne</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>YO TODO QUEDA EN NADA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ricky Martin</td>
<td>Sony / Latin</td>
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<td>Italia</td>
<td>Sony / Latin</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Obra Bermudez</td>
<td>Sony / Latin</td>
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<td>Marco Antonio Solís</td>
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#### Greatest Gainer

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<td>Grupo Monzón De Durango</td>
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<td>BULERÍA</td>
<td>David Bisbal</td>
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<td>SOY UN NOVATO</td>
<td>Intocable</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>TENGANAS</td>
<td>Víctor Manent</td>
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<td>ROSAS</td>
<td>La Orja De Van Gogh</td>
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<td>AUNQUE NO TE PUEDA VER</td>
<td>Álex Ukaño</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIENTES TAN BIEN</td>
<td>Sin Bandera</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUIEN TE DIJO ESO?</td>
<td>Luis Fonseca</td>
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<td>COMO PUEDE ENAMORARME DE TI</td>
<td>Petronio</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>BARAJA DE ORDO</td>
<td>Paloma</td>
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<td>DUELE VERTE</td>
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<td>A QUE NO TE VAS</td>
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<td>EL PALOMITO</td>
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<td>Rossario</td>
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<td>MI FRENAL</td>
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### Latin Pop Airplay

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<td>TE QUISE TANTO</td>
<td>Paulina Rubio</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUIDAETE EL ALMA</td>
<td>Chayanne</td>
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<tr>
<td>YO TODO QUEDA EN NADA</td>
<td>Ricky Martin</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERCA DE TI</td>
<td>Italia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME CANSE DE TI</td>
<td>Obra Bermudez</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MÁS QUE TU AMIGO</td>
<td>Marco Antonio Solís</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TE LLAME</td>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>QUE LLOREN</td>
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### Tropical Airplay

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<td>YO TODO QUEDA EN NADA</td>
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<td>QUE LLOREN</td>
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### Regional Mexican Airplay

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>YO TODO QUEDA EN NADA</td>
<td>Ricky Martin</td>
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<td>Marco Antonio Solís</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAZME OLVIDARLA</td>
<td>Conjunto Primavera</td>
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**Note:** The table includes tracks from a variety of Latin music genres, including pop, tropical, and regional Mexican. The rankings are based on airplay data from various radio stations. The chart is a snapshot of the music landscape at the time of publication.
The Beats Go On
Continued from page 1

Among the dance/electronic acts cited as pioneers in the licensing field are Moby, Dido and Dirty Vegas. Every track from Moby’s 1999 album “Play” received exposure through synchronization or licensing deals. Dido’s “Here With Me” showed up as the theme for the TV series “Roswell.” Dirty Vegas’ “Days Go By” accompanied the Mitsubishi Eclipse ad campaign.

Music consultant David Steel, owner of Steel Synth in New York, had a hand in getting all the tracks from “Play” placed in a variety of media. He says the success of “Play” has played a big part in increasing the demand for electronic music in TV and other media.

LOOKING FOR OTHER ‘DAYS’
According to ad agencies, music consultants, music supervisors, labels, artists, DJs and producers, everyone is searching for the next “Days Go By.” Only two years ago, British trio Dirty Vegas went from obscurity to mainstream success, thanks to the use of that song in the Mitsubishi Eclipse ad. At the time, “Days Go By” sounded like nothing else on the radio or in the clubs.

That is a recurrent theme among music supervisors and other programmers.

“We are always looking for something different, something that stands out [but] fits within the framework of the show,” says Jason Alexander, founder and owner of Hit the Ground Running, which specializes in music supervision for several TV shows, including “CSI: Miami,” “Cold Case Files” and the upcoming “CSI: New York.”

Alexander stresses the importance of finding “interesting music that is not derivative of something else.”

Dave Bartram, head of U.K. media and marketing at BMG Music Publishing in London, concurs. “Many requests today ask for electronic music but with an added twist—maybe a full-string orchestra, a male choir or hard beats,” he says, referring to recent music placed in TV ads.

Bartram also notes more requests for remixes or themes of known songs. He cites Jason Nevis “I’m the Main Man,” which Bartram helped place in a U.K. ad for Coors Fine Light Beer (Billboard, Jan. 10). “I’m the Main Man” samples T. Rex’s “Telegram Sam.” By incorporating something classic into something new, Bartram says, “you have the ability to vastly broaden the appeal of a song and reach a wider target market, which is why Coors was quick to license the song for its ad campaign.” The song appeals to Marc Bolan fans, Jason Nevis fans and a whole new cross-section in between.

In fact, “I’m the Main Man” has now been licensed by Sanctuary Records Group for Europe and Tommy Boy for North America, Southeast Asia, South Africa and Australia (billboard.biz, Feb. 6).

A WINNER FOR WIDELIFE
So far this year, the biggest success story for a dance or electronic artist may well be the placement of “All Things (Just Keep Getting Better)” from Canadian producer/remix duo Widelife, in the Bravo/NBC smash reality series “Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.”

The energetic track, which features the soulful vocals of Simone Denny, appears on the “Queer Eye for the Straight Guy” soundtrack released Feb. 10 by Capitol. The collection debuted at No. 39 on The Billboard 200.

According to Widelife’s Rachid Wehbi and Ian Neuman, the placement has meant significant publishing revenue, more tour dates and mainstream exposure worldwide. The show is seen in more than 30 countries.

“It’s great exposure for us and for dance music,” Wehbi notes. “The success of ‘Queer Eye’ has helped us cross over.”

Widelife has since created theme music for ABC Family’s “Knock First” and Trio’s “24/7.”

Widelife is also in discussions with Capitol regarding an album deal. “This one song has opened up so many doors for us,” Wehbi adds.

Another success story is the Dutch producer DJ Tiësto, who created original music for a European Coca-Cola TV ad. The results were so powerful that the beverage company put the DJ’s image on all Coke cans.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES
Such exposure is especially important for dance and electronic artists, who get little support from traditional radio and video outlets, particularly in the United States.

“American radio is so formatted, which makes it difficult for dance music to be heard,” says Andy Ruffell, founder and CEO of DanceStar USA: The American Dance Music Awards, which will be staged March 9 for the third year in Miami.

The licensing revenue is also significant in a genre that has low expectations for retail income.

“Of course it helps an artist,” says DJ/producer Dave Audé, who has produced original music for Nike and Coca-Cola commercials. “Because there is no longer a lot of money in 12-inch vinyl sales, such musical placement helps an artist earn a living.”

In addition to TV ads, Audé has licensed his music to videogames like “Grand Turismo,” for which he says he earned a flat fee of $5,000 per track. Audé also produced the music for the closing credits of the Disney film “Signs.”

Recently, Audé created the music for a 40-second anti-piracy ad for Warner Bros., which will be shown in cinemas nationwide. And along with DJ Dan, Audé remixed the theme song for the cartoon “The Transformers.”

Among other recent examples of mixing commerce and art are Madonna’s “Love Profusion,” which is being heard in an Estée Lauder TV ad, and Dub Pistols’ “Revolution,” which is featured in a Lexus TV ad.

Ringtones for mobile phones also offer opportunities for dance and electronic artists. Phone users can feature sounds on their handsets from the likes of Dub Pistols, DJ Tiësto, Felix da Housecat, Paul Van Dyk, DJ Colette and Latin Lovers, among others.

Even as demand grows for dance and electronic music, Madison Avenue and Hollywood appear to have toughened their positions on licensing fees. In meetings with ad agencies, consult-ant Steel notes that fees have dropped across the board for music usage.

“The big advertisers are not spending the big bucks they once did,” he explains. “When cutting costs, music is the first thing to go.”

As in all genres, some labels are better positioned than others to adjust to such belt-tightening.

“If you own the music’s master and publishing, you can perhaps make a sweeter deal,” says Kevin Herlihy, who, with DJ/producer Jason De, runs Super Crucial Recordings, distributed by New Line Records.

Super Crucial, which releases music by the Angel and 60 Channels (an alias of the Angel), has licensed various tracks to Showtime’s “Street Time,” UPN’s “The Twilight Zone” and other shows.

The importance of dance and electronic music outside of clubland is not lost on DanceStar USA, which is handing out awards in four related categories this year: best movie soundtrack, best use of music in a commercial, best use of music in a computer game and best use of music in a TV show.

A Whole Lotta Licenses
A Sampling Of Recent Dance/Electronic Music Deals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madonna</td>
<td>“Love Profusion”</td>
<td>Estée Lauder TV ad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jason Nevis</td>
<td>“I’m the Main Man”</td>
<td>Coors TV ad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>“Gabber”</td>
<td>VP/Vaughall TV ad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fauna Flash</td>
<td>“Ien”</td>
<td>Nissan TV ad</td>
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<td>Layo &amp; Bushwacka!</td>
<td>“Streepy Language”</td>
<td>“Hip Tuck” TV show</td>
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<td>Matmos</td>
<td>“Memento Mori”</td>
<td>“Queen For Folk” TV show</td>
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<td>Goat Project</td>
<td>“Santa Maria”</td>
<td>Coca-Cola TV ad</td>
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<td>Kraky Kubs</td>
<td>“Ill Type Sound”</td>
<td>Bailey TV ad</td>
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<td>Venus Hum</td>
<td>“Hummingbirds”</td>
<td>Motosynthesis TV ad</td>
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<td>Iamique XL</td>
<td>“Symbatex”</td>
<td>Hammer HU TV ad</td>
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<td>Fischersponerer</td>
<td>“Emerge”</td>
<td>“Sex and the City” TV show</td>
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<td>The Source/Candie Station</td>
<td>“You Got the Love”</td>
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<td>Dart Punk</td>
<td>“Face to Face”</td>
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<td>Moby</td>
<td>“Love of Strings”</td>
<td>“Real World” TV show</td>
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<td>Dfuse</td>
<td>“Blue Skies”</td>
<td>“Without a Trace” TV show</td>
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<td>Tommie Sunshine</td>
<td>“Dance Among the Ruins”</td>
<td>Clearasil TV ad</td>
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<td>Time Max</td>
<td>“Get Down”</td>
<td>Monster.com TV ad</td>
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<td>Blue Man Group</td>
<td>“Feel Better”</td>
<td>Joe Boxer TV ad</td>
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<td>Nicola Conte</td>
<td>“Bossa Per Due”</td>
<td>“Real World” TV show</td>
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<td>3KSTATIC</td>
<td>“Sweet Side to Obedience”</td>
<td>“SSX: Stoked” videogame</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aphrodite</td>
<td>“Wobble”</td>
<td>“Need for Speed” videogame</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Crystal Method</td>
<td>“Born Too Slow”</td>
<td>“Carve” videogame</td>
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<td>Legowelt</td>
<td>“Disco Rat”</td>
<td>“Lost in Translation” film soundtrack</td>
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<td>Peachtree</td>
<td>“Fucking the Pain Away”</td>
<td>“The Italian Job” film soundtrack</td>
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<td>Amon Tobin</td>
<td>“Sobriety”</td>
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TO OUR READERS
Beatbox will return next week.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>ME AGAINST THE MUSIC</td>
<td>Britney Spears</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOTHING FOLKS NOBODY KNOWS ME</td>
<td>Madonna</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOU PROMISED ME (TU ES FOUTU)</td>
<td>In-Grid</td>
<td>3 (tie)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEEPLY (MIXES)</td>
<td>M. Nicks, JR.</td>
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<td>(THERE'S Gotta BE) MORE TO LIFE</td>
<td>Stevie Wonder</td>
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<td>DESTINATION</td>
<td>Terence Trent</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFFICIALLY MISSING YOU</td>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>BREATHE (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Michelle Branch</td>
<td>8 (tie)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>The Rolling Stones</td>
<td>9 (tie)</td>
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<td>THE DISTRICT 233 ALONE TONIGHT</td>
<td>The Postal Service</td>
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<td>RUBBERNECKIN' (PAUL OAKENFORD-REMIX)</td>
<td>Euphix</td>
<td>11 (tie)</td>
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<td>2 TO 4 (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Britney Spears</td>
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<td>MEGAMIX (WAAAHHH, BABA, HOO HOO, REMIXES)</td>
<td>Santana &amp; Todd</td>
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<td>THROUGH THE RAIN (IN DEEPER JIVE)</td>
<td>Manak Carey</td>
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<td>BORN TOO SLOW</td>
<td>The Crystal Method</td>
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<td>I'M GLAD (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Jennifer Lopez</td>
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<td>HOLLYWOOD (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Madonna</td>
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<td>ROCK YOUR BODY, ROCK</td>
<td>Ferry Carson</td>
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<td>Annie Lennox</td>
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<td>AS THE RUSH COMES</td>
<td>Motorcycle</td>
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<td>Chicky, S &amp; DD Featuring Inner Circle</td>
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<td>RAINWATER</td>
<td>Astrid Suryanto</td>
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<td>Gotta Be Your Love/SUN-RAYS</td>
<td>Greyboy</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Toast To Men (PK the Men)</td>
<td>Will Tee &amp; Feat. May</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIA</td>
<td>Despina Vandi</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACE TO FACE</td>
<td>DJ Pupp</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>HARU (WILDFLOWE, J. VASQUEZ, &amp; DEMARCO MIXES)</td>
<td>Haru</td>
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<td>SLOW</td>
<td>Cap't E3</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>SLIPPIN' AWAY</td>
<td>Pretty Sweet</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>POWERLESS (WHAT YOU WANT)</td>
<td>WILDFLOWE, JUNOR, &amp; CHAB MIXES</td>
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<td>BORN TOO SOOOO (B. MORGLOO, DEEPLY, &amp; NURBED MULES)</td>
<td>The Crystal Method</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALL THINGS (JUST KEEP GETTING BETTER)</td>
<td>Widelife With Simon Deezy</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>ME, MYSELF AND I (MIJURU MIXES)</td>
<td>CUBA</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHERE LOVE IS (DAMON REMIX)</td>
<td>Widelife With Simon Deezy</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAKE (IN THE NAME OF PROPHET)</td>
<td>Kevin Aviance</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVE IT UP</td>
<td>Simon</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHERE DID LOVE GO (FRANK REMIX)</td>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOD IS A DJ (ATMIX REMIXES)</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOXIC (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Brandy Spears</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREE (S.A.F. &amp; NEMO MIXES)</td>
<td>Sarah Brightman</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTHING FAILS (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Madonna</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT'S MY LIFE</td>
<td>No Doubt</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED</td>
<td>Colten Ford &amp; Pepper Mashay</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUE (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Delerium Feat. Norman Pallot</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUST A LITTLE MORE LOVE</td>
<td>David Gutt Feat. Chris Wells</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTO THE LIGHT (DAVE AUDE REMIXES)</td>
<td>Collection Piece</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOVE IS SIMPLE</td>
<td>Madonna</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A GOOFY MOVIE</td>
<td>D. Hidgins</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLICK INTO THE FUTURE</td>
<td>Cinco K The King</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
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<td>PO LK (RE-MIXES)</td>
<td>Funk</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAKE ME DANCE ALL NIGHT</td>
<td>3 Speaker High</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASS THAT DUTCH (SCUBROG REMIX)</td>
<td>Arthur Baker Feat. Astrid Williamson</td>
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<td>MAKE ME DANCE ALL NIGHT</td>
<td>3 Speaker High</td>
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<td>THE HURTING</td>
<td>MacBook Dyeing</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WONDERFUL US KLEINBERG &amp; A. AUDIE MIXES</td>
<td>STEINER</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STONED (DEEP DISH REMIX)</td>
<td>Dido</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NASHVILLE—With more than a decade of hits under his belt, Clint Black could have remained a major-label artist and continued to do business as usual. Instead, his new album, “Spend My Time,” marks a new chapter in the veteran singer/songwriter’s career.

Black’s March 2 release is the first on Equity Records, a new venture he launched with business manager Charles Sussman, former Sony Nashville executive VP/CMO Mike Kra- kie and personal manager Jim Morey. Equity will not only serve as a vehicle for Black’s career but also for other acts as well, and its partners expect it to become a substantial player in the country format. Created to operate on an artist-friendly business model, Krakie says Equity acts will own their masters and get paid from the first unit scanned (Billboard, Aug. 9, 2003).

The self-produced “Spend My Time” is Black’s first studio album in five years.

“Just felt it was time to move on,” Black says about leaving his longtime label home, RCA. “I’ve been there a long time with a lot of success. The time was coming up for the end of my contract, and I felt that it would be better to go ahead and leave. After my second greatest-hits album, it just felt like it was time.”

Although most artists who launch their own labels are often seeking creative freedom, Black says he never felt stifled at RCA. “I’ve always made the record I want to make,” he says. “There were periods where RCA was more involved, but ultimately the decision was always mine. My relationship at RCA was one of artistic freedom.”

GUT REACTION
In a format where artists often churn out one album per year, Black says he didn’t worry about taking five years between studio albums. “I just wanted to be able to enjoy the luxury I had of being a mostly at-home dad and having that bonding time with my daughter,” he says. “That’s really what I did. I worked a little.”

Equity president Krakie admits, “When you are away for five years you take a risk. It’s less of a risk when you are an artist who has voluntarily taken five years off with one who has been forced to take five years off.” When Krakie parted ways with Sony, Black says, and the other Equity partners knew they wanted him to run the label.

“Mike was like-minded about ... what kind of a label we should start,” Black says. “It was a no-brainer. Here’s a guy who is a great leader by all accounts. I just felt like we could create something that could not only be a home for my new music but could be the beginning of something wonderful for other artists who don’t see the major labels as the big dream that it used to be.”

Black’s first Equity single is the album’s title cut. The song is No. 17 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart.

“He’s got a great history at country radio. He has one of those distinctive voices you hear on radio that’s instantly recognizable,” Equity VP of national promotion Rick Baumgartner says.

Black landed 27 singles in the top five during his RCA days. Among Black’s 13 No. 1 hits are “Killin’ Time,” “The Rain” and “Nobody’s Home.” According to Baumgartner, the label will be running “win it before you can buy it” contests at radio as well as Internet promotions with Taylor guitars. Fans can log on to clintblack.com or participating radio stations’ Web sites to listen to cuts from Black’s new album and register to win a guitar.

Equity is also running a promotion with Wal-Mart. Consumers who purchase “Spend My Time” at the retail chain will get a code in the packaging that will allow them to download a 13th track for free. The bonus track is a six-minute, true- story song Black wrote titled “The Great Mississippi Flood of ’93.”

SHOWING APPRECIATION
Black believes in taking time to show appreciation to radio and retail. He has been visiting radio stations, and plans call for him to do nine in-store-Wal-Mart appearances in six days.

“I always want the people that helped me to be proud that they did,” he says. “You can send notes and call people, but showing up at their radio station or their store, I think that’s the biggest way to say, ’I appreciate what you’ve done for me.’”

“We are all over this release,” says Brian Smith, VP of store operations for Marietta, Ga.-based Value Central Entertainment. “It will be sale-priced, prominently featured in-store and also appear in our advertising circular. It has been a long time coming, but his fans haven’t forgotten, and we have been hearing a steady buzz developing since the single was dropped to radio.

“I’m excited to work this record,” Smith continues. “He was one of the mavericks in the early ’90s, and I think his new album will be a great introduction to people who don’t know him and a meaningful place in the format. I applaud his decision to release this on his own label. Equity has been very proactive in setting this release up. As a first single, we’re proud that Clint Black and doing well at both radio and CMT, which is encouraging.”

Black does not plan to be active in the daily running of the label but will lend his input.

“I’m going to be very involved in helping to shape the connection between the label and the artist,” he says. “My perception on that is very important to the label to make sure that we stick to the premise of being artist-friendly. I’m going to provide the artist vantage point and not be involved in the running of it at all. I can better serve the company by doing my job as an artist.”

The second season of the “Nashville Star” series will debut March 6 on USA Network. Sony Music Nashville A&R executive Tracy Gershon is the only returning judge for the show. Also on tap are radio personality Billy Greenwood of country stations WSMN Nashville and KSTL St. Louis and former BNA act the Warren Brothers, who recently signed with Savoy Label Group’s 429 Records (see The Beat, page 15).

Nancy O’Dell of “Access Hollywood” returns as host. This season will feature appearances by last year’s winner, Buddy Jewell, as well as Joe Nichols, Rodney Crowell, Willie Nelson, Young and todorick Black and Trace Adkins. The contestants are once again competing for a Sony recording contract.

In other Warner Bros. news, the duo recently shot a pilot for CMT for a reality show about their lives and career. They can also be seen in the upcoming film “Small Town Saturday Night.”

ON THE ROW: James Druckery joins Gibson Audio as COO, Gibson Audio is the new name of Nashville-based Gibson Guitar. He most recently was president of Harman International’s multimedia business.

Hank Adam Locklin has been named executive director of the Country Music Assn. as senior manager of membership and industry relations. Locklin, the son of country artist Hank Locklin, previously worked in artist management and music publishing at Loretta Lynn Enterprises and Bluewater Music. Jamie Platt is promoted from membership to membership manager at the CMA.

In related news, the CMA Awards will move from their traditional Wednesday-night slot to Tuesday, Nov. 9 this year. The show will be televised live, as usual, on CBS from Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry House.

BMI has already claimed Monday, Nov. 8 as the date for its annual country awards, setting the stage for a showdown with ASCAP, which has traditionally hosted its own country awards on the Monday night of CMA week. BMI’s awards were previously held on Tuesday.

The Academy of Country Music has partnered with Yahoo’s Launch service to create a new associate membership program aimed at country music fans who are not part of the industry. Associate members will be able to vote in the video of the year category for the ACM Awards, which has been re-branded The Launch video of the year. Associate members will also have access to a password-protected fan club site at acmusic.com or acm_launcraching.com.

ARTIST NEWS: Canadian country artist Paul Brandt will launch a weekly syndicated show, “Paul Brandt’s Canadian Countdown,” this spring. It will be syndicated by the Edmonton, Alberta-based Da Silva Group Radio Network.

Kennedy Chesney’s DVD “Road Case” will get the red-carpet treatment when it plays at Regal theaters in 32 markets March 8. The event is part of Country Music Goes to the Movies promotion that also includes 30-second spots running before movies in Regal theaters and lobby signage and posters. The DVD, previously available exclusively on Chesney’s Web site, will be available at retail March 9.

www.americanradiohistory.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>IMPRINT &amp; NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Week At Number</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>KENNY CHESNEY</td>
<td>COLUMBIA 435396 (18.98 CD)</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Collection, Volume I</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>REBA MCENTIRE</td>
<td>MCA 452907/SONY MUSIC 15.99EQ/11.981</td>
<td>Room To Breathe</td>
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<td>16 Biggest Hits</td>
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<td>Rhys McEntire</td>
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**HOT COUNTRY SINGLES SALES**

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**Notes:**
- Billboard is the weekly music magazine published by VNU Business Media. Inc., and Nielsen SoundScan. Inc. All rights reserved.
- Information compiled from Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. and Billboard charts.
- All sales and streaming data are for the chart week ending March 15, 2004.
**ALBUMS**

**POP**

- **Walt Disney Messenger**
  - Song’s originators, miserably same

- **RELEASE DATE:** Feb. 17
  - Walt Disney’s Teenie comedy
  - “Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen”
  - Disney’s Lindsay Lohan (also appeared in “ Feyre Friday”) is well-posed to resonate with its targeted young female audience. The same is also true of this, its harmless musical companion. While Lohan holds her own on four tracks, she particularly shines on “Drum Queen” (That Girl) and “What Are You Waiting For?;” a medley (“Don’t Move” starring songs for the City Changers”) fails miserably—as does Mornie Kitten’s cover of “Ladies Night” (featuring the song’s originators, Kool & the Gang). The album shape is quite “Ready” by Cherie, a newcomer to watch.---MP

- **ANNE McCUE Roll**
  - PRODUCERS: Dusty Wakeman, Anne McCue
  - MESSENGER 15
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 24
  - Australia-born, Los Angeles-based Anne McCue is the virtual definition of “triple threat.” A potent singer, thoughtful songwriter and top-notch guitarist, she completely owns her own on this new project. Joined by a group of superior West Coast sidemen—including producer/bassist Dusty Wakeman, drummers Dave Raven and Mike Skinson and keyboardist Carl Byron—McCue makes a deep impression with a strong band of introspective new songs. She’s capable of rocking out on numbers like “I Want You Back,” “Hangman” and “Ballad of an Outlaw Woman,” while such tunes as “Where the Darkness Grows” show off a more lyrical and still-hard-edged side. She displays her considerable guitar chops throughout, climaxing the album with a biting cover of Jimi Hendrix’s “Hey Joe,” which McCue is a do-it-all performer who has been quite unjustly obscure for too long.—CM

- **OWSLEY The Hard Way**
  - PRODUCER: Will Owsley
  - LAKEVIEW EDITIONS LV0001
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 24
  - Interestingly coinciding with its title, the self-produced album from singer-songwriter Owsley struggles too much to have it both ways. The music straddles indie and pop sensibilities without ever stepping one foot clearly onto one side or the other. While “The Hard Way” rolls along competently, the midtempo guitar hooks and straightforward vocals lack the necessary punch to reach mainstream consciousness. And the unique choices with instrumentation, such as the intricate guitar layering on “Down,” are too few and far between to adequately captivate music fans’ attention. Lead single “Be With You,” a simple pledge of love to a girl, might be able to gain some traction with its enduring honesty.---SA

- **JEN CHAPIN Linger**
  - PRODUCERS: Rod Sherwood, Stephan Cramp, Jen Chapin
  - HYBRID RECORDINGS HY-20033
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 24
  - To get the first question out of the way: Yes, Jen Chapin is the daughter of folk-rock artist Harry Chapin. But since she combines jazz and blues with a little bit of soul, she describes her own tunes as “urban folk.” The moniker somewhat fits “Linger,” which is the type of soothing and innocuous album tailor-made for a Starbucks. The imagery reflects her New York roots as she sings of the city’s steady thrum and composure and how being a face in the crowd can be comforting and still in “City.” The bass-funky “Me Be Me” and “Numbers” shake things up a little, and the island melodies of “Passive People” almost echo Jimi Buffett. These are where her delicate phrasing and compositions are strongest, and “Regular Life” has enough punch that it could turn up on NPR or college radio.---CLT

**ESSENTIAL REVIEWS**

- **JONNY GREENWOOD Body Song**
  - PRODUCERS: Jonny Greenwood, Graeme Stewart
  - CAPITAL RECORDS 95167
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 24
  - While composing music to accompany the dialogue-free tour of the human experience that is the film “Body Song,” Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood made a decision. Since the images themselves did not repeat, why should any of the soundtrack? Indeed, there are no recurring themes to be found here. Rather, Greenwood (with assistance from the Emperor String Quartet on several cuts) indulges Radiohead’s most experimental leanings on a series of concise pieces. Strings buzz behind a solemn melody on “Moon Trills,” while gauzy processed tones conjure an ominous vibe on “Clockwork Tin Soldiers.” Oppty percussion is the sole force at work on “Convergence,” while electric bass battles a banjo on “24 Hour Charleston.” “The Bends” is not, but Radiohead fans will revel in an unnarrated peek at Greenwood’s musical mind-set.—JC

- **BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO Anything Goes**
  - PRODUCERS: Brad Mehldau, Matt Pierson
  - WARNER BROS. 48600
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 24
  - After last year’s successful electronic-tinged “Largo” experiment, Brad Mehldau returns to his native territory: his tried-and-true, straight-up-with-a-tin-ws trio format. He is joined by simpatico bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Jorge Rossí, who have been probing deep harmonic and rhythm sets with Mehldau since his 1995 debut. On this outing of radiant ruminations, Mehldau goes long on lyrical celebration and short on dark contemplation. The trio takes a rap journey through some time-tested standards as the Coler Porter title tune and the Lerner-Lowville classic “I’ve Grown Accustomed to Your Face” as well as pop gems “Still Crazy After All These Years” by Paul Simon and “Everything in Its Right Place” by Radiohead. Highlights include a brushed-drum solo on Hoagy Carmichael’s “靠近 Your Heart,” which the gleeing through Harold Arlen’s “Get’s Happy.”---DO

**DANCE/ELECTRONIC**

- **JUNKIE XL Radio JXL: A Broadcast From the Computer Hell Cabin**
  - PRODUCER: Janie XL
  - ROCH 95228
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 10
  - Dutch DJ-producer Jani Kihlberg has been playing his Junkie XL moniker since 1997. He developed a large underground following after crossing over to the mainstream with a remix of Elvis Presley’s “A Little Less Conversation,” which topped the pop charts in more than 20 countries. On this, XJL’s third studio album, divergent moods are split between two discs, labeled 3PM and 3AM. The former is home to remixes and original productions and features numerous guest vocalists, including former Republic frontwoman Saffron, Dave Gahan, Gary Numan, the Cure’s Robert Smith, Peter Tosh, Solomon Burke and Presley. The soundscapes range from dub and funk to trance and electro and is closer to one of XJLS DJ sets, beginning on the ambient tip and building to a trance-fueled high (“Breeder” featuring international DJ Sacha. By dividing the album into two decidedly different segments, XJL has created music for recent (streamait) converts and hardcore enthusiasts. We hope, though, that each group will find that there is much to admire in that they may not be familiar.---MP

**COUNTRY**

- **SLAID CLEAVES Wishbones**
  - PRODUCER: Gurf Morlix
  - PHILA/Rounder 13671
  - RELEASE DATE: March 9
  - Austin-based singer-songwriter Slaid Cleaves seems to have found his groove here on his first studio album in four years: it finds him teaming, for the third time, with producer Gurf Morlix. The deceptively buoyant title cut keeps the gnom at bay with a shot, and Cleaves boogies with highway-seasoned authority on “Road Too Long.” The hangdog midtempo “Drinkin’ Days” is a classic cause-of-effect drinking song, and Cleaves and Morlix create a dance scene on “Sinner’s Prayer” and “Borderline.” Cleaves’ folkier ten- dencies are displayed on the haunting “Below” and “Quick As Dreams.” Those and others like the very “Horses” showcase Cleaves as a storyteller of imagination and skill, and his dusky vocals are effective throughout. Finally, “New Year’s Day” is as fine a tribute as any Texan ever deserved.—RW

**LATIN**

- **GRUPO EXTERMINADOR De Pandrao Con El Diablo**
  - PRODUCER: Juan Sanon
  - Fonovisa 0883508193
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 10
  - The word corridos inevitably brings to mind epic, violent tales of drug deals gone bad, treys discovered and flying bullets. But Mexico’s Grupo Exterminador has sold more than 700,000 copies of its two previous corrido albums (volumes one and two of “De Pandrao Con El Diablo”) in serious and funny business. Even the toughest corridos in this set come with caveats: Skits preceding the tracks featuring ad libs, sound effects and humor) veer from the sardonic to the sophisticated. The ban needs to be taken with a grain of salt. This is not thinking-man, sophisticated stuff; it is designed to be laughed at, danced to and, occasionally, make one go soft and weep (big ballad “Hazlo sin Amor”). There is shock value in “La Manguer” a double entendre rap/ cumbia ditty about a macho who decides he likes girl, and “El Padre De Todos” (“Everyones Father”), whose title says it all.—LC

**REGGAE**

- **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
  - World Reggae
  - PRODUCERS: various
  - PUTTINI 221
  - RELEASE DATE: Feb. 24
  - An album such as Puttini’s “World Reggae” is probably the quickest way to appreciate the monumental impact that Jamaican reggae has had on the world. This first-rate compilation features a

**CONTRIBUTORS:**


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**BBILLBOARD** MARCH 6, 2004

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www.americanradiohistory.com
doozen reggae tunes tracked by reggae acts from Cape Verde, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, France, Brazil and Algeria, among other locales. The stylistic groove is decidedly rootsy, but each group brings a little something extra to their music. Check the ghostly echoes of the Police in the vocals of Bernaú Udres’s “Ragogu,” an artist from New Caledonia. It’s ladies first for singers Kaisa (Cameroon) and Maria de Barros (Cape Verde), who is actually performing a cover of “Kaleu,” a Cape Verdean genre that is clearly a close relative of reggae. Apache Indian (India) adds Indian flutes to “Um Nomah Shivaay,” while the U.K./Spanish group Mys y Más incorporates violins over an unmistakable reggae beat. Nigerian Najek Fatek echoes Bob Marley’s message of love and harmony with his fine song “African Unity.”

ROXANNE

"Jazz" Bop fest. Her trio mates young enough to be her grandchildren. Instead of generating the gusto, they follow Haynes’s vocalic and elegant lead. He basks in the solo spotlight with his drum tenacity on “Inner Truth” but more importantly serves as the fulcrum of sound, cradling and caressing in this post-bop fest. Featured tracks include three Monk covers, a sweet swing through the bass clarinet-colored “It Don’t Mean a Thing” and features a soulful/marching/interpretation of Pat Metheny’s “Question & Answer.”

CHRISTIAN

"If I Ain’t Got You" (3:48)

PRODUCER: Alicia Keys

WRITER: A. Keys

PUBLISHERS: Letwell Productions/EMI Music Publishing, ASCAP

J59351 (CD promo)

Alicia Keys continues to show her growth as an artist and songwriter with the latest focus track from her double-platinum “The Diary of Alicia Keys.” Following the chart-topping success of “You Don’t Know My Name,” “If I Ain’t Got You” is a masterful, haunting ballad that pulls at the heart strings. Her voice and the piano stretches out vocally and with real feeling. Musically, the single has the essence of an R&B classic from yesteryear (think Roberta Flack by way of Gladys Knight). Keys, who wrote and produced the track, again displays a maturity beyond her young age. The single should be an easy sell at adult R&B radio. It will be interesting to see how mainstream R&B programmers react to this decidedly more mature track. Either way, “If I Ain’t Got You” will only further cement Keys’ place in the R&B pantheon.

MODERN ROCK

THE VINES Ride (2:35)

PRODUCER: Rob Schnap

WRITER: C. Nicholls

PUBLISHER: Sony/ATV Music Publishing, Meister Music

Capitol DPRO 7096 6 13828 2 S (CD promo)

One of the first wave of “it” garage bands, the Vines are now rolling out the first single off their upcoming sophomore album, “Winning Days.” Today’s atmosphere is decidedly more competitive: In addition to the Vines’ music establishing itself, the White Stripes and the Strokes, there are recently landed newbies Jet and the Living End. With that said, the Vines have not raised the stakes much with “Ride.” It is fun, but it may not be boisterous enough to bring in new admirers. Whereas the band’s previous efforts mixed raucous screams with poignant melodies, “Ride” plays it safe with a brush yet simple hook punctuated with loud altibet flat vocals. Though lead singer Craig Nicholls pleads, “Ride with me, ride with me,” the Vines may simply pass on the offer.

SINGLES

Edited by Michael Paolotta

CLASSICAL

LANG LANG

Live at Carnegie Hall

PRODUCER: Christian Ganchos

Deutsche Gramophone 4784 820

Release Date: Feb. 24

Few instrumentals in recent memory have inspired the intoxicated raves—or furious backlash—that 22-year-old Chinese pianist Lang Lang attracts, and most especially after his solo recital in November at Carnegie Hall. It’s doubtful that this release of that concerto will settle the score, as his performance gives plenty of ammunition to both sides. In a program encompassing Haydn, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Tan Dun and a traditional Chinese piece (performed as a duet with his father playing the erhu), Lang Lang gives technically brilliant performances. However, his musicianship still has quite a way to go emotionally and intellectually. It’s his percussive relentlessness in Liszt’s “Réminiscences de Don Juan” as one example. Recording an entire Messiah of a specific moment in time; this is a portrait of a promising young pianist who, despite the hype, is only just beginning to find his feet.—AT

VITAL REISSUES

CANDI STATON

Candiland

Compilation PRODUCER: Mark Amiel

ORIGINAL PRODUCER: Rick Hall

Honest Joe/Jastaworks ASW 94432

Release Date: Feb. 24

In the final scene of the film episode of the final season of HBO series “Sex and the City,” Candi Staton’s earthy voice was heard loud and clear (“You Got the Love”). The timing then could not be better for this very essential step back in time. Even though Staton has been recording a primordial gospel for the past 20 years, the Alabama-born Staton remains best known for her many R&B/disco hits (“Young Hearts Run Free,” “When You Wake Up Tomorrow,” “Victim”). But prior to the days of disco, between 1969 and 1972, a young Staton recorded some of her best work for Rick Hall’s Muscle Shoals, Ala.-based Fame Records. Compiling 34 tracks from three Fame albums, “Candi Staton” brings together 26 of these recordings, all of which have never appeared on CD before. Of the 13 tracks, 18 were from the Billboard R&B chart. Highlights include the gold-certified “I’d Rather Be An Old Man’s Sweetheart (Than A Young Man’s Fool),” a cover of “Stand By Your Man” (which was nominated for a Grammy Award), the bluesy “Sure As Sin” and the “Soul”-primed “Love Chain.” Emotion and soul run deep throughout (thanks to Staton’s raw vocals), with each track an honest revelation.—MP

In addition, this is the first single from Lonestar’s forthcoming June release, and it’s a strong calling card. Steeped in fiddle and steel guitar, “Let’s Be Us Again” is a traditional Americana song built to challenge the stage for her forthcoming album debut.—GM

POP

SARAH CONNOR

Bounce

PRODUCER: B. Aris, T. Cottura, A. Freeman

PUBLISHERS: Songs of Boyay/7 Gemini/Handsetic/Standard Musicverlag/Edition X-cellent

EP SG209 (CD promo)

In her native Germany, Sarah Connor has proved to be quite the versatile artist. But with “Bounce” she is nailing a soaring, sensuous ballad as easily as hip-hop-tinged soul pop. It took import airplay of “Bounce” by mainstreamers AllMusic, which is to bring this über-talented stateside, prompting Epic to initiate a national campaign. Top 40 needs a song like this—tempo-driven, party-ready and singable, while all maintaining a cool, contemporary urban edge. A radio version with rap chorus in the U.K. cliche; the preferred features Connor solo. Definitely the most infectious debut song out there, from an upcoming album saturated with hit potential. One of the exceptional ones.—CT

R&B/HIP-HOP

1010 Leave (Get Out)

PRODUCERS: Soulshock & Karlin

WRITERS: Soulshock, K. Karlin, A. Cantrell, "S" Silky, White

PUBLISHERS: Full of Soul Music/EMI Blackwood, SoulShock, Suvang Music/EMI Blackwood, Godfrey Music/Songs Of StyleWorks, BMI; Smooth As Silk/Playin Music, ASCAP

Blackground/Universal UNIR 21165 (CD promo)

Teen boy groups may have lost their cachet, but teen female singers—especially those from Canada—are currently creating a buzz. To a list that includes 16-year-old British sensation Joss Stone, add 13-year-old Job. Like Justin Timberlake before her, the Boston-area singer/songwriter is a progenitor of blue-eyed hip-pop soul. That comes across in this retro-tinted single with a can’t-miss formula: a smooth-vibed get-out-of-my-life anthem with a catchy hook. Under the guidance of Soulshead & Karlin, Jobi turns in an ear-catching performance that calls to mind Brandly’s early efforts. However, Jobi cuts lose more impressively on the song’s hip-hop chorus before pulling the stage for her forthcoming album debut.—GM
Toy Fair Showcases New Product By Kiss, Others

BY STEVE TRAUMAN

NEW YORK—Buena Vista’s Raven and Laylight/Epic’s Good Charlotte are among the latest acts to add toys and games to their portfolios. Other acts who had new licensed products at the 101st Toy Fair here include Mercury/Universal’s Kiss, Buena Vista’s Hilary Duff and Maverick’s Madonna.

The fair was held Feb. 15-18 at Manhattan’s Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

The stakes are high and could be rising. Retail sales of music-generated licensed properties topped $1.5 billion in 2002, with music royalties up 2% to $119 million, according to the Licensing Industry Merchandisers Assn.

Raven is the new spokesperson for HitClips, the Tiger Electronics/Hasbro micro-music system that has sold more than 30 million units in the past three years, and its new under-$50 VideoNow personal video player. She succeeds Duff, who had the dual role this past year.

Her new single, “True to Your Heart” from “Disneymania,” will be a featured HitClip, which has morphed into a longer, two-minute micro-mix music cut in a mini-CD format, backward compatible with all prior HitClip music.

“The Life of Raven: Past, Present & Future” is being taped for a spring VideoNow release. The Disney Channel’s popular weekly show “That’s So Raven” is in its third season, and her first album is due later this year. Raven is also currently making the upcoming direct-to-video “Princess Diaries 2.”

Raven told Billboard: “It’s really exciting to help promote this neat micro-music format and VideoNow, both of which appeal to my fans.”

Hasbro music president Dave Capper adds, “As an all-star celebrity, Hilary [Duff] worked very well for us, and with her TV show and music, we know that Raven can do a great job for HitClips and VideoNow.”

Good Charlotte guitarist Elly (Continued on page 38)
Melissa Manchester Among New Koch Signings

Koch Records has signed a number of new acts, including several former major-label artists.

New York-based Koch has inked pop vocalist Melissa Manchester (previously with Arista, Capitol and MCA), singer/songwriter Abra Moore (formerly with Arista and J), funk-rock act Jimmie’s Chicken Shack (which previously recorded for A&M), singer/songwriter Richard Shindell (who issued albums on the Indies Shanachie and Signature) and the Bone Brothers.

Manchester, Moore and Jimmie’s Chicken Shack will all release their Koch debuts in the first half of the year.

Koch Records Nashville (formerly Audium Records) has signed country/alt-country T. Judd (formerly with Razer & TiX and Sony) and the reunited former RCA act Restless Heart to exclusive worldwide recording deals.

Koch Entertainment president Bob Frank says, “There are a lot of artists who have established careers—artists like Melissa Manchester and Abra Moore and Jimmie’s Chicken Shack, three very different types of artist—who are available. We can make money with acts like this, and these artists can have a home here. These are long-term signings.

These kinds of signings—acts with strong track records but not megastars—fit in well with Koch’s sales strategy, Frank maintains.

He says, “We’ve built a very successful business selling 50,000 to 500,000 units of a title, and when we have one that goes gold or platinum, hey, that’s icing on the cake. But we haven’t built an infrastructure that has to support platinum records.”

Additionally, Koch will release albums by the Cardigans, Junkie XL and Sloan in the United States under exclusive licensing deals. New albums by these acts are due by the end of June.

NAVARRE IN MOTION: Navarre Corp. in New Hope, Minn., has renewed its distribution agreement with Studio Distribution.

New York-based Studio, which signed on with Navarre in August 2002, is a consortium of dance labels including K7, Global Underground and Rapster.

Forthcoming releases include titles from such high-profile DJs as Sasha (It’s Bassa & Bigweed), DJ Jazzy Jeff, Pete Rock and Guru (Gangstarr).

Additionally, Navarre announced several major promotions.

Brian Burke has been elevated from senior VP/CMO of Navarre Distribution Services, the company’s software division, Cary Deacon has been promoted from chief corporate relations officer to the position of president, overseeing licensing and he will continue to helm the corporate relations department.

Navarre’s VP/CMO Jim Gilbertson has also been appointed to the company’s board of directors.

All those promoted report to Navarre president/CEO Eric Paulson.

RYKO’S CULT RITES: Los Angeles-based video firm Cult Epics has signed a U.S. distribution deal with New York-based Ryko Distribution.

Cult—which specializes in horror, erotic and cult films—joins video imprints Blue Underground, Plexifilm, Troma and Fantoma on the Ryko roster.

The agreement commences with the March 30 release of three “Vintage Erotica” volumes; future releases include Abel Ferrara’s “Driller Killer” (June), a three-disc edition of Walérian Borowieczyk’s “The Beast” (July) and four titles featuring erotica pin-up Bettie Page (October and November).

CRASHING INTO EUROPE: Phoenix-based metal label Crash Music has signed European distribution deals with Border Music and Bertus Distribution.

Border will handle Crash’s product in Sweden, while Bertus will distribute its releases in the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.

Crash, operated by Pavement Music founder Mark Navarre, has a roster that includes such acts as Kreatör, Sodom, Internal Bleeding and Single Bullet Theory.

Innovative Distribution Network distributes the label in the United States.

Big Price

Continued from page 37

Apple thinks it has a winner on its hands with a product that is targeting a wide swath of consumers who neither need the massive storage capacity of the iPods currently on the market—they can hold upwards of 10,000 songs—nor wants to pay for a device with a price tag starting at $299.

However, Apple is not just comparing the Mini against the standard iPod in its marketing efforts. It is also positioning it as a better alternative to high-end, flash media-based products offered by companies like Digital Networks North America, maker of the Rio line of portable music players.

Flash media is a removable storage media used in digital cameras and some MP3 players. Apple iPods, by contrast, are essentially portable computer hard drives.

Flash players typically carry only a couple of hours of music, but they also are less expensive, costing $300 or less.

Apple’s argument is that for consumers considering pricier flash-based devices, the Mini, which is of rival size and holds much more music, is only about $50 more.

The problem, critics of the Mini say, is that rival devices with storage capacities that mirror a standard iPod can be had for the same price as a Mini. For instance, Dell Inc.’s Dell DI 15—a device with 15 gigabytes of memory that stores 3,700 songs—also retails for $249.

“They’ve priced themselves out of the mainstream and most fashionable version of the iPod yet with the budget-oriented iPod Mini,” said MarketShark.com analyst James K. Canty.

For those in the market for an iPod who are not driven by large storage capacity needs, the Mini—which basically functions just like any other iPod—is likely to emerge as the device of choice.

Unlike other iPods, which can hold between 20 and 10,000 songs depending on the model, the Mini has 4 gigabytes of memory, meaning it can hold about 1,000 songs.

It also differs from other iPods in that it is encased in anodized aluminum, giving the device a shiny, metallic look and feel. It additionally allows for greater personalization by coming in five different color schemes.

The flexibility of mini-iPod, one analyst said, is a big selling point due to its smaller screen.

The sale of the Mini has been shrinking, and album information is no longer listed. When playing a track, the only artist and song title information is listed. However, users can still search for music by album title.

The other major sacrifice in the name of size, of course, is storage capacity. But for those with a music collection including hundreds of songs, it allows for rapid searching through song titles, with basic command buttons play, pause, menu and forward/back. On the other iPods, these buttons are set above the scroll wheel.

As with other iPods, the Mini has a battery life of eight hours, works on both Mac and PC and is compatible with Apple’s iTunes software.

Point and Click

Continued from page 37

Martin previewed the band’s first action figures he helped design for Stevenson Entertainment Group (SEG), the leading producer of merchandising and promotional items.

“I’ve been collecting comics and toys forever and started designing our tour T-shirts and other apparel,” he said. “I’d been thinking about toys for a long time and when I was approached by Sega, I thought that if I could create toys, I’d love to have them on display.”

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At Toy Fair, SEG also previewed new Metallica statuettes; series 2 and series 3 figurines of “Pink Floyd the Wall,” each with five maquettes (a specific style of statuette), and a Pink Floyd boxed set with an exclusive sixth figure and special 25th-anniversary, 3D figure of a gargoyle emerging from “the Wall,” the first Offspring Smilin’ man (Continued on page 39)

10.36 million; that is 171% over 2002. This project is projected to increase 197% to 279% million.

Consumer electronics experts and other industry watchers note that with devices getting cheaper and offering the ability to store entire libraries of content, the appeal of portable music devices is on the rise with consumers across the board.

“There’s pent-up demand,” Bennoff says. “There are a lot of active digital music consumers who don’t have a device yet.”

Toy Fair

Continued from page 37

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BIG PRICE:

Apple Computer delivers its smallest, slimmest, most fashionable version of the iPod yet with the budget-priced iPod Mini. For those in the market for an iPod who are not driven by large storage capacity needs, the Mini—which basically functions just like any other iPod—is likely to emerge as the device of choice.

Unlike other iPods, which can hold between 20 and 10,000 songs depending on the model, the Mini has 4 gigabytes of memory, meaning it can hold about 1,000 songs.

It also differs from other iPods in that it is encased in anodized aluminum, giving the device a shiny, metallic look and feel. It additionally allows for greater personalization by coming in five different color schemes.

Gold, pink, blue and green. Standard iPods are offered only in white.

The big advantage of the Mini over other iPods is size. Weighing in at just 3.6 ounces, the Mini is comparable in size to many cell phones and fits into pockets and small handbags more easily than other versions of the iPod.

Its combination of the iPod touchpad “scroll wheel” is also an improvement over the older iPods’ browser, allowing for rapid searching through song titles, with basic command buttons play, pause, menu and forward/back. On the other iPods, these buttons are set above the scroll wheel.

As with other iPods, the Mini has a battery life of eight hours, works on both Mac and PC and is compatible with Apple’s iTunes software.

The big debate for consumers looking to buy an iPod will come down to a question of size versus capacity. A standard 15 gigabyte iPod that holds 3,700 songs costs about $30 more.

BRIAN GARRITY

Toy Fair

Continued from page 37

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Post-Holiday Glitch Seems To Be Just That At VEG NA

In the first issue of Billboard this year, I said the account base is stronger than it has been in recent memory, holding out the caveat that in the past, the occasional surprise emerged when holiday payments came due in mid-January. The surprise does not happen annually, but unfortunately, it did this year, and it was from Virgin Entertainment Group North America.

Until that misstep, VEG NA had become the preeminent superstar merchandising operation. Before I relate VEG NA’s problems, for those of you who sell to the retailer and were unaware, let me help you take your heart out of your mouth by first reporting that the chain already appears to be on the mend, through even some questions still need answering.

In mid-November, VEG NA was sluggish in paying some independent suppliers, prompting the concern that it might have maxed out its revolving credit facility. But that problem appeared to have been rectified when VEG NA renewed and expanded its $20 million revolving credit facility with Fleet Retail Finance, to sources say, $30 million in early December.

In January, it replaced CFO Jeff Mosie with Ravi Ahuja, who had been senior VP of global business development for parent company

VEG in the United Kingdom.

During that shift, communications to the vendor community were not as smooth as usual, and the merchant’s January payments came with the surprise that VEG held back a portion of them in anticipation of making returns. Some suppliers were OK with that, some were not. For those who weren’t, it once again appeared that the chain had maxed out even its expanded revolver, prompting them to put VEG NA on hold.

At the time, VEG NA executives privately assured suppliers that it was a short-term cash crunch, one that would clear up as soon as returns were processed.

The good news is that now appears to be the case. By the time February payments came due at mid-month, returns had caught up, and VEG NA resumed normal terms with most majors and independent suppliers. Sources also tell me that the parent company has given VEG NA a vote of confidence by installing more cash in the chain, which should shortly make its way to those suppliers with which it is not current.

“We traded well through the holidays but had made a conscious decision to not do returns through November and December, which resulted in a major clear-out in January,” says Glen Ward, president/CEO of the chain. “We have been very pleased with the participation of the vendor community in helping us do that.”

To return to current status with the other suppliers, sources at the more conservative suppliers say that VEG NA must give detailed business plans going forward to regain the confidence of the entire vendor community. Ward confirms that that is exactly what will happen within the month.

HANDLEMAN TRUMPS ITSELF:
While sales are down, profits are up at the Handleman Co. The Troy, Mich.-based wholesaler reported net income of $21.1 million, or 86 cents per share, on revenue of $443.9 million for the third quarter ended Jan. 31. In the year-ago quarter, Handleman earned $3.3 million, or 13 cents per share, on a $17 million charge for impairment of subsidiary assets, on sales of $450.5 million.

After adjusting its numbers to exclude the financials of Madacy (which was sold in fiscal 2003) and Anchor Bay, the company reported net income of $33 million on sales of $919.1 million vs. the net income of $19.8 million on sales of $1 billion the previous year.

For the upcoming fourth quarter, the company expects to post earnings from continuing operations of 22 cents per share on sales of $611 million.

Separately, the company declared a quarterly cash dividend of 7 cents per share, payable April 9 to shareholders of record March 25.

On Feb. 24, the company’s stock closed at $22.33, up $1.34 from the previous day.
Songwriters & Publishers

‘Cold Mountain’ Piques Interest In Sacred Harp

BY JIM BESSMAN

Much of the publicity surrounding the Academy Award-nominated soundtrack to “Cold Mountain” has focused on a pair of songs, “Home” and “I’m Going Home.” They are performed in the traditional, harmony-rich a cappella folk-hymn style known as sacred harp, or shape-note singing.

Though the movie’s best-song-nominated “The Scarlet Tide” and “You Will Be My Ain True Love” are not sacred harp songs, their singer, Alison Krauss, will be accompanied by a 40-piece sacred harp choir when she performs them at the Feb. 29 Academy Awards ceremony. She’ll segue into Stephen Jenkins’ 1800 sacred harp song “Liberty.”

REKINDLING INTEREST

Whether the DMZ/Columbia/Sony Music Soundtrax soundtrack to “Cold Mountain” can do for sacred harp what “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” did for bluegrass (T Bone Burnett produced both) remains to be seen. But new interest in the very old form — particularly interesting intersection between sacred harp and music publishing,” according to Tim Eriksen. He assembled the Oscar choir (and is himself a member) and arranged the film’s sacred harp tracks in addition to performing on them and several other soundtrack songs.


“The current book — the 1991 edition — contains mostly old songs from the 18th and 19th centuries. So it gets somewhat complicated, with disputes over ownership and publishing rights going back over 100 years.”

The sacred harp songs featured on the “Cold Mountain” soundtrack are traditional and published through Bug-administered Z7S (BMI). “[But] the newer songs in the 20th-century editions have been copyrighted,” Eriksen notes, while “in the 19th century, the common practice was to beg, borrow or steal and put your name on it if you changed a few notes—or just publish things with an extensive contribution however as your own composition.

The sacred harp singing tradition continues a style developed in singing schools during Colonial times and maintained mostly in the rural South — though it has attracted more sophisticated urban fans in the United States and abroad.

Central to the performance aspect of the style are communal, day-long singing/dinner events, at which groups sing songs from “The Sacred Harp” unaccompanied and according to a musical notation system of geometric shapes representing the notes — hence the name “shape-note singing.” (It is also known as “fasola singing,” as the notes also designate the musical syllables “fa,” “so,” “la” and so on.)

The term “sacred harp,” Eriksen notes, relates to the human voice “because it’s all unaccompanied singing,” as well as biblical references to the harp of David. “So many songbooks in the 19th century had the word ‘harp’ or ‘harp’ attached — ‘The Harp of David,’ ‘The Lyre of Zion’ — that they became known as ‘harp’ or ‘old harp’ books and synonymous with repositories of old songs.

Besides the remarkable sound of the harmonies, melodies and wonderful texts, what makes sacred harp special, Eriksen says, are the people and traditions encircling the style.

“There are all these lifelong singers, and it’s social singing, where anyone can participate — not just trained singers,” Eriksen says. “And then there’s the food: If you go to a sacred harp singing, you’re not going to leave hungry.”

But Eriksen notes that sacred harp is not solely old music. “In every edition of ‘The Sacred Harp’ are new and newly arranged songs by living composers right alongside songs that would have been familiar to George Washington,” he says.

“But most of the songs in the book are too old to have copyrights attached,” he says, “so it’s common practice for sacred harp singers who make recordings to give a $1 donation per CD sold to the [book’s] Sacred Harp Publishing Co.”

“Everything in the sacred harp community,” Eriksen continues, revolves around such “good will and reciprocity. It’s so remarkable in that regard, sort of like the old punk rock days, when people made music because they wanted to and if there was any money that came out of it, they tried to figure out an equitable way to distribute it.”

Eriksen, who teaches music to college students in Minneapolis when not making his own acoustic recordings (his new album, “Every Sound Below”), has adapted his career in music in punk bands in western Massachusetts and Long Island, N.Y.

“My interest in sacred harp began with my first exposure through Library of Congress recordings when I was a teenager,” Eriksen says, singing out “I just went off to college, I began singing with friends just for fun. I found a copy of ‘The Sacred Harp’ at the library and eventually realized it was a living tradition.”

“The tradition continues next month or shortly thereafter, when DMZ releases the tentatively titled ‘Return Again — Sacred Harp Singing From the Cold Mountain Session,’” comprising more of the 45 sacred harp songs cut at the session for the film.

“From the publishing side,” Eriksen says, “we’ll direct some of the proceeds to nonprofit organizations that promote sacred harp singing—since there are no performing groups.”

Cherry Lane/NASCAR Move Into Pole Position

Dale Earnhardt Jr. may have won the race, but Cherry Lane Music Publishing also came in first last month’s 46th annual Daytona 500—the NASCAR Nextel Cup’s season kickoff and premiere event.

At Daytona, Motor Music — the partnership formed last year (Billboard, June 14, 2003) between Cherry Lane and NASCAR to develop original music and sound recordings that communicate and identify the sound of NASCAR — debuted its centerpiece, “Thunder.”

NASCAR’s theme song. The song was composed by David Robidoux and mixed by Alan Meyer and marks the first time in NASCAR’s 56-year history that it will have branded theme music.

Additionally, Motor Music has developed an initial 15-CD library of instrumental and orchestral cues covering a wide variety of genres. These are also intended for domestic and international broadcast, including TV, radio, online and new-media channels of delivery, as well as commercial recordings. They are the first components of a growing body of NASCAR music created to enhance the brand beyond sports programming.

Besides NASCAR broadcasts, the “Thunder” theme will now be heard as a Nextel ring tone, within the 2004 NASCAR In Car interac
dive digital-cable sports programming package and during “NASCAR 3-D: The IMAX Experience,” a 3-D film opening nationwide March 12.

Robidoux has won several Emmy Awards for outstanding achievement in music composition/direction for sports specials, including “75 Seasons: The Story of the National Football League.” He also composed the thematic branding music for the NFL Network and its signature shows, “NFL Total Access” and “NFL Films Presents.” Meyer is a veteran music producer and scoring mixer whose recent film work includes “The Last Samurai” and “Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl.”

“Dave Robidoux’s magnificent theme is a powerful, emotional composition and will undoubtedly bring a heightened level of recognition to the NASCAR brand,” Cherry Lane president Aida Gurwicz says.

“On-screen this week via NASCAR TV of broadcasting and new media Dick Glover says, ‘The creation of theme music is just the first of many music services NASCAR will begin to offer to our partners to help brand and market the sport.’

“Glover adds, ‘Motor Music will help us introduce NASCAR to a wider audience by offering recognizable sounds and appropriate music.’ Through Motor Music, NASCAR offers complete music production and publishing services to its business partners, including drivers, teams, tracks, licensees, broadcast and video production partners, international TV and entertainment projects and sponsors within the sport. Cherry Lane administers the compositions and master recordings worldwide.

TAX-ING SUBJECT: Rep. Ron Lewis, R-Ky., introduced a bill in the House Feb. 4 that would allow songwriters to claim capital gains when selling compilations of their work. The Nashville Songwriters Assn. Research director Gardner Naiman said that the issue of tax fairness to Capitol Hill.

Titled the Songwriters’ Capital Gains Equity Act (H.R. 3776), the pending bill reflects the current and ongoing relationship between songwriters and music publishers, wherein songwriters often share in the cost of promoting their music compositions.

The bill has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

MASSIVE SIGNING: BMG Music Publishing has signed Massive Attack frontman Robert Del Naja, aka 3D, to an exclusive worldwide publishing deal. The agreement, which covers all of his future works but not back catalog, brings the creative core of the English electronic group under the BMG publishing umbrella.

Neil Davidge, the act’s other main creative force, signed exclusively to BMG in 2002.
Opportunities For Strong Stomachs

While 'The Future Hasn't Arrived,' Observers Say Window Is Open For Investment

BY BRIAN GARRITY

NEW YORK—Despite steady declines in the recorded-music market during the past three years, finance professionals, lawyers and industry executives maintain that investment opportunities related to music abound—at least for those with strong stomachs.

Thanks in large part to the success Apple Computer and other companies are enjoying in selling tracks on the Internet, money managers are starting to rethink the concept of music as an investment category.

"It's a real tinderbox of capital, opportunity, properties and executive talent out there," says Greg Scholl, a partner with Dimensional Associates, a private media investment fund backed by JDS Capital Management. "The companies and investment groups that have an operating orientation and don't mind complexity are going to do very well."

Investment opportunities in the music industry will be among the many topics discussed when members of the music, financial and legal communities convene for the Billboard Music & Money Symposium May 4 at the St. Regis Hotel in New York.

Apocalyptic predictions of "the death of the music industry" have given way to expectations of a prolonged transition from CDs to commercial digital music, as the number of digital tracks sold through online services keeps growing.

"That's one of the reasons people look at the business more favorably," a media investment banker specializing in music transactions says. "The future hasn't arrived, but at least people now believe there is going to be a future.

As a result, the window appears to be open once again for music investments, according to more mainstream investors, fund managers and industry dealmakers.

John Frankenheimer, co-chairman of law firm Loeb & Loeb, notes that efforts by the likes of Apple are bolstering the inherent value of music.

"I think it's important to understand that the investment Apple has made in music services is an indicator of the value of the music industry in general," he says. "They're paying for the value that an association with music brings to their own product lines. You're going to see others doing the same thing, and you'll find more and more retail opportunities, more opportunity for tie-ins and other opportunities that are going to drive the value of music. The investment community is starting to pay attention to that."

Indeed, an unexpectedly bullish outlook for digital distribution is fueling private equity's growing interest in assets controlled by the major labels. That explains the investment community's primary focus for the near term.

But opportunities also exist in areas like publishing, distribution and independent labels, with some observers predicting that music is on the cusp of a new era of consolidation.

Some financial professionals say that while the music business is helping to legitimize digital distribution, it remains a complicated environment.

"There's no question that we're in a highly valuable market, but they're all messy," Scholl says. "They're messy because there are major structural changes that need to happen, or messy because of personnel issues or messy because the balance sheet is atrocious."

Scholl says many larger investors are willing to continue sitting on the sidelines for now as other companies sort through the market and operating problems faced by many mid-level companies in the music business.

He also notes that that is a short-term opportunity for ventures like Dimensional.

Dimensional has made a "high seven-figure" investment in the Orchard—an umbrella retail and Internet distribution company for some 2,500 indie labels, many of which are artist-run companies—as part of a larger independent music rollup that includes digital club network and digital music service eMusic.

"Some investment pros are calling for an increase in mainstream money coming into the middle market in the second half of the year, but that remains a question mark.

"I'm not saying the investors are back, but the market is back," says Brian Williams, head of music lending practice SunTrust Bank. "Investors in the music business will lag that a little bit."

Williams says that with the economy showing signs of life and Internet piracy appearing to come under greater control, he is bullish about the prospects for music in 2004.

However, not everyone shares Williams' optimism.

"Things are changing. But there is still substantial risk associated with music," a media banker says. "Some private equity houses still say, 'I'd rather set my hair on fire than invest in this industry.'"

Not surprisingly, some of the biggest and most high-profile music-related investments will continue to center on technology and consumer electronics companies that are pumping money into new digital distribution services—a trend foreshadowed at the Consumer Electronics Show in January.

In an interview with Billboard following CES, Amanda Marks, senior VP of Universal Music Group's e-label division, pointed out that moves by large technology and consumer electronics companies into digital distribution are helping legitimize commercial downloading.

Indeed, Apple's success in selling downloads and portable devices is breeding competition, and in turn additional investment, in digital music.

Real computer makers like Dell, Gateway and Hewlett-Packard are all developing and marketing end-to-end digital music solutions.

Sony Corp. later this year will unveil a big bet on digital music focusing on a new download service called Connect and an updated version (Continued on page 46)
Music Divestitures Are Still Worth Money

Big Media’s Castoffs Could Be Lucrative Gains For Private Investors

BY BRIAN CARRITY

Has Big Media lost its ear for the music business? Are private investment partnerships now calling the tune?

For perspective on where investment strategies in music are headed, look to the recent moves of Edgar Bronfman Jr., who, as announced late last year, has teamed up with buyout firm Thomas H. Lee and Partners in the $2.6 billion acquisition of Time Warner’s Warner Music Group.

As during the dotcom boom, Bronfman finds himself on the cutting edge.

Bronfman, who lost a chunk of his family’s Seagram fortune in its ill-fated stock swap with Vivendi Universal SA in 2000, was a poster child for the era’s Internet-fueled merger mania. He is marching in time with Wall Street.

But this time around he is not buying an entertainment behemoth—instead he is in the vanguard of unbundling one. As private-equity firms play a bigger role in media deals in the coming year, the latest trend is for would-be music entrepreneurs to hook up with a leveraged buyout (LBO) firm—a breed of private-investor group known in Wall Street parlance as a “financial sponsor.” The sponsors will be formidable competition for so-called strategic buyers, those companies with existing assets that promise synergy with a new acquisition.

As 2004 begins, entertainment conglomerates—still reeling from the mergers-and-acquisitions spree they went on in the late 90s—are being forced to consider jettisoning some of the under-performing assets under their control, to decrease debt and increase profits.

In many cases, that means spinning off related acorns. Struggling record divisions, whose profits have been crippled by Internet piracy during the past three years, are one of the top targets for large diversified companies seeking greater cost savings and, in some cases, assets to shed.

“You’re going to see the large diversified entertainment companies continue to evaluate their portfolios to determine whether they are in businesses or have assets that they consider to be non-core, which could lead to some transforming blockbuster separation events,” says Stefan Selig, vice chairman of Bank of America Securities.

Stepping into the fray are entrepreneurial types like Bronfman and private-equity shops like Thomas H. Lee.

“In the current environment, with clubbing strategies [among groups of investors] and the right financing, financial sponsors can be very competitive in buying back assets,” says Paul Taubman, co-head of global M&A at Morgan Stanley.

Prior to nabbing the Warner music assets, Bronfman lost out on the other big media deal of last year: Vivendi Universal SA’s sale of its non-music entertainment assets. General Electric won that bid, but it created the template for Bronfman’s play for WMG.

The ability of the music industry to take on debt and generate strong and consistent cash flow are the critical factors in attracting the attention of the leveraged buyout, media investment bankers say.

“For that reason, I think you are going to see them as active participants specifically in some of these industries like music and publishing,” one Wall Street source says.

NEW APPROACH

In the past, media conglomerates typically looked at their music holdings—much like their film, print publishing and TV assets—as stand-alone units rather than as tightly integrated pieces. But the enduring hangover from the dotcom bubble has forced a change in attitude, a reality evidenced by moves made by Time Warner and Vivendi Universal last year.

Assets on the selling block, by and large, are businesses like music that face changing business models and/or tough operating conditions, bankers note.

“At this point in the economic cycle, if you have a business you want to deploy, you want to deploy it in areas where you can see meaningful growth,” one U.K.-based media banker says. “Meaningful growth is in areas like cable and advertising, not in areas with problematic business models.”

Given that the music industry has seen declining sales and profits for three years, running as it has struggled to change its business model for the digital age, music holdings have become a particular source of headaches for media conglomerates.

The entertainment industry has responded to shrinking sales by restructuring, pursuing consolidation moves and exploring asset sales involving their music operations.

In addition to Time Warner’s sale of WMG last year, it sold its disc manufacturing business to Cinram for $1 billion. Elsewhere, DreamWorks SKG bailed out of the music business in November, selling DreamWorks Records to Universal Music Group for $100 million.

Sony and Bertelsmann AG are currently in the midst of seeking approval of U.S. and European antitrust regulators for a proposed merger of their music operations—a 50-50 joint venture to be known as Sony BMG.

However, few of the moves that have transpired in the past 12 months represent an endgame for Big Media’s music strategies.

Questions continue to swirl around the future of EMI Group, the publicly held British music company. Since 2000, EMI, a pure-play music asset without divisions in other areas of entertainment, has twice unsuccessfully tried to merge with Warner Music and once made a failed run to the altar with Bertelsmann’s BMG.

Following EMI’s most recent failed bid to combine with Warner Music—it lost out to the Bronfman group in the bidding war largely because of regulatory concerns—there was talk of a private-equity-backed consortium taking a run at buying EMI. Others in the industry contend that a Bronfman/Thomas H. Lee-led WMG will still make a play for the company. Meanwhile, analysts and record executives also question Vivendi’s long-term future as the owner of the world’s largest record company.

Sources suggest that even though Vivendi Universal opted to hang on to its music business for now while selling its non-music entertainment assets, it may look to ultimately unload Universal Music Group as well, when the recording industry rebounds.

WHO NEEDS MUSIC?

Bankers and analysts say that media conglomerates have come to the conclusion that music is not critical to their overall portfolio strategy.

“It restrains value,” says Harold Vogel, a noted media industry analyst and founder of investment firm Vogel Capital Management. “Media companies don’t like music and they haven’t liked it for a while.”

Capitalizing on the shifting landscape are financial sponsors like Thomas H. Lee, which made a $600 million commitment to the Warner Music Group acquisition.

Private equity’s interest in the music business, and media as a whole, comes at a time when pressure is mounting on the leveraged-buyout industry.

Record Companies Must Embrace Changing Digital Era

BY SAMANTHA CHANG

Charles Darwin would be proud: Today’s harsh music climate is certainly putting his survival-of-the-fittest theory to the test.

In this do-or-die atmosphere, artists are increasingly being forced to pursue new avenues of income that go beyond recording deals, as the traditional business model for artists/label deals evolves.

Observers predict that this will result in music companies signing fewer recording and publishing deals, lowering sales expectations and reducing staff as part of across-the-board cost-cutting.

At the same time, artists will see more cross-marketing with other entertainment or consumer goods companies, an increased focus on TV and a greater dependence on live-performance income.

Clearly, the Internet has become the catalyst for major changes ahead.

“The creation of new income streams, such as the Webcasting royalty, can increase an artist’s chances of success, even though he or she may not be signed to a major record label,” says Dina LaPolt of LaPolt Law in Los Angeles, whose clients include the Outlaws, the BellRays and Tribe 8.

Performers must continue to fight for artists’ rights, given the decreasing role of the major record companies in artist development, says LaPolt, who is a member of the attorney-manager advisory board of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

Indeed, observers believe that the Internet is sounding the death knell for the traditional artist/label model.

On the Web, music can be recorded and distributed far more cheaply, so the intermediary role once played by record companies may eventually no longer be necessary.

Record companies are “irrefutably dying. The likelihood of their industry is unsustainable,” says Eben Moglen, a law professor at Columbia University in New York.

Other critics, however, are not so quick to predict the demise of the record industry. They note that the current uncertainty largely results from the attempts of major music companies to control start-up business models for digital music distribution, at the expense of artists and consumers. Those attempts have resulted in a disparate and daunting mix of digital music business models.

But if record companies and artists expect to survive the next generation of the music business model, the music industry’s demise may turn out to be no more than a greatly exaggerated rumor.

CRoss-MARKETING BOOM

If necessity is the mother of invention, then the Internet has quickly become a mother of music marketing.

For example, artists increasingly are promoting their music on film and TV soundtracks as a means to develop their careers, says Richard Rosenport of Adorno & Yoss in Miami.

Another hot trend is the use of master recordings for mobile-phone ring tones, says Michael Elkin, a partner with Thelen Reid & Priest in New York.

“Each time a digital delivery occurs, say, for a Rolling Stones song, there’s income to be split between the label and its artist,” says Elkin, who has successfully litigated actions on behalf of artists against mp3.com, Napster and musicmaker.com.

(Continued on page 46)

labels need to alter their business models if they want to survive
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Divestitures
Continued from page 42

firms to put their money to work.

"You're seeing more sponsor participation in large auctions than you have in a very, very long time," Selig says.

The reason? Private equity shops are facing use-it-or-lose-it scenarios with the money.

"Sponsors have raised so much money that they have to put to work before these funds expire, and they have to return the capital to limited partners," a banking source says.

"That in itself is causing sponsors to be more acutely aggressive than they have been in the past."

Current economic conditions and lowering rate-of-return demands also are contributing to the interest among financial sponsors to music deals.

Bankers note that the debt markets are as attractive as anyone has seen them, thanks to low interest rates.

That makes financial sponsors more competitive than ever with strategic buyers who promise potential synergy with their new acquisitions. That scenario plays out when Bronfman and his partners outbid EMI despite that company's existing music holdings.

That is not to say that strategic buyers are out of the picture in buying music assets or other media properties.

However, in highly consolidated businesses like media, the number of potential buyers for an asset is increasingly limited.

What's more, in areas like music, consolidation among like players is tough, because they become subject to more stringent antitrust scrutiny. Such would be the case with EMI in its bid for Warner Music.

NOT SIMPLY SYNERGY

At the same time, there is less inclination by third parties to chase media assets in the name of the buzz word "convergence," a motivating factor that has fueled much of the coupling of content and distribution companies in recent years.

Talk last year of Apple Computer making a run at Universal Music Group, a clear convergence-merger attempt, was quickly scuttled after the stock market drove down Apple's stock by 8% when word leaked about the talks.

As a result of the constraints facing big media mergers, private-equity plays for media assets are more likely. LBO firms are also helped by the fact that their rate of return requirements have come down in light of a struggling equities market. While five years ago LBO investors needed to offer investors as much as 30% annualized rates of return on investments, now those rates are often in the high teens or the 20% range, sources say.

The plays also represent a move by the smart money to get ahead of the market. "If you believe we're embarking on an improving economy and a bit of an economic turn-around, there's a perception that you can pay a little bit more now to take advantage of improved financial performance and potential stock-price appreciation going forward," a source says.

This is particularly so in areas like music. "There's the perception that these are attractive cyclical plays. As the economy turns and spending resumes, this is a good time for sponsors to be making investments broadly in these sectors," the source adds.

GOOD YEAR FOR M&A

Given the confluence of factors favoring deal making, expectations are high for media mergers and acquisitions in the coming year.

Selig says, "As we see the world, the media and entertainment business should be one of the more active sectors in 2004 for merger activity."

Stock valuations have improved, balance sheets have been cleaned up and issues facing content companies like digital piracy have come under greater control.

Per-share prices in Time Warner were up 37% year over year, closing 2003 at $17.99.

Vivendi Universal shares experienced a similar bump, closing 2003 up 51% at $24.28. Radio and touring giant Clear Channel Communications stock closed the year up 31% at $46.83 and Viacom shares ended 2003 up 9% at $44.38.

"Media companies are in a better position at the start of 2004 than they were at the start of 2003," Taubman says.

However, any LBO firm buying an entertainment asset will still examine asset prices relative to the potential for increased cash flow, through cost savings and value generated by content libraries. Certainly those issues are important in any play for such a company as Universal Music Group, which investment bankers say offers attractive cost-cutting opportunities.

But a Universal deal carries an assumed price tag—somewhere in the range of $5 billion—the market may not be willing to pay at this point.

In addition to straight asset sales, companies will increasingly look to strategic joint-venture opportunities as a way to weather struggling markets, a la the combination of recorded-music businesses by Sony and Bertelsmann.

But whether driven by strategic buyers of financial sponsors, the sell-off of media assets is already under way in 2004, and more deals are coming.

Time Warner sold its Time-Life direct-marketing division for an undisclosed sum to an investor group fronted by former BMG chief executive Strauss Zelnick.

Greg Scholl, a partner with Dimensional Associates, a private media investment fund backed by JDS Capital Management, says a recurring theme is that big media is playing defense, not offense.

"That's the thread that weaves all this together—everyone is looking to take costs out of their business," he adds.

Therein lies the new opportunity for entrepreneurs like Bronfman and aggressive investors like LBO firms, willing to gamble on under-performing businesses and other assets now considered "non-core" by their owners. In 2004, big media's cashflow could be private investment's gain.
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Digital Era

Continued from page 42

The Internet can also spawn revenue from pay-per-view concert cybercasts, which artists and labels then divvy up.

"This will generate digital performance money to be paid to copy-right owners, and artists will lobby heavily for a greater share of this income," Elkin says.

Another consequence of the changing business model and the rise of the Internet is that A&R may become a devalued part of the major-label system, says Christian L. Castle, a senior counsel with Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld in Los Angeles.

"Signings will be more about artists with proven track records on indie labels than picking talent in a producer-driven world of artists who may actually be on their third or fourth album by the time they release an album on a major," Castle says.

"Hence, the artists don't need anyone other than maybe a producer to help them," says Castle, a former senior VP of business affairs at Sony who advises Bob Dylan, DreamWorks Records and DreamWorks Music Publishing.

Interestingly, despite millions of dollars that major music companies invested in controlling digital music distribution in its earliest days, the first successful digital distribution models came from such entities outside the industry as Liquid Audio (1996), the Rio mp3 player (1998), and, more recently, Apple's iTunes and iPod projects (2003).

The lesson from the Apple model is that digital distribution demands that major labels embrace radical and fundamental change by integrating digital technology and distribution into recording, marketing and promotion—virtually every aspect of their business, observers say.

Unlike many other industries that successfully have embraced the Internet, the music industry was dealt a particularly bad hand on the regulatory front. But Congress can fix this, should it decide to step in.

"Our government's utter failure to vigorously enforce the nation's copyright laws has allowed an unprecedented level of piracy, which, in turn, has created a near pathological fear in the industry of any digital business model," Castle says.

The result, observers say, has been commercial paralysis and denial at the strategy-making levels.

"Imagine if the U.S. Customs Service told General Motors that they were free to sue illegal importers but that the government wouldn't help," Castle says.

The good news for the industry is that within its ranks are many creative people. Corporate policy and long-standing business practices have restrained their creativity in dealing with the digital music challenge. But that creative power must be unleashed and quickly, by allowing innovative business models, observers say.

The imperative is apparently starting to sink in at the senior levels. Castle recalls, "One major-label executive told me recently after Steve Jobs' presentation at the iTunes Windows launch: 'Anyone who gets in the way of this should be fired.'"

Indeed, by one estimate, if only the recapture of a modest 10% of the illegal file-sharing market were converted to legal paid downloads, the result would be substantial growth in music company revenue.

The technology and systems exist to accomplish this goal, which may be enough to reverse the fortunes of the industry.

But executives say that growth will only happen if copyright laws are enforced, if the entrepreneurial passion of employees is allowed to flourish, if artists are truly treated as business partners and if music buyers are respected and included in the process.

In short, the future of the music business will be strong if change is not only embraced, but demanded.

Strong Stomachs

Continued from page 41

of the MiniDisc that can carry more than 45 hours of music per $7 disc.

The move builds on mounting competition in the digital music space.

Roxio, a leading consolidator of digital music assets last year, is in the midst of an expensive effort to revive the Napster brand.

And RealNetworks shifted its bet on digital music last year when it acquired the assets of listen.com—operator of the Rhapsody subscription service—and distanced itself from MusicNet, a digital music startup venture it spearheaded on behalf of a number of major labels.

Opportunities also are growing in the mobile-phone business, as the likes of Sprint and AT&T use music and the burgeoning ring-tones business as a major selling point of their wireless content platforms.

"We view this as a lot like what television went through with the advent of cable," Scholl says. "One of the things the Internet is going to do is create a lot more outlets for music. As a lot of music becomes bundled and packaged, and as the cost to try things goes way down, consumption patterns will change."
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Licensor’s ‘Animated’ Over DVD Opportunities

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

NEW YORK—More studios are focusing on refreshed licensing and marketing efforts for DVD, as evidenced at the 101st annual Toy Fair Feb. 15-17 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center here.

That’s good news for licensing companies.

“My juice kicks in when it’s on video,” says Bob Solomon, president/CEO of Applause, a leading licensor of plush and novelties for upcoming Disney and Universal animated films.

Equally bullish on the importance of licensed merchandise to support home video and big-screen releases is Russ Brown, Marvel Enterprises consumer products executive VP. The company’s joint licensing and merchandising venture with Sony Consumer Products for “Spider-Man” saw virtually all SKUs sales spike substantially through the then-released DVD release.

“There’s equal anticipation for ‘Spider-Man’ 2 this July,” he notes, “with specific action items held for the expected holiday Columbia Star DVD release.”

At the Toy Biz/Marvel exhibit, marketing director Patricia Rinaldi previewed a Spider-Man Crawl-Along action figure and “Doc Ock’s Hand.”

Brown says that licensed games play a major role in Marvel’s growth plan with Ames Kirshen recently named game development manager as head of a new in-house group.

More than 6 million Marvel-based games have been sold in the past two years, according to the company.

At New Line, holiday sleeper hit

“The Lion King” has a double pump with a theatrical DVD release in August and a special-edition DVD for the holidays that will include nine minutes of deleted scenes. To complement the latter, Toy Biz has a special series of action figures and play sets.

For Warner Bros., the third Harry Potter installment, “Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire,” arrives in theaters this June and on DVD for the holidays.

New console games are due from Electronic Arts in addition to products from Ami, Lego, Fusion Toys and Rubies Costumes.

“Scooby-Doo 2: Monsters Unleashed!” is getting strong support from the March 26 movie debut through the expected fall DVD release, ranging from a Mattel Barbie doll as the Daphne character to a “Scooby-Doo Monopoly” from USopoly.

Disney Consumer Products (DCP) is also having success with its tie ines with Buena Vista Home Entertainment, says DCP studio development marketing director Dion Vlachos.

A recent example are Talking Pumbaa and Talking Simba pluhes from Hasbro, which were available for last October’s DVD special-edition release of “The Lion King” but are getting a real bounce with the February direct-to-video debut of “The Lion King 1 1/2.” At Toy Fair, Disney/Pixar’s “The Incredibles,” due in November, received a big push with a long list of toy and game licenses showing new lines for the late-spring 2005 DVD.

At Fox, the big-budget “Alien vs. Predator,” due in August, will have pre-release support from McFarlane Toys. Vivendi Universal (VU) Games has a new “Predator” multi-platform videogame in the works for the holiday DVD release.

A big licensing program will support Fox’s CGI project “Robots,” due in theaters March 2005. Burger King and Kelloggs are among promotional partners. VU Games has cross-platform videogames in development, including one of the likely launch titles for Sony’s new PSP portable game system.

RENEWED CAMPAIGN

The Hasbro-owned property G.I. Joe will be marketed anew for the direct-to-video “G.I. Joe: Valor vs. Venom,” overseen by DreamWorks Pictures Consumer Products Group (PVG), with spinoffs for DreamWorks TV. The Akimbo players, which are expected to cost $199, will soon be available through akimbo.com and through the Web sites of each

321 Studios’ Software Ordered Off The Market

Software company 321 Studios was ordered to stop manufacturing and distributing its “DVD X Copy” products Feb. 9, but the company will be appealing the decision.

The ruling was made by Judge Susan Illston of the U.S. District Court of San Francisco. 321 Studio’s software allows users to copy or copy-protect videos. 321 said in court that when the company was sued that its software does not violate the DMCA.

The movie studios responded with a counterclaim for litigation in December 2002. During the past two months, both the DVD Copy Control Assn., (DVD CCA) and Macrovision (Billboard, Jan. 24) have filed lawsuits.

Robert Moore, founder and president of 321 Studios, plans on taking its case as far as the Supreme Court if “that’s what it takes to win,” according to a statement. Moore also stated, “There is no difference between making a copy of a music CD for personal use and making a backup of a DVD movie for personal use.”

AKIMBO LAUNCH: A new video-on-demand (VOD) service is bringing content from the Internet right to consumers’ TVs.

The Akimbo players, which officially launches in the second quarter, enables users to download up to 200 hours of video content from different Internet VOD services through a set-top box connected to the TV.

“We’ve combined the model of a PVR [personal video recorder] that stores information on a hard disc with the concept of a set-top box with Internet delivery,” says Josh Goldman, CEO of Akimbo.

“Anything that’s worth watching is worth watching the content on your PC.”

Akimbo has deals with such film-oriented Internet VOD services as CinemaNow and ifilm and is also working with a range of other Internet content providers as Endorphin, which offers extreme-sports programming, and Studio 4 Networks, which has educational and fitness content. Goldman says that Akimbo will ultimately offer a variety of special-interest content revolving around film, hobbies, music, health, education and foreign-language programming. Numerous content deals are in the works.

The Akimbo players, which are expected to cost $199, will soon be available through akimbo.com and through the Web sites of each content provider that has a deal with the company. Akimbo is in discussions with several brick-and-mortar retailers.

Akimbo users must also pay a $9.99 monthly subscription fee. In the future, some content may only be available by paying a separate monthly fee. These prices will be determined by each content deal.

Goldman says a lifetime subscription fee may also be an option.

CLASSIC GARLAND: Warner Home Video is releasing five titles featuring one of Hollywood’s most beloved stars, Judy Garland, April 6.

The key title is “Meet Me in St. Louis,” which is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. WHV is releasing “St. Louis” as a two-disc special-edition DVD ($26.99) that will contain such numerous extras as an introduction by daughter Liza Minnelli, a documentary about the movie and a “Singin’ in the Rain” and “The Adventures of Robin Hood.”

WHV senior VP of classic catalog George Feltzenberg also says that the sound on this DVD is notable.

“MGM had a very progressive way of recording its music using multiple microphones, [with] separate on one the chorus, the orchestra and the lead vocalist,” Feltzenberg says. “These separate pieces survived, and we have taken them to create a new 5.1 soundtrack. When you hear ‘The Trolley Song,’ you hear the orchestra in the back and Judy in the center.”

The Garland films “For Me and My Gal,” “In the Good Old Summertime” and “Ziegfeld Girl” will also be available for $19.98.
### Billboard Top DVD Sales

**Week Ending March 6, 2004**

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<td><strong>AMERICAN WEDDING</strong></td>
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### Billboard Top VHS Sales

**Week Ending March 6, 2004**

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**Note:** Prices and availability are subject to change. For more information, visit Billboard or Nielsen VideoScan.
Executive Turntable

People on the Move

Record Companies: Virgin Records in New York names Lenny Santiago senior director of A&R. He was an A&R rep at Roc-a-Fella Records.

Liquid 8 Records in Minnetonka, Minn., names Mark Heyert VP of sales. He was VP of Fuel 2000 Entertainment.

Thump Records in Pomona, Calif., appoints Jay King director of classic R&B. He was a founder of R&B group Club Nouveau.

Artemis Records in New York names David Coke director of finance and administration. He was CFO at Tommy Boy Records.

Radio: Oldies WCBS-FM New York names Chad Brown VP/GM. He adds those duties to his role as Infinity Broadcasting director of sales, New York.

Music Video: Fuse in New York appoints Robert Weiss head of programming. He was head of East Coast development at VH1.

Music Magazines: Global Rhythm in New York names Tom Pryor managing editor. He was senior editor at CDnow.

The Fader in New York appoints Derick Procope fashion director. He was fashion director at Details magazine.

Also at The Fader, Eric Ducker is promoted to West Coast editor, based in Los Angeles. He was senior editor.

Marketing Services: Almighty Institute of Music Retail in Los Angeles appoints Craig Rosen VP. He was managing editor of news at Launch and Launch Radio Networks.

Jazzed For Ecko

Fashion designer Marc Ecko, left, hangs out with Vibe magazine editorial director Emil Wilbekin during a Feb. 10 showcase of the new jazz-inspired Marc Ecko Collection for fall 2004. Those who attended the event at Ecko's New York showroom were treated to a live performance by jazz quartet Cliff Lee + 3.

Movie ‘Dates’

Several music celebrities attended the Feb. 3 premiere of Columbia Pictures’ romantic comedy “50 First Dates” at the Mann Village Theatre in Los Angeles. At left, from left, are Sugar Ray lead singer Mark McGrath, Creed lead singer Scott Stapp and Black Eyed Peas members Will.I.Am and Fergie. Also at the premiere was No Doubt bassist Tony Kanal, at right, who produced three songs on Maverick Records’ “50 First Dates” soundtrack. (Photos: Eric Charbonneau/ Berliner Studio/DImages)

Streisand Scores

Barbra Streisand recently attended the unveiling of a newly renovated, state-of-the-art facility named the Barbra Streisand Scoring Stage at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, Calif. The stage was named in honor of the Sony Music Entertainment/Columbia Records recording artist for her outstanding contributions to music and film. At the event, from left, are Columbia Records Group president Will Botwin, Sony Corp. of America chairman/CEO and Sony Corp. vice chairman Howard Stringer, Streisand, Sony Music Entertainment chairman/CEO Andrew Lack and Columbia Records U.S. president Don Jenner.

Now, Hear This ... Rooney

Artists to Watch

Power-pop rock bands are currently rare on The Billboard 200, but Los Angeles-based group Rooney is trying hard to rectify that with its self-titled debut album on Geffen/Interscope Records. The label has mounted an intense artist-development campaign for “Rooney” since the album’s release last May. Most of the campaign’s focus so far has been worked through retail, with “Rooney” being included in many retail chains’ new-artist programs and featuring developing-artist pricing. With lead singer/guitarist Robert Carmine writing the band’s songs, Rooney’s lineup is rounded out by guitarist Taylor Locke, bassist Matthew Winter, drummer Ned Brower and keyboardist Louie Stephens. Sales for “Rooney” have been fueled by video airplay of first single “Blueside” on MTV. But what really helped build momentum for Rooney was the band’s guest appearance on Fox’s popular drama “O.C.” in an episode that aired Jan. 7. The album has soared from the lower half of the Billboard Heatseekers chart into the top 10. With those numbers, Geffen/Interscope apparently thinks the time is right to work current single “I’m Shakin’” to top 40 radio. The song received early airplay on top 40 KLOS-FM Los Angeles and music-video networks MTV and Fuse. On March 5, the band appears on ABC’s “Jimmy Kimmel Live.” Rooney may very well attain the ambitious goal it sets for itself in the opening of its official bio: wanting to see good rock music become mainstream again.

ED CHRISTMAN
Universal's Trema Purchase Affords Label 'Possibilities'

BY JAMES MARTIN

PARIS—Universal Music France has acquired Trema, a leading French independent label. Trema was founded in 1969 by the label's president, Regis Talar, who discovered French singer Michel Sardou and songwriter Jacques Revaux.

The label's artist roster includes "chan-son française" stalwarts Michel Sardou, Michel Delpech and Enrico Macias, plus up-and-coming young rock group Domyosos.

Talar says the deal was "Trema's only solution for survival." He adds that it "allows us to conserve our status as an artists' company, as opposed to a standard record company."

Universal Music France chairman/CEO Pascal Nègre declines to comment on the deal.

Universal is the market leader in France, with a 33.6% share in 2003, according to labels body SNEP. Trema claims its share of 1.5%.

Sony Music France previously owned 49% of Trema and had the first rights to acquire it outright. But Sony recently sold its shares to Talar, Sardou and French concert promoter Camus & Camus, paving the way for Universal to purchase Trema for an undisclosed sum. Sales and distribution switch from Sony to Universal effective March 1.

At the time of the Universal purchase, Revaux no longer held shares in the company. He has retired from the music business. He wrote the music for the standard "My Way" in its original French form, as "Comme d'Habitude."

Sardou has now re-signed with Trema, with which he has been since 1969. He will release his next four albums on the label.

With the acquisition, Universal cements its position as the dominant force in local repertoire here. In recent years, Universal has acquired several other French labels. Some, such as Musidisc, have been fully integrated into the major's French operation. Others, such as Atmosphériques, have remained largely stand-alone structures.

DIVIDING THE DUTIES

Tarma will continue to operate as an autonomous imprint with its own A&R functions. But marketing and promotion will be shifted to other Universal labels according to genre.

Tarma's chanson française and rock acts will be handled by Universal imprint Barclay; its more pop-orientated projects will be released through AZ. The latter is home to artists emerging from France's "Popstars" TV talent show.

Talar says it would be "overly idealistic" to expect Trema to have full autonomy under Universal's wing. However, he says, "I made a

(Continued on page 55)

Spain's Estopas Back On The Production Line

BY HOWELL LEWELLYN

MADRID—Five years after releasing a "rumba-rock" debut album that moved 1 million units, sibling duo Estopas are again reviving the local music industry's engine.


Released shortly after the pair quit their jobs at a car-components factory where they sang to colleagues on the shop floor, the album picked up an International Federation of the Phonographic Industry Platinum Europe award for shipping more than 1 million units in Europe.

The brothers are ending an 18-month sabbatical with the March 3 release in Spain and Mexico of their third album, "La Calle Es Tuya." (BMG Ariola). Releases in the United States, Argentina and Chile will follow through March and April. Wider European releases will depend on performance in the Latin territories.

"This is our most controlled record so far," David Munoz says. "We wanted to produce our own album, so we built a studio at home. This new album and tour freaks us out as much as it did at the beginning—we've just spent 18 months getting unfreaked."

SALES ARE DOING WELL

Global shipments of "Estopas" have passed 1.2 million units, according to the label. The duo's second album, "Destrangis," has shipped 800,000 units to date. Some 236,000 units of the albums' combined shipments came from overseas—notably Mexico; the

(Continued on page 54)

Japan Import-Ban Target Set

BY STEVE MCCULLEY

TOKYO—Jan. 1, 2005, could see the introduction of legislation that would ban the import into Japan of domestic repertoire licensed to overseas labels.

In a move aimed at publicizing its ongoing import-right campaign, labels body the Recording Industry Assoc. of Japan (RIAJ) recently set that day as a target date for bringing in a new law giving labels the right to block imports of Japanese repertoire from abroad.

Now, sources suggest that the government's Cultural Affairs Agency plans to introduce legislation allowing labels to ban such imports for a period of five years from "release.

There are reports in the Japanese press that the legislation would take effect from the labels' preferred Jan. 1, 2005, starting date.

Despite requests, the agency had not confirmed the accuracy of those reports at press time. Any move to bring in such legislation would be resisted by many retail

(Continued on page 54)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JAPAN</th>
<th>UNITED KINGDOM</th>
<th>FRANCE</th>
<th>GERMANY</th>
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<td>Somewhere Only We Know</td>
<td>I'm Runnin Through The Jungle</td>
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<td>Milkshake</td>
<td>Superstar</td>
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<td>Hey Ya!</td>
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**Hits of the World is compiled at Billboard/London.**

NEW = New Entry  RE = Re-Entry
The self-titled debut album from four-piece band Franz Ferdinand charted the U.K. chart Feb. 15 at No. 3, following the hit single "Take Me Out." Signed to independent label Domino, the sharply dressed quartet has been generating a lot of hype with its energetic, disco-fueled guitar pop. Hailing from Edinburgh, Scotland, where the group created a stir by hosting activist events in a warehouse dubbed "the Chateau," Franz Ferdinand traveled to Malmo, Sweden, last August to record its debut album with Cardigans producer Per Magnusson. Domino released the album March 23 in the United States, and Franz Ferdinand commenced a North American tour Feb. 26. It will return in May for further dates.

CHRISTOPHER BARRETT

BELLES LETTRES: "Qui De Nous Deux" ("Delabel/EMI") is the third set from an artist known simply as M, also accomplished young French singer/songwriter Matthieu Chedid. The album confirms the talent's ability as a creator of catchy pop-rock songs, characterized by beguiling melodies and cleverly crafted lyrics that shine through on such tracks as the reggae-tinged single, "A Tes Souhaits." "Qui De Nous Deux" entered the French charts at No. 1 in late 2003 and spent three weeks there. A forthcoming tour, which takes in France, Belgium and Switzerland from April through April, is already sold out. The album has sold 300,000 units in France.

JAMES MARTIN

WINE AND SONG: Southern Italian "indy rock" group Negramaro opened for the Rasmus during its recent Milan concert, prior to releasing its album "000577" (Sugar) Feb. 13. Lead singer Giuliano Sanfiori said: "The name comes from a wine produced in our native Salento region. It's bittersweet, like our music, while 000577 is the official code number for bottle it. As for our influences, they're a combination of British and American rock and the Italian singer/songwriter tradition." The Negramaro project marks a departure for the Sugar label, best-known for crossover phenomenon Andrea Bocelli and the English-singing Elisa. Sugar GM Riccardo Usuelli says, "The Italian live-rock scene is very vibrant, and the time is ripe for transforming this into record sales."

MARK WORDEN

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING: An impressive mini-set during the Danish market night at MIDEM should provide the impetus to rocket Kira & the Kindred Spirits to international success. Backed by a powerful blues-rock band, frontwoman Kira Skov showcased a "rockin' blues" band. The dark horse on a bill that included Danish breakthrough acts the Raveonettes, Kashmir & Mow, the band reported a "stamped" of interest following their performance. "We're working on a U.S. deal and have got offers for several showcases in L.A. and San Francisco," Skov reports. The time is definitely right: Danish Culture Minister Allan Mikkelson visited MIDEM and pledged funds to help musical exports, and Music Export Denmark recently formed to lend financial support for bands to play several showcases (see story, page 54). "Happiness Saves Lives," the group's domestic debut album, was released.
France — was formed by state-funded rock/pop music “incubator” the Danish Rock Council (ROSAS), state-run public broadcaster the Danish Broadcasting Corp. and venue-fonden, a nonprofit arm of the annual Roskilde Festival aimed at supporting music venues.

ROSAS provides financial support for up-and-coming acts. It also sponsors the annual Spot Festival in Aarhus, which expose new talent to international A&R and media representatives.

The acts performing at SXSW under the MED banner will include the Defectors (Bad Afro), Hush (unsigned), On Trial (3rd Tsunami) and Randi Laubek (EMI-Medley).

Also appearing will be three acts from Copenhagen indie label Crucian, including its most successful signing, Junior Senior.

INTERNATIONAL EXPORER

“We must bring the Danish music in the country at noon and the sneeze great interest and impact internationally,” says ROSA managing director Gunnar Madsen, who is coordinating activities under the MED umbrella.

After SXSW, MED plans to stage a series of concerts featuring developing Danish talent. They will take place in Brussels and Paris in May, Madsen says.

Following the Spot and Roskilde festivals in June, it will stage concerts at annual music industry trade fair Popcommm Sept. 29-Oct. 1 in Berlin. “Much of what we’ll subsequently do will be in countries close to Denmark,” Madsen says.

MED was created to coexist with the involvement of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry or its member companies.

IFIP Denmark chairman Michael Ritto confirms that “for now, we have no active role.” Ritto is skeptical of a music export body that was launched without consulting the IFIP’s members, who are the actual exporters of Denmark’s recorded music.

Madsen suggests that MED might be a misnomer, noting that the thrust of the new body is to “profile Danish music overseas.”

“We’ll be in a dialogue with the labels when we have common interests,” says Madsen. “We’ll try to combine a broader music export platform with their commercial interests.”

IFIP Denmark marketing director Jesper Bay conceives that MED could lead to cooperation between the “organizational and the entrepreneurial” aspects of the state and the music industry. “But Denmark is too small a country to have too many organizations,” he warns. “That can be risky.”

Oie Mortensen, head of local repertoire and international exploitation at EMI-Medley, also has his doubts. “We’re waiting to see what happens,” he says.

control the distribution as best we can. But a percentage of those (licensed recordings) have still managed to trickle back. If they show up in record stores as bargain ‘re-entry items,’ the prices we set in Japan will have no real relevance anymore.”

“Rather than focusing on stopping them overseas,” he adds, “we’re trying to stop distribution within Japan.”

Francesco “Paola” Estopa is not a huge-selling act in those [oversea Latin] countries, but they went down really well when they played there in [2002]. Their streetwise humor won them much respect.”

“La Calle Es Tuay” sticks to the act’s successful blend of Catalan rumba—a flamenco sub-genre, rock and a little hip-hop. It is lyrically flavored with the same realism that marked the first two sets. “We always play the same way, but that’s what people like,” says Jose Muñoz, the younger half of Estopa.

The duo’s approach is exemplified on the new album by the rock-styled “Pastillas de Freno.” The “pastillas” are the automobile brake blocks the brothers mounted every hour in their old jobs at Spanish Volkswagen affiliate Seat. It also refers to putting the brakes on the frenzied lifestyle that followed their initial success.

The third of the trio of new albums is a clear sign that 2004, Madrid-based BMG Ariola president Carlos Lopez says.

The other two key albums for the year are both slated for post-summer release; they are by Manolo Garcia and Joaquín Sabina.


The network is Spain’s most popular channel for the format, with a 2.7 million daily audience.

“Their new songs are as street-wise as ever,” Baró adds, “about the industrial suburb where they grew up, and now there is more rock than rumba. This is still very much Estopa and is going to be very popular.”
Japanese Label Buys Into Korea

BY STEVE MCCLURE

TOKYO—Leading Japanese independent label Avex and South Korean label/management company S.M. Entertainment are looking to move into other Asian markets.

Tokyo-based Avex has bought a 5.81% stake in Seoul-based S.M. Entertainment for 176 million yen ($1.7 million).

GREAT CHANGES

The deal came in the wake of the South Korean government’s Jan. 1 lifting of its last restrictions on sales of Japanese repertoire. Korea was a Japanese colony from 1910 until 1945; during that time Japan had systematically suppressed Korean language and culture.

Industry insiders say the Avex/S.M. deal is the first time a Japanese record company has invested in a South Korean label.

“It’s not that we want to invade the Korean market, but it’s nice that the Korean market is now open to our repertoire,” Avex head of international Haji Taniguchi says. S.M. and Avex “have similar interests,” Taniguchi adds, “which we believe we can pursue together.” He adds that the firms plan to work together in other Asian markets, such as China.

The companies have been doing business since 2000, when Avex and S.M. signed a reciprocal licensing deal. That was the first such deal between a Japanese and a South Korean label.

One of the fruits of that deal was the Japanese debut of South Korean female vocalist BoA, whom Avex has since developed into one of Japan’s biggest-selling artists.

The first Avex-licensed product S.M. issued in South Korea was the album “Love Enhanced Single Collection” by Japanese vocalist Namie Amuro. The set debuted Feb. 9. Several other albums licensed from Avex are due soon.

The Avex group published its third-quarter earnings figures Feb. 4; they met analyst expectations. Sales for the group’s core music company Avex Inc. (which includes the Avex Trax, Avex Tune and Cutting Edge labels) totaled 31.6 billion yen ($299.3 million) in the April-December period, up 2.8%.

Meanwhile, net profits rose 163.6% year over year to 1.3 billion yen ($12.5 million).

The company attributed the healthy results to cost-cutting efforts in its sales and administration operations.

France Bows CD/DVD Chart

NEW LIST TRACKS SALES OF CDs AND MUSIC DVDS

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

PARIS—French charts compiler IFOP/Tite Live is launching a new weekly sales chart on behalf of labels body SNEP that will incorporate sales of album CDs and music DVDs in France.

SNEP director general Hervé Rony says the new CD/DVD chart, which bows March 2, reflects the increasing importance of music DVD sales in France.

“Overall, what matters for us is to focus on the ‘long-play’ format, be it CD or DVD,” Rony explains.

DVD SALES SOMETIMES BEAT CD

Sales of all music titles that have been released either on CD or DVD—or in both formats—will be used to produce the new chart, which will have 250 positions.

IFOP/Tite Live says unit sales for the top-selling music DVD in France exceeded those of the top-selling CD during certain weeks of 2003.

The new listing will add to the current weekly sales charts based on over-the-counter sales that IFOP/Tite Liv compiles for SNEP.

IFOP/Tite Live already produces a top 150 albums chart, a top 75 singles listing, a top 40 compilations chart (including single artists’ ’best-of’ albums and multi-artist compilations) and a top 40 midprice chart. It also compiles a top 40 video music chart integrating music videos and videocassettes.

Although still embryonic as recently as 2000, in 2003, the music DVD market was worth 91 million euros ($114 million) at trade prices based on shipments of 7.2 million units, according to SNEP.

Music video (DVD and VHS) accounted for 3% of units shipped in the overall French music market in 2001, 4% in 2002 and 8% in 2003.

Rony says the introduction of a download chart is also being considered.

“Downloads are part of the new environment, and we are integrating this new factor,” Rony notes. “It will be up to SNEP members to decide how fast we will go and how we will do it.”

Trema

Continued from page 51

point of explaining to each of our artists that this deal is an association of Trema’s proximity with its artists and Universal’s commercial and promotional punch, rather than a transfer of Trema’s catalog to Universal.”

Although describing the Trema buy as “the end of an era,” independent labels body UFFI GM Jérôme Roger insists “it’s also a non-event for independents.”

Because of its previous close links with Sony, Trema’s sales had previously been included in the majors’ share in French market surveys, he says.

“I would not like this deal to be seen as the end of the independents,” Talar says. “It could give us even more possibilities than before. I will endeavor to work just as I have before, and I know Pascal [Nègre] will allow me to do so.”

Trema will not move out of its current premises in Paris, “at least until August,” Talar says.

Declined to comment on whether the Universal acquisition would result in layoffs among Trema’s full-time staff of 15.
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Rubio

Continued from page 5

With the new album, Rubio is targeting the Latin market, clearly acknowledging that her Latin fan base is what has carried her this far. Unlike most other Spanish-language albums by crossover acts, “Pau-Latina” doesn’t include any English-language tracks.

“Right now, I’m focused on this album and on this concert tour,” Rubio said, referring to the U.S. and Mexico tour she plans to launch this summer. “I am very committed to the project and very motivated.”

Henry says, “When you’re promoting a Spanish album, it’s very specific. I do think we’re getting more and more mainstream, but as mainstream as Paulina can get [with a Spanish-language album]. She’s just not interested in doing what everyone else does and to try and appeal to the electronic market.”

In addition to a steady stream of interviews, Rubio also did six in-stores in Miami, Los Angeles, San Diego, Houston, Dallas and Chicago this past week, at record stores like a retail chain and at an independent and “I think it was very important to bring her close to her market,” says Walter Kolm, senior VP of marketing and A&R for Universal Music Latino. “It’s important for her fan base to have Paulina reach out to them.”

OPENING THE DOOR

Rubio—a child star who once was a member of Mexican teen-bopper group Timbiriche—shed her erstwhile diva image with “Paulina.”

That album, in a departure for a pop recording, includes a regional Mexican track, “El Ultimo Adios.”

That one song opened the door for Rubio to get airplay at regional Mexican radio stations. This week, “Te Que Tanto” is No. 1 thanks in part to airplay on 17 regional Mexican stations, which are playing the original pop version and the new Spanish version of the track, mixed only for radio.

“Pau-Latina” also includes “Cali,” a song penned by new superstar Antonio Solís, whose arrangement is similar to the “techno-mariachi” feel of “El Ultimo Adios.” Another track, “Quiero Caminar,” features Banda El Recodo.

The names of Solís and El Recodo are certain to bring credibility with a regional Mexican audience.

“I was born in Mexico and raised in Spain, so my music has my mix of styles in perfect English. “It’s not something prefabricated.”

A second English-language album is already in the works for Rubio, and plans call for its release later this year. In all likelihood, Henry says, it will include some Spanglish, “because that’s who she is. This is a very commercial artist on a global level.”

In past years, Prince’s Miami Master List became the unofficial guide to the events and happenings surrounding the WMC. This year, the list has been rechristened the M3 Master List. So the WMC is introducing its own list, dubbed “the List,” which it calls the “unofficial” and definitive guide to all the events and parties taking place in, around and during WMC 2004.

It appears that M3 is injecting WMC with some new life,” Bernstein says. “It’s proving that competition is good and healthy. But with so much happening in the course of a week, you can’t help but wonder if some important events and seminars will get overlooked.”

SoundScan

Continued from page 10

may have the right; they now want ownership,” a retail source says.

Retail sources say label executives have also expressed concerns over such issues as control of data, increased servicing charges and a need for sales information more comparable to what U.S. sources receive.

Canadian music retailer says, “The issues the labels have raised, we have no issue with. The data we’re happy with; the service we’re happy with. But they’re trying to buy our venue. We are looking for a venue in New York, Ontario, Miami and Detroit. We’re looking to purchase a venue in New York and we’re interested in purchasing a venue in Ontario.”

Chi - Blend, a buyer at Sunrise Records, which has 32 stores in Ontario, adds, “We are getting different stories from both CRIA and SoundScan. We need to clear up a couple of things that need an informed decision to what we should do.”

Having compared notes with my counterparts at the Official U.K. Charts Co. and with London-based label executives who deal with charts there, I believe there is a distinct advantage to having charts compiled by an independent source,” says Geoff Mayfield, Billboard director of charts. “When a committee of labels and retailers attempts that endeavor, it can be difficult to reach a consensus on some issues. There is also a temptation to install filters that ultimately can make the charts less informative.”

QUALITY ISSUES

Introduced to Canada in 1997, Nielsen SoundScan has enabled Canadian-based labels to be more accurately informed about purchases of music throughout the retail sector. Nielsen SoundScan data is sold at Canadian retail by reading the plastic cards from electronic cash registers that read bar codes on records of reporting stores. Nielsen SoundScan data is sold to record companies, radio groups and other users.

Bernie Finkelstein, president of Toronto-based True North Records, says, “SoundScan has done mostly a fabulous job here. My one complaint is that it isn’t stores enough into its service.”

A major-label source says, “It’s a U.S. system that has been plugged into Canada. Some of us aren’t satisfied with the service.”

Sisco counters, “SoundScan in both the United States and Canada is an ever-evolving product, and it is constantly being improved. Relevant to the market, the service in Canada is appropriate.”

Robertson would not discuss if the proposed joint label-retail initiative would include retailers supplying data to create an aggregated SoundScan sales marketing information system.

Sisco says, “We have contracts—most of them long-term—with virtually every major Canadian retailer, and we intend to honor them. Sources note, however, that several Nielsen SoundScan contracts with retailers will end this year. Some retailers, like the A&R Canada, which has 22 stores in Western Canada, supplies sales data to Nielsen SoundScan on a noncontractual basis.

Lane Orr, VP of purchasing at A&R Sound says, “Right now, I am not saying SoundScan will be needed to continue to provide us for the data. However, SoundScan isn’t being paid by CRIA. So where does SoundScan get the money to pay me? When we’re not being paid by SoundScan, we won’t provide data. But I have nothing that indicates SoundScan is not going to pay us.”

Sisco insists, “We have clients both on the manufacturer and commitment to data suppliers on the retail side. This is our business throughout North America, and we intend to continue that business.”

WMC

Continued from page 6

publishing company Flavornip; Vickie Starr of independent marketing company Girle Action; and event producer Carolyn Clerksom.

The event’s stated mission is straightforward: to help the electronic music industry understand and adapt to new technologies and the rapidly changing demands of the business.

“This is an entirely different philosophy than that of the WMC,” says Maurice Bernstein, president and co-founder of record label and independent marketing firm Giant Step. “It seems more about technology and more forward-thinking.”

Each year, tens of thousands of people head to Miami for the WMC. Yet the majority of them do not register for the event; rather, they flock to the town for the hundreds of parties.

According to Astralworks GM Errol Kolosine, three tiers of people will come for the occasion: “Those fiercely entrenched in the music industry, those trying to break into the music industry and dance and electronic music enthusiasts,” he says. “The folks in the middle tier are the only ones that actually register. Everyone else hangs out at the pools by day and then parties all night long.”

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Massenburg Brings EQ To DAW Environment

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

NEW YORK—As a result of the seismic changes that the commercial audio recording business is experiencing, the Toy Specialists, a prominent New York equipment rental company, is shuttering.

The company's inventory, which included vintage and modern equipment, was sold off Feb. 26 at an all-day auction at Toy Specialists' 599 11th Ave. location and online through bidspotter.com.

The equipment rental market has declined in recent years because of shrinking recording budgets and the prominent role that digital audio workstations (DAWs) now play in professional recording, Toy Specialists founder Bill Tesar says.

In DAW recording, software-based plug-ins—used to apply processing such as reverberation, compression or equalization—often replace hardware-based equipment typically found in recording studios.

“We've seen this coming for years,” says Tesar, who founded Toy Specialists in 1983 after working as a studio owner, engineer and session musician. “Why beat your head against the wall? I've been in the industry in many capacities since 1970, and this business had a real good run for a long time.

“In the mid- to late 1990s, this was a screaming business,” Tesar continues. “It's a confluence of things, but most of the decline has to do with record company budgets. It's time to move on.”

Toy Specialists' auction inventory on bidspotter.com featured 985 items, including analog and digital tape recorders, outboard processing gear, microphones, monitors, keyboards and DAW equipment.

“There always was a limited market for [professional audio equipment rentals],” Tesar says. “What Toy Specialists primarily did was service recording studios. That was 80% or 90% of our business.”

The closing of a mainstay of New York's professional recording industry is a sign of the times, an indication of the evolution of audio production toward smaller, DAW-based environments. Nonetheless, Toy Specialists' closing is obviously a boon to remaining equipment rental companies, such as Dreamhire.

“They seemed to be winding down their operation over the last few years,” says Chris Dunn, who established Dreamhire in 1984 and acquired its assets from the Zomba Music Group in 2003 (Billboard, Dec. 13, 2003).

“But ultimately, it's good news for us, of course, because there's more business to go around between the remaining rental guys,” Dunn says.

Suspecting that BMG, which acquired Zomba in 2002, might shutter Dreamhire, Dunn acquired the company's assets.

In October 2003, Dunn closed Dreamhire's Nashville location and brought its inventory to New York to sell or add to its own local equipment supply. That followed Zomba's December 2001 closing of Dreamhire's London office because of a poor recording market.

To kick-start a new revenue stream, Dunn has established a sideline business that rents DAW equipment, which, he told Studio Monitor, has ably supplemented the recording business through slow periods.

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

The migration from hardware-based to software-based recording and processing is being felt throughout the recording industry (see story, this page).

The ever-increasing acceptance of digital audio workstation (DAW)-based recording is illustrated by many introductions in which a hardware-based device is reborn as a software plug-in.

One such product, which was recently announced at the Winter NAMM show in Anaheim, Calif., is the Massenburg DesignWorks (MDW) High-Resolution Parametric EQ for the Roland VS Series of DAWs.

Since he developed the parametric EQ in the early 1970s, renowned producer/engineer George Massenburg has been working to improve it. He has introduced many products to the pro audio marketplace through his CML and MDW companies.

The MDW High-Resolution Parametric EQ takes its equalization expertise into the DAW environment. MDW plug-in equalizers are available for Pro Tools HD and the Mackie D8B in addition to Roland VS workstations; Massenburg's EQ can also be found in the Sony Oxford/CML 8200 Option, a plug-in emulation of EQ on the Sony OXP-R3 console.

Massenburg was introduced to Roland VS DAWs when he heard vocal tracks that Randy Travis recorded to a Roland VS-1680 with producer Kyle Lebinh. “It sounded great,” he recalls. “It was time for me to change my thinking.

“With what I've looked at all the issues that impact the perception of digital audio and decided there is no reason they can't be knocked down one at a time.

One of them is sample rate, and this innovative platform is 96kHz-capable. "It feels better to work in this format," Massenburg continues. "What's left is how to get the tools in that [audio professionals] are comfortable with. As we find so often, the differences are in the subtleties. The folks at Roland are very responsive to our need for controls [and] how the controls need to work so the new user will be introduced to the best, which includes how to get EQ to sweep quickly and get precision settings in the context of a signal path that's really good."

Roland digital recording/processing product manager for musical instruments Tom Stephenson says, "It's a big step for Roland to introduce anyone else's software into our products. They've never done that before."

"In the old days, only the top guys who had the expertise, the money and the desire to perfect things could have had the really good tools," Stephenson adds. "In the consumer chain, it wasn't possible to get those things. What's really exciting about this association..."
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Sales Are Still Strong

If the contrast between last issue’s album volume and that reflected by this issue’s charts feels like a familiar roller coaster, it should.

The decline in volume from the bonanza that included Grammy Awards exposure, Valentine’s Day shopping, a long weekend and much-anticipated albums by Norah Jones and Kanye West mirrors almost exactly the week-to-week slide that occurred during the first full week of January, when stores adjusted from the holiday week that included New Year’s Day.

Album sales are down 27.2% from the Grammy/Valentine frame, while the week that ended Jan. 11 was off 28.3% from the one that ended Jan. 4.

Yet, just as a great roller coaster gives the illusion that you’re about to be thrown off the track, 2004 album volume absorbs this inevitable decline without losing momentum. Album sales again beat those of the same week of last year (see Market Watch, this page), extending a nine-week streak that began with the Christmas stanza that closed out 2003.

Personal aside to National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences president Neil Portnow: At the risk of stating the obvious, people who sell music would love for the Grammys to forevermore fall on a Sunday before Valentine’s Day. With this month’s leap year adjustment placing Feb. 14 of 2005 on a Monday, Feb. 6 of next year looks like an inviting broadcast window.

Gift-Rapped For Teena

Not a bad birthday present for someone who turns 48 this week: Teena Marie returns to Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks after an absence of almost 13 years. Her “Still in Love” (featuring Baby) is the first title on the Cash Money Classics imprint to appear on this survey and is Teena Marie’s first chart entry since the spring of 1991, when “Just Us Two” peaked at No. 42.

With “Still in Love” opening at No. 70, Teena Marie’s chart span stretches to 24 years, nine months and three weeks, counting back to the debut of “I’m a Sucker for Your Love” in May 1979. Her biggest R&B hit to date is “Ooh La La La,” which was No. 1 for one week in April 1988.

If “Still in Love” can find its way to The Billboard Hot 100, it will be Teena Marie’s first appearance on that tally in 16 years, since “Ooh La La La” peaked at No. 85. “Lovergirl,” which reached No. 4 in 1985, remains Teena Marie’s biggest Hot 100 hit.

OL’ BLUE EYES IS BACK: Limp Bizkit’s remake of the Who’s “Behind Blue Eyes” is a new entry on The Billboard Hot 100 at No. 72. The original peaked at No. 34 in 1971.

“Behind Blue Eyes” was written by the Who’s Pete Townshend. This is his first writing credit on the Hot 100 since his own “Face the Face” peaked at No. 26 in January 1986.

The charting of Limp Bizkit’s “Behind Blue Eyes” marks only the second time a cover of a Who song that appeared on the Hot 100 has returned to the chart. The other Who remake to chart was the New Seekers’ medley of “Pinball Wizard/See Me, Feel Me,” which went to No. 29 in 1973.

Elton John and Rod Stewart both received airplay on their respective remakes of “Pinball Wizard,” but neither released the song on a commercial single, so neither version charted on the Hot 100.

TIP-TOP: J-Kwon holds at No. 8 on The Billboard Hot 100 with his first chart entry, “Tippy” (See So Def/Arista). “Tippy” will have to move up at least five places to tie the No. 3 peak position of “Topsy,” a 1958 hit for Cozy Cole.

MORE BURT AND HAL: Songwriters Burt Bacharach and Hal David have generated plenty of chart news this year, with a No. 1 hit on The Billboard Hot 100 (“Slow Jamz” by Twista Featuring Kanye West & Jamie Foxx), a Modern Rock Tracks hit (“I Just Don’t Know What to Do With Myself” by the White Stripes) and a Club Play hit on the dance chart (“Walk On By” by Cyndi Lauper).

But there’s more. Bacharach and David have the title song on Steve Tyrell’s “This Guy’s in Love” (Columbia), which is No. 3 on Top Jazz Albums. And while “Here I Am: Isley Meets Bacharach” falls off Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums this issue, it is likely to return, given that its remake of the Dusty Springfield hit “The Look of Love” is starting to garner airplay.
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>The Bootleg</td>
<td>The Great American Songbook Vol. II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>The Offspring</td>
<td>Splinter</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>The White Stripes</td>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>Confessions Of A Teenage Drama Queen</td>
<td>This Is Not A Test</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>JOSH GROBAN</td>
<td>Clever</td>
<td>A Rush Of Blood To The Head</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Eamon</td>
<td>Jive/A&amp;M Rhodes 19/KSC</td>
<td>I Don't Want You Back</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>TWISTA</td>
<td>Kamaaza</td>
<td>Kamikaze</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Jackpot</td>
<td>Only You 5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>TWISTED SISTER</td>
<td>The Zone</td>
<td>The Zone</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>BRYNETTE SINGS</td>
<td>Songs About June</td>
<td>Songs About June</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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<td>14</td>
<td>JESSICA SIMPSON</td>
<td>In This Skin</td>
<td>In This Skin</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>LUDACRIS</td>
<td>Chicken*N**Beer</td>
<td>Chicken*N**Beer</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>G-UNIT</td>
<td>Beg For Mercy</td>
<td>Beg For Mercy</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Black Album</td>
<td>The Black Album</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>MICHAEL MCDONALD</td>
<td>Motown</td>
<td>Motown</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ALAN JACKSON</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Volume II</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Volume II</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>KANYE WEST</td>
<td>The College Dropout</td>
<td>The College Dropout</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>EVANESCENCE</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>LINKIN PARK</td>
<td>Meteora</td>
<td>Meteora</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>Interstellar</td>
<td>Interstellar</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
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<td>MAVIS STAPLES</td>
<td>Long Black Train</td>
<td>Long Black Train</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
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<td>INDIGO GIRLS</td>
<td>All That We Let In</td>
<td>All That We Let In</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
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<td>27</td>
<td>THE NATIONAL</td>
<td>Brain's Blood</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>2005's Greatest Hits</td>
<td>2005's Greatest Hits</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>HILARY DUFF</td>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
<td>Metamorphosis</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>LINKIN PARK</td>
<td>Minutes To Midnight</td>
<td>Minutes To Midnight</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>JOSH TURNER</td>
<td>The Long Road</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<td>INDIGO GIRLS</td>
<td>All That We Let In</td>
<td>All That We Let In</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>THE DARKNESS</td>
<td>Permission To Land</td>
<td>Permission To Land</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>Interstellar</td>
<td>Interstellar</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>41</td>
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Over The Counter

Continued from page 61

At press time, Blue Note estimated "Feels Like Home" will decline by 20%-25% in its third week, which would keep the album locked at No. 1. The aggregate of the albums that arrived Feb. 24 will be from Young Gunz, which is on course to start at 115,000-125,000 copies, according to retailers' first-day sales. Figure that even if Jones' sum falls as much as 50%, she would still finish ahead of either West or Young Gunz.

WANTED: Not too long ago, a song that had been the biggest-selling single for nine weeks in a row would have collected a bigger sales-to-date total than 111,000 copies. The top singles used to sell that much in a week or two. Now this is the current state of the U.S. singles market. With the exception of singers who emerge from the "American Idol" spotlight, one can look for the modest numbers that rookie Eamon has rung since "F*** It (I Don't Want You Back)" hit stores in October.

First released as a 12-inch vinyl single last fall, the CD version of that title has sold 110,500 copies to date. The track currently leads Hot 100 Singles Sales with a sum of less than 5,000.

I suspect the song's tough-guy attitude and its explicit lyrics barely clouded by its radio edit, increased this single's cool quotient among teens. In fact, I had been tempted to dismiss him as a one-hit wonder until I realized that he was signed to Jive, a label that has always maintained a high batting average.

One might go back betting against label president Barry Weiss—witness the 106,000 copies that Eamon's album, "Don't Want You Back," has sold in its first week, good for the Hot Shot Debut on The Billboard 200 (No. 7). We'll soon know whether this 20-year-old has more than one hit in his pocket. In the meantime, his album's start is much stronger than I would have anticipated.

SIFTING THE SOFT: What a difference a week makes.

Last issue's top two new entries on The Billboard 200 represented close to 1.5 million copies, or 10 times the combined sales of Eamon and the next-highest bow, by Indigo Girls (No. 35, 34,000). The transition from a holiday week impacts traffic even more severely. Last issue, most titles on The Billboard 200 saw gains over the prior week. This issue, with the exception of new entries, only eight albums on the chart show any increase over prior-week sales. We have adjusted bullet criteria on our sales lists accordingly; on the big chart, we award a bullet to any album with a decline of 20% or less.

Consequently, many of the chart's upward moves mean a title loses more than the others in the vicinity. That happens with Evanescence, which matches its previous best chart peak (7-3) despite a 30% decline.

In this adjustment frame, play from video channels—particularly VH1, MTV and/or VH1's sister cover of the Cure's "Love Song," but the most obvious reason the soundtrack owns The Billboard 200's largest sales increase is that the film has led the box office for a two-week period. When the album has the largest unit and percentage increase, as "50 First Dates" does this issue, the Pacesetter award goes to the chart's second-largest percentage spike, in this case, Yeah Yeah Yeahs' "Fever to Tell."
## Billboard Top Jazz Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Week</th>
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<th>Artist</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>JOSHUA BELL</td>
<td>M2R</td>
<td>Only You</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>Master And Commander</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>CECILIA BARTOLI</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>The Salleri Album</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ANONYMOUS 4</td>
<td>American Angels</td>
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<td>Sér De Elite</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>ANDREA ROCCIA &amp;</td>
<td>Sentiments</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>LORAINNE HUNT LIBERSON</td>
<td>Blue Note</td>
<td>Bach Can'tas BWV 82 And 139</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>The Most Relaxing Classical Album...! Ev'ry 1</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Live In Dublin</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>RENEE FLEMING</td>
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<td>By Request</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>HILARY AHN</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
<td>Bach Violin Concertos</td>
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| 12        | 13        | JILL HARRISON | Time-Life | The Great American Songbook - J 

## Billboard Top Classical Crossovers

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<td>JOSH GROBAN</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
<td>Closer</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>AMICI FOREVER</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
<td>The Opera Band</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>YO-YO MA</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Obrigado Brazil: Live In Concert</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>YO-YO MA</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Obrigado Brazil</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>SARAH BRIGHTMAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>CHARLOTTE CHURCH</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Prelude: The Best Of Charlotte Church</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>LUICIANO PAVAROTTI</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Ti Adio</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Renaissance Classics Group (EM)</td>
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<td>String Quartet Tribute To Tocaccini</td>
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<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Quest On The Set: James Galway At The Movies</td>
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<td>Sony Classical</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>SOUNDRACK</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
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## Billboard Top New Age Albums

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<td>1</td>
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<td>Romantic Melodies</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>YANNI</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Ultimate Yanni</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Windham Hill Hill 2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>VANNI</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Ethicity</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>HAVAIANA</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Romantic Dream</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>DELERIUM</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Chimer</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>JIM BRICKMAN</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Love Songs &amp; Lullabies</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>The Healing Garden Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>STEVEN ANDERSON</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>100 Church Classics</td>
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<td>American Spirit</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>VANGELIS</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Odyssey: The Definitive Collection</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ZADE</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Zade</td>
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<td>Prayer: A Windham Hill Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>RICK BRAUN</td>
<td>Sony Classical</td>
<td>Thundering Rainforest/Tropical Rain Forest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.
Jessica Simpson earns her first No. 1 on the Mainstream Top 40 chart, as "With You" bounces "The Way You Move" by Outkast Featuring Sleepy Brown from the top, even though the latter song is up slightly in detections.

Simpson's only other Billboard No. 1 occurred on the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart in December 1999 with "I Wanna Love You Forever." With "With You," Columbia its first No. 1 without Beyoncé (including her work with Destiny's Child) on the Mainstream Top 40 chart since Savage Garden's "I Knew I Loved You" topped the list in January 2000.

ANOTHER ONE: Usher takes the lead on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks with "Yeah!" featuring Lil Jon and Ludacris, thanks to the advantage of a retail-only single.

Although "Yeah!" gains 5.1 million listeners and now possesses an R&B radio audience of 74 million, Ruud Stuaard's "Sorry 2004" edges it out for the top slot on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay with 74.2 million impressions. That is the tightest battle for the top of the airplay chart since July 26, 2003, issue, when less than 100,000 impressions separated the No. 1 "Crazy in Love" by Beyoncé Featuring Jay-Z from Monica's "So Gone."

The points "Yeah!" accumulated for sales of its 12-inch vinyl release is enough to push it ahead of the retail-slasher "Sorry 2004" on R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks. Retail sales also keep "Slow Down" by Twista Featuring Kanye West & Jamie Foxx ahead of "Sorry!"

"Yeah!" holds at No. 1 for a second week on The Billboard Hot 100 and a third week on Rhythm & Top 60, where it extends the mark for detections at the format. A week ago, the track posted 3,459 detections and moved past Beyoncé Featuring Sean Paul's "Ruby Baby" which peaked with 3,438 detections in October. This issue, "Yeah!" increases to 4,426 spins.

DO OVER: Some old tracks are getting new life on the charts this issue. Remixes of "Work It" and "E.I." by Nelly bow on The Billboard Hot 100 at No. 71 and on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart at No. 66, respectively, while "Victory 2004" by P. Diddy, the Notorious B.I.G., 50 Cent, Lloyd Banks & Busta Rhymes debuts on the latter chart at No. 68. The two Nelly tracks appear on his recent album, "Da Derrty Versions—The Reinvintion," while

"Nellyville," and a remix by Scott Storch was included on "The Reinvintion." But what has made the song take off at top 40 radio is an unauthorized version by Ne-Yo that includes a guitar lick from AOC/DC's "Back in Black" that surfaced a couple months ago. For charting purposes, plays for the Neos version have been merged with the lesser-played Storch remix, and we've added the word "Reinvintion" as the subtitle to "Work It" and "E.I." to differentiate the titles from their original versions.

OVER, UNDER & AROUND: Close to two-thirds of the top 30 slots on Hot Country Singles & Tracks do not show any movement this issue, and the few titles that do move are not all upward. Owing to a pair of relatively young titles that occupy the top two slots and only a handful of songs that increase at least 20 detections, the upper half of the country list shows little to crow about.

In the top 30, 17 titles hold the same positions as last issue, while six songs take backward steps and seven others increase in rank. Among the 25 titles that post gains in detections, only seven gained 100 detections or more, and the average increase is considerably 139 plays.

Themes of war continue to populate the country chart, as Toby Keith's "American Soldier" logs a third week at No. 1. Up 356 detections, John Michael Montgomery's "Letters From Home" takes the chart's highest gain, and newcomer Donovan Chapman drives a populist shot at anti-war voices in America's film mecca with "Hey Hollywood," which bows at No. 56.

SECOND HELPING: Janet Jackson makes her 48th appearance on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart with "I Want You," taking the Hot Shot Debut designation at No. 54. With only five days of airplay, "Want" garners 6.8 million R&B audience impressions. The song is the second track from Jackson's March 30 release, "Damita Jo," to hit radio. "Just a Little While," which holds at No. 45 on The Billboard Hot 100, was too pop-leaning to impact R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks.
Programming

Reality-TV Roundup: Where Are They Now?

When it comes to TV talent contests, the United States, Fox's "American Idol" and its top finalists get the most attention and hit records. In contrast, winners of USA Network's "Nashville Star" (Buddy Jewell) and MTV's "Making the Band 2" (Bad Boy's Da Band) have had respectable commercial success. "Buddy Jewell" has sold 548,000 copies, and Bad Boy Da Band's "Too Hot for TV" has sold 524,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

But whatever happened to the winners of other musical contests that sprung up on U.S. TV last year—the singers whose profiles aren't as large as the "American Idol" champ's?

Here are the latest updates on what some of these winners have been doing since their victories:

Taryn Ramsey, winner of VH1's "Born to Diva," signed to the resurrected Casablanca Records, the Universal-distributed label headed by Tommy Mottola, who was an executive producer of "Born to Diva." In January, "Up Against All Odds," Ramsey's first single under the new deal, reached No. 29 on the Billboard Adult Contemporary chart and No. 95 on the Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart. Her yet-untitled album on Casablanca does not yet have a street date.

Harlem Lee, the champ of NBC's "Fame" talent contest, won a record deal with Wire Records. Last November, Wire released the album "Introducing Harlem Lee." It failed to make a dent on the Billboard charts, having sold a mere 3,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

American Junior, the group of winners formed from the Fox-TV talent contest of the same name, have yet to release their debut album on Jive Records. Last year, Fox released American Junior's first single, "One Step Closer," which sold 36,000 copies and reached No. 6 on the Billboard Hot 100 Singles Sales chart.

"Kids in America," a compilation album from the "American Juniors" finalists, sold 68,000 copies. Sources say that because of the public's lukewarm reaction, the future of the group is questionable.

In Brief: Music video network Fuse has joined forces with mainstream R&B radio station WGRT (Hot 97) New York for a year-long programming partnership. Fuse will have the exclusive telecast of this year's Hot 97 Summer Jam, the concert date is to be announced.

Music-and-fashion program "Fuse Frontal Hip-Hop Presented by Hot 97" will take place March 2 in New York. Fuse will televise the show March 26 as a one-hour special. At press time, Ashanti, Cassidy, Lil' Kim and Young Gunz were scheduled to perform.
Gospel

Continued from page 1

“optimism that this can be done.”

The evidence can clearly be seen on the 
Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Album 
charts, which currently features 
Smokie Norful, Vickie Winans and CeCe 
Winans in its top 10, along with the 
soundtrack to the gospel-flavored movie 
“The Fighting Temptations,” starring Cuba 
Gooding Jr. and Beyoncé.

Additionally, Michelle Williams of 
Destiny’s Child is No. 77 this issue with 
her gospel album “Do You Know” 
(Music World/Columbia/Sony).

Norful is among a growing number of R&B 
artists who are also taping into the 
gospel/R&B crossover movement. 
Others spreading the word include 
Mary Mary, Debra Killings (who has 
worked with TLC and others) and 
R&B pioneer Smokey Robinson, whose first 
institutional album will be released in March.

Labels also are getting into the act, 
with mainstream operations targeting 
gospel female artists and 
imprints looking 
toward the mainstream.

For example, R&B/Jazz label Hidden 
Beach Recordings last year announced 
plans to launch inspirational division 
Still Waters. It will also release projects 
on gospel crossover veteran BeBe 
Winans’ Nashville-based label, 
The Movement Group.

Meanwhile, EMI Gospel recently 
said it will distribute Atlanta-based 
Hip Hop Music through EMI Christian 
Music Group’s Chordant Distribution 
and to the general market through 
EMI Music Marketing.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The crossover movement 
can be attributed in part to the national mood, 
sources suggest.

“With 9-11 and the war, people 
are looking for something to soothe their 
pain,” singer Vickie Winans says. 
“They tend to go to church more 
where they can hear more songs that 
soothe the soul. And the good 
news of gospel music has taken on 
such a greater power.”

Others point to changes in label 
support, radio programming techniques 
and music quality, as well as gospel’s 
evolving image.

“The quality of gospel music 
production has improved over the years,” 
says Willie Mae Mcvher, a former 
major-market R&B radio PD who now 
programs ABC Radio Networks’ 5-year-old 
“Rejoice” program, which syndicated 
in 50 markets. “It’s still not enough, 
but the music sounds better.

“First, mainstream 
radio’s increased focus on 
its mainstream counterparts, 
’Rejoice’ utilizes music rotation 
clocks and runs contests, giving away 
cash and trips to such locales as

Jamaica and South Africa. Gospel 
comedian Sister Cantaloupe co-hosts 
morning drive during a day that 
includes entertainment and financial 
reports and specialty shows

As for increasing label support, EMI 
Gospel artist Norful has experienced this 
firsthand.

Norful’s debut album, “I Need You 
Now,” has spent 88 weeks on the Top 
Gospel Albums chart. It is currently 
running neck and neck in the top 10 
with its own spinoff EP “Smokie Norful: 
Limited Edition.” Both peaked at No. 
20 on the chart, making it the Top 
R&B/Hip-Hop Albums.

“Besides a universal message 
communicated in a great way, you need 
a label to believe in you enough to 
support you and able to offer that kind 
of support,” Norful says. “EMI used its 
labeling to its people.

HIP-HOP MEETS GOSPEL

Joining Norful as a case in point is 
Tones, whose brand of gospel—mixing 
R&B and Gospel—has drawn comparisons to Prince.

Following management changes 
at Jive and Verity, however, Tones 
says “there’s a complete new leaf” at the 
label that recently reorganized and 
launched a new look and sound.

“They totally get me now; the 
support is unreal.”

In April, Jive/Verity will embark on an 
R&B/Soul Tour featuring a 15-disc Tones 
package that includes a double-CD 
and a DVD. Verity is banking on 
Tones’ loyal following to help position 
him at mainstream’s forefront with 
the winning package.

Featuring Sheila E., Kirk Franklin, 
Yolanda Adams, Kelly Price and others, 
the project is described as part 
MGM musical and part Broadway Play. 
It serves to break not only the stereotypic 
styles of Tones—the once 
dreadlocked singer used to dress like rocker 
Lenny Kravitz—but also the image 
associated with gospel.

“Tones’ message is messages with a 
gospel context,” Tones says. “But it’s 
a smorgasbord that also includes hard 
rock and stage-show production. It’s 
also out of the box because it doesn’t 
present the rap/prototype— 
praying gospel with robes. That to me 
is gospel like blackface.

“People have never shed that image 
of us,” Tones adds. “Kirk Franklin, 
like Johnny Mathis and others, has 
prepared the way for doing something like this now.”

RAPPING RADICALS

Such progress has revved issues 
division of music types and 
the new wave of contemporary acts— 
especially when the topic is 
hip-hop gospel.

There have long been rumblings 
between the traditional and 
contemporary 
sectors. The Edwin Hawkins 
Singers encountered disfavor in 
1989 when they scored an R&B/pop crossover 
hit with “Oh Happy Day.”

Another example is 
how the general 
acknowledgment of controversy is the Rance Allen 
Group. The Tyscot recording act is a 
beloved pillar of the gospel community. 
But during the ’70s the group raised 
eyebrows when it expanded its 
music’s boundaries by incorporating soul, 
Soul and rock elements to garner 
success beyond church walls.

Trend-setting choir leader Andrae 
Crouch also aroused criticism with 
his nontraditional approach in the 
’80s, as did Kirk Franklin in 1997 with 
his energetic anthem “Stomp.”

And Tones has been criticized for 
his genre-bending music.

“Kirk Franklin has revolutionized 
gospel for this day and age,” Allen says. 
“But 30 years ago we were the 
revolutionaries whose music wasn’t 
churchy enough.”

That could dated to its 
nightclubs and played on secular 
stations. One night in Chicago, someone 
yelled, “If I wanted to hear B.B. King, 
I would have gone to a club.

RHYTHM & BIBLES

Allen is supportive of today’s new 
reed of gospel artists, noting that 
acts like Mary Mary “have taken gospel 
music in a vein I call ‘rhythm 
and Bible.’”

But he cautions rap/hip-hop 
gospel acts to be aware of their platform.

“There is a ministry for them, 
but they have a greater responsibility 
for what they say and how they present 
themselves. Then they have to make 
sure their message is as loud as their 
rhythms and hip-hop clothes, or it will 
get misconstrued. 

Vickie Mack-Laitidale knows about 
such situations. As president of 
GospelCentric, one of the gospel 
industry’s most forward-thinking 
labels, she is used to dealing with the 
controversy ignited by trailblazing 
acts like Franklin. Does she still see 
division among the ranks?

“I don’t pay attention to that stuff 
anymore,” she says. “I just do what 
I believe and what God is inspiring me to do. 
The more you try to improve, the 
more they’ll find you, but I just try to make 
tracks.”

Additional reporting by 
Chris Morris
Radio Idol

Continued from page 10

talent search, adding, “We got on every TV channel in Chicago—what a phenomenal promotion. But first of all, we needed to do something like this in Chicago. Not to give attention to local artists is crazy.”

Smith’s comment, Chicago Idol, ran during 2003. “Closer to You” was recorded late last year, and Smith debuted the song Jan. 5 on WGCI. A second round of the contest is all planned for summer, Smith says.

Larry Kahn, senior VP of R&B promotion at Jive, says the label has looked at signing Mohan, but there is no official word whether negotiations are still proceeding. While the label was not directly involved in the contest, WGCI’s prize centered on the winner recording a song written by Jive artist R. Kelly—in this case, Larry Kahn.

“Because securing radio airplay is an increasingly tough challenge, Kahn says, “I think there is talent all over the world looking for a break.”

John Ferriter at William Morris Agency, which will plan a tour for the eventual Radio Star champ, similarly thinks there are plenty of viable acts waiting in the wings.

“I was in [the Santa Barbara, Calif.-based band the Stingrays] for 13 years,” he says. “There are immensely talented people out there that don’t get a chance.”

Lack of Organization

The SPARS meeting made clear that a contracting industry and smaller recording budgets have caused friction between the two sides. While changing A&R culture and production methodologies are seen as further damaging studio-label relations.

In the old days, record companies owned studios,” Ryang said in a subsequent interview. “Record companies had producers on staff, and record companies were in total control of everything. It was different.”

He believes that this latest “American Idol” commercial could find the real deal, adding, “The truth of the matter is that Clear Channel is a powerful company, I see them breaking artists.”

Air Time is Not Guaranteed

However, Clear Channel Radio has not given any formal commitment to having its stations play the songs recorded by the eventual contest winner in the same way that all artists whose records will be released in the studio.

“LPFMs are noncommercial and cannot be bought and subsumed by big radio chains.”

LPFMs

Continued from page 5

last year from witnesses at two hearings that included recording artists and managers, do not buy into the NAB’s defense.

At one point during the second hearing last July (Billboard, July 19, 2003), McCain sarcastically referred to the NAB as “that wholly owned subsidiary of [radio and concert giant] Clear Channel Communications.”

Edison Media Research VP of music and programming Sean Ross says that urban LPFMs will be part of a larger reshaping of radio’s music programming.

“There will be a combination of factors at work that are beginning to change radio even without the presence of LPFMs or satellite broadcasters. “Programmers are finally acknowledging the declining listening levels of recent years and acknowledging that there might be some tangible listener appetite for more variety,” he says.

Congress authorized the LPFM service in 1999, with the support of then-FCC chairman Bill Kennard. The NAB was subclasses of stations, that back the authorization for LPFMs in all but two territories. Congress then mandated the FCC to conduct the outside study on interference.

“In the worst case,” the Mite study concluded, “no third adjacent channel interference between an LPFM station and an existing full-service FM station will exist beyond a radius of 1.1 kilometers around the LPFM transmitter site.”

“LPFMs are noncommercial and cannot be bought and subsumed by big radio chains.”

Projects involving multiple producers are more common today, resulting in little to no organization or oversight, some studio personnel complained.

When you have 10 producers working on a record and the level of organization is nonexistent, it’s extremely difficult to get money upfront,” said Robbie Norris, operations manager at Quest Recording, in an LPFM meeting. “The shop has to be run in that situation that studios demand a 50% deposit prior to sessions.

“Too much is wasted on lack of organization, from the record label all the way down to the artist, and the studios are being asked to make up the difference,” Norris said. “It’s impossible. We can’t do it anymore.”

Commenting on expansions made at the meeting, Hamby told Billboard that today’s labels put a “premium” on the talent-scout aspect of A&R, rather than the ability to manage the recording process.

“There are plenty of [A&R] people that know what they’re doing,” Hamby said. “But when somebody says to me that a project is in the studio and nobody’s supervising it, it blows my mind. I make these decisions.”

Gallo observed, “The lack of organization seems to be more and more rampant. Of course, you’ve had record labels moving, changing, being bought and sold, and a lot of other situations to supplement their lack of organization, [whether] that means paying attention to details of billing and other situations more so than you ever did before, or, as mentioned earlier, making sure there is somebody at that label that you have a personal relationship with.”

“The atmosphere at the New York SPARS meeting was being felt elsewhere.

“I think a lot of A&R people are just not in the loop,” said Jane Scochie of Royaltone Studios in New Hollywood, Calif.

Scochie has not experienced as many rate and payment disputes as her New York counterparts but nonetheless criticized the labels’ practices. “I don’t think it’s fair and accurate, and I think when the labels are asked to give them cheaper deals. I think labels’ attitude is, if they’re going to crunch figures, the studio is the first place they go.”

In Nashville, Dave Biondolillo of Sound Stage Studios concedes that there is significant pressure on rates. “We’ve gotten some e-mails and whatnot that says that labels will only pay so much and anything over that they just won’t pay for.

“Nashville is such a close-knit community that it tends not to get [contentious],” Biondolillo adds. “It’s more like ‘work-this-out’ kind of thing. But if we’re starting to see it, and it has been a bone of contention here. In this day and age, you suck it up. You take what you can get.”

As a consequence of allegedly long overdue invoices will be significantly tougher credit policies, some SPARS members pledged.

“Les bicycles, they may be a little too little, too late for some long-established studios.

“Unless there’s a warmup of business in the next six weeks,” Norris said, “I think you’re going to see historic amounts of people going away and never coming back.”

Amlen agrees. “You’re going to find a lot of people go this year. I think this will be the year that the weeds die.”
The Majors Missed Everything From MTV To Downloading

BY ED CHRISTMAN

In 1972, Sam Marmaduke took what he learned from racking department store racks and invented the multimedia store.

Initially, Hastings Entertainment carried books, music and magazines. Then video came into the picture. Today, new product lines continue to be added.

Meanwhile, it took most other retailers until the mid-1990s to catch up. Now everyone wants to be a multimedia merchant.

Three years before the founding of Hastings, Marmaduke’s oldest son, John, joined Western Merchandisers, the family’s racking operation, based in Amarillo, Texas. Eventually John moved over to the new retail operation.

In 1982, John was named president of Western Merchandisers, overseeing the retail and rack businesses. He continued in that role when Wal-Mart acquired the racking operation in 1991. After Western Merchandisers was sold to Anderson News in 1994 (and renamed Anderson Merchandisers), John turned to running Hastings, which he took public in 1998. The chain now has 149 stores in 20 states. Its stock closed at $52.22 Feb. 25.

John Marmaduke is an “aggressive visionary and one of the most critical-thinking men I know,” says Mike Reese, CEO of Newbury Comics. “The biggest thing he taught me was about collateral industries like books and toys, and when you start looking at them, then you realize that in the music industry the emperor didn’t have any clothes on.”

Reese adds that Marmaduke “doesn’t allow politics” to stop him from challenging any idea.

Indeed, Marmaduke has a reputation for telling it like it is, often to the chagrin of label executives. While they often privately agree that Marmaduke is right, the labels also complain, as one distributor executive put it, that “he sees everything in black and white and never wants to concede that some issues need to be viewed as gray.”

For his part, Marmaduke continues to call them like he sees them. And since his view is from the American heartland, he still sees things differently from most industry executives in New York and Los Angeles.

Q: For 30 years you have been telling the majors they are too fat and need to examine the way they do business. Do you think they finally get it? And if so, what grade would you give them?

A: I would give most of them a good grade, because they have narrowed the gap so much in the last two years; they are not there yet, but they are on the road. But I think the lack of expense control has been so rampant for so long that the new mind-set still has to trickle down further. I think the new people have it. I don’t think the old guard have.

Q: Conversely, is there anything that used to be part of the music industry that would be welcome today?

A: We need more young people in management positions. I think music is about youth, and back when the overall executive tenor was younger, they tended to respond quicker to the trends. The Catch-22 of an industry that is overpaid is there is no natural attrition. It just gets older, because they know they can’t make the same money in any other industry. So it makes for creativity constipation.

Q: How much of the industry’s downturn can be blamed on A&R?

A: Again, I think the high overhead has another Catch-22: All they look for is platinum records. So there is very little artist development, and it shows in the quality of music. Look at the downloaders and see what they are buying. That shows the lack of quality songs within the album release.

Q: Where do you stand on the majors backing the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s approach to suing downloaders?

A: I support it. They are not suing weekend downloaders. They are suing those whose massive transactions are commerce. You had a law without a consequence, and without one kids will do whatever they can get away with.

Q: The majors have caught a lot of criticism for their handling of the commercial online marketplace. How much of that has been warranted?

A: The press is all digitari, so the amount of criticism is not surprising. But the most important thing the majors missed is not having any understanding of the customer. They did little market research, and most critically, they were out of touch with the street.

Q: Have the labels yet realized the power of the consumer?

A: The people at the labels who make decisions are not connected to consumers. Look at the physical single. How else could you justify the last three years? The labels still don’t quite totally understand that the consumer is in the driver’s seat now, but they are beginning to get it. They need to shift from being push marketers to being pull marketers.

Q: Do you believe that the majors first tried to cut out music retail from online?

A: I think they tried to create an oligarchy. The majors were all thinking that if they could lock up a high percentage of the online channel, then they could make money like the old days of the record clubs.

Q: You are involved with the Echo consortium. What is happening there? I don’t think it is being taken seriously.

A: I hear that; I don’t know where it is coming from. Retailers want a profitable digital download model. We don’t want to have a loss leader. We don’t have hardware to sell. Downloading is a new channel, long-term accretive to the industry and will actually help retail physical goods. Unauthorized CD burning is a different issue. It is mainly corrosive, and the sooner we get [digital-rights management] the better for every artist and all of us.

Q: What is the main problem the music industry faces today?

A: It does not have executives with a strategic view. Most of the top executives were successful A&R executives. Most don’t have an opinion as to where their product fits into the competitive entertainment market, which is required research. The majors have missed everything under their noses from MTV to AOL to downloading.

Q: What will the online retail landscape look like in terms of the number of players?

A: Anyone with a brand or customer loyalty will offer downloads. Amazon, Best Buy or record clubs. With the wholesale model there is no reason there can’t be a lot of players. But as we see things evolve, most of the fundamentals of retailing apply to the Internet. For the life of me I don’t understand why Internet commerce is not taxed. The last vestige of the Internet bubble is Congress.

Q: Are the majors now so preoccupied with online commerce that they are missing some of the changing dynamics of the physical-goods side of the business?

A: I absolutely agree. There are still lots of people in stores buying music. We need to get back to fundamentals: discovering artists and building careers and finding new formats to expose. Also, I would love to see dynamic pricing, singles, EPs. There should be all manners of prices and offers, and let the marketplace decide what is the best. Price is still the least managed thing by the labels. I am glad to see Universal’s pioneering efforts.

Q: Should the other majors follow Universal Music Group’s JumpStart approach?

A: We support JumpStart. It isn’t perfect, but it is a lot better structure than the labels spending hundreds of millions of dollars in slotting fees to destroy their value proposition and their retailer specialty partners.

I hope every major has its own unique solution so that we have a competition of ideas and start to become an industry known for innovation.
Here’s something Republicans and Democrats agree on: Stealing music over the Internet is wrong. Support artists and keep the music playing — download legally.

SENATOR ORRIN HATCH
SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY

WE DOWNLOAD
(Legally.)

Advertising space provided by National Stop Music Piracy!
We talked and dreamed about it, but the reality of the last two years has been an experience that was hard to imagine. We set out to write and record songs that our fans would enjoy; songs that are memorable. But to have the number one most-played song of 2002 is the perfect experience! And JVC has helped make that experience even better by letting us keep all the crazy things we did on tour, using our digital camcorders, or just crashing and watching movies on our big screens.

Chad Kroeger, Ryan Peake, Mike Kroeger, Ryan Viseval – Nickelback

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