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Latin Talent Suffers
Tight Budgets Take Toll On New Artists

BY LEILA COSO
These are tough times for new acts hoping to break into the Latin music market in the United States. Hampered by tighter budgets, most labels acknowledge that they have cut back on the number of new acts they are developing at any given time.

What’s more, radio stations take fewer and fewer chances on new music. On the retail side, a high percentage of Latin titles are sold at mass merchants, which also are less likely to stock unknown artists.

“With this crisis, we had said new talent would be the first to suffer, and we weren’t crying wolf,” says John (Continued on page 75)

Steve’s Baby
iTunes Turns One Amid The Tumult

BY BRIAN GARRITY
NEW YORK—For the first time in a long time, the record industry is once again a two-format business. As Apple Computer’s iTunes Music Store marks its first anniversary April 23, digital music is fast taking the place of the cassette format as an option to the CD.

For the piracy-ravaged recording industry, whose fortunes have been almost solely hitched to the health of the CD since cassette sales began (Continued on page 76)

Latin Music Conference & Awards
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“With this crisis, we had said new talent would be the first to suffer, and we weren’t crying wolf,” says John (Continued on page 75)
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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Is it’s not ‘country comedy’ but comedy for the country.”

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JumpStart Revs Up

Retailers Warm To Revamped Initiative

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK — Retailers always grouse about price increases, but those introduced in the Universal Music Group’s revamped JumpStart are going down pretty smoothly.

“The best news is that though a price increase was inevitable, it didn’t manifest itself in a $12.98 cost. Whatever happened, I am sure that it was under consideration,” Tower Records executive VP of sales, operations and product Kevin Cassidy says.

In fact, some accounts say the new version of JumpStart has characteristics that can please big-box retailers as well as music specialty merchants.

“We are pleased to see the move away from the one-size-fits-all mentality,” Virgin Entertainment Group North America president Glen Ward says.

Changes in catalog terms of JumpStart “demonstrate the need to support specialty retailers such as ourselves,” he says.

UMG declines to comment.

According to a JumpStart letter sent to VMUs accounts and obtained by Billboard, the $12.98 frontline titles will now carry a $9.49 cost, up from the $9.09 level that the program initially set when it was unveiled last September.

Meanwhile, the $10.10 “superstar” cost increases to $10.35 and the list price for both increase a dollar to $13.98 (billboard.biz, April 17).

Starting April 26, UMG will offer a list of eligible catalog titles that can be purchased for an 18% discount, provided that accounts give prominent in-store space for four weeks for a minimum of 15 titles. The discount works out to a wholesale cost of $7.78.

Additionally, the SoundSavers midline still carries the initial JumpStart cost of $5.08, but a 9% discount on select titles can get the price down to $5.51.

So while the price increase could provide an additional $40 million-$50 million a year in revenue, according to Billboard estimates, it likely will be partially offset by the discounts provided.

(Continued on page 7)

Music Biz Makes Case For EU Help

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

DUBLIN — While acknowledging the music industry’s desire for supportive European policies, European Union officials say they only have limited power to affect the industry’s well-being.

This state of play was a central theme at a one-day event organized April 20 in Dublin by Ireland’s Arts, Sport and Tourism department and the Music Board of Ireland.

Ireland currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU. The recommendations of the seminar will be used at the May 27 meeting of EU ministers of culture.

“We need to look at the needs of those who aspire to creative and commercial success as musicians and entrepreneurs,” Ireland Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism John O’Donoghue said in opening the “Creative Financing and Music” seminar.

O’Donoghue invited participants “to propose strategies and approaches that might improve the situation.”

He pointed out that the European film and TV sectors enjoy an “array of support mechanisms” in Europe and wondered “the extent to which support may be necessary for the music industry.”

One of the key issues debated in Dublin was the funding of creative industries.

Although most growth sectors, such as the telecom or the technology industries, have a wide range of possible sources of financial backing, there are few routes for creative industries.

In its conclusions, one of the seminar’s participants, taxation expert Geraint Howells, insisted that the existing financial mechanisms were not adapted to the way the music industry operates.

This industry, he said, is dominated by small or medium-sized enterprises that often have modest, though crucial, financial needs, especially at the startup stage. “If you need 100,000 euros, you are simply not interested for banks,” Howells said.

(Continued on page 63)
**Maverick Cries Foul Over WMG Court Filing**

BY BRIAN GARRITY

Maverick attorney Bert Fields dismisses as “bogus” a claim by Warner Music Group that Madonna’s label has lost $66 million since 1999.

WMG’s claim is the latest wrinkle in its ongoing spat with Maverick’s principals—led by Madonna and Guy Oseary—over the value of the label and who will control it after this year.

Fields says WMG is “stabbing Madonna in the back” by filing the claim in the middle of settlement negotiations.

According to a recently unsealed Delaware court filing, WMG says that Maverick’s principals would have to cough up $66 million on top of a buyout price if they wanted to take control of the label.

That figure includes the cited $66 million losses plus interest along with outstanding $20 million loan and other uneconomized costs.

WMG claims that Maverick generated $50 million in profits, shared between WMG and Maverick, prior to 1999.

WMG has an option to buy the 60% of Maverick it does not currently own when the labels’ joint-venture agreement expires Dec. 31. According to the court document, filed March 24, if Maverick cannot raise the money needed to buy itself out of WMG’s control, WMG would convert the label into a “purely passive economic interest,” over which Maverick would have no operational control and from which Maverick could not regain any profit until WMG recovers its $66 million in losses as well as the outstanding loan.

As previously reported, Maverick filed a $500 million breach-of-contract suit March 25 in California Superior Court in Los Angeles, seeking to terminate the joint venture.

The suit charges WMG with inaccurate accounting practices that understated the value of the label. WMG’s latest filing was a preemptive action against Maverick, asking a judge to declare that Maverick’s claims were baseless.

As part of the buyout process, Maverick must value the venture. WMG then has the option of taking a buyout at that price or buying out Maverick’s stake at the same price.

Scott Welch, manager for top Maverick act Alanis Morissette, says the interminable battle is the best thing that could happen.

Morissette’s new album, aptly titled “So-Called Chaos,” comes out May 18.

“Maverick wants to sell as many Alanis albums as possible, because if they leave [WMG] they want to be a valuable pickup for another label,” Welch says. “WMG wants to sell as many as possible because if they pick up Maverick, they have an artist who is very valuable.

“We’ve gotten everything we’ve ever asked for.”

Citing gambling statistics, he adds: “The courage to take on tough battles because the cause is right and because someone has to lead.

“Songwriters and publishers owe her a debt of gratitude.”

—LES BIDER, WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC

WMG’s campaign also stated that in the 1990s, “there have been a few artists that have not been paid in a timely manner” and that WMG “is not responsible for any disputes between an artist and their management company.”

**CERTA Charges The Hill**

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—When newly formed coalition CERTA descended on Capitol Hill April 20, its purpose was to talk to lawmakers about supporting anti-piracy measures.

But the group—including audio and video retail, movie house and new media trade associations—did not limit its agenda to anti-piracy and consumer education issues.

In its 33 meetings with Capitol Hill members and staff, CERTA members also told lawmakers of their predicament as the struggling middlemen caught in a digital-era transition between traditional supply and content producers, such as the recording industry and the film industry, and customers with changing buying habits.

Specifically, what they asked for is a change in the copyright law’s Section 115. That deals with music publishing’s mechanical compulsory licenses, Digital Media Assn. (DiMA) executive director Jonathan Potter says.

“CERTA members employ about 750,000 workers nationwide, according to Labor Department statistics.

Although CERTA does not have an official leadership chair, Potter, who is based in D.C., was the unofficial coordinator for the Capitol Hill marathon visit.

CERTA is composed of nearly all of the intellectual property scene on Capitol Hill in 1998 as a roughly heven coalition of Webcasters and online companies.

Potter’s main thrust has been to get equal treatment for new provider entrants into the digital music delivery field, which has been for owners with the record industry for greater control.

Additional reporting by Bill Koppis in Los Angeles.

**Biz Bids Farewell To BMI’s Preston**

BY BILL HOLLAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.—With Frances Preston’s formal announcement of her retirement from BMI this August, many in the industry have stepped up to sing her praises.

President/CEO of the performing rights group for 18 years, Preston will assume the title of president emeritus.

“If she’s a hero to me,” says SESAC president Bill Velez, who spent four years as a BMI staffer.

“I choose one word to describe her, one that I reserve for very few: courageous,” he says. “The courage to take on tough battles because the cause is right and because someone has to lead.

“Songwriters and publishers owe her a debt of gratitude.”

Warner/Chappell Music chairman/CEO Les Bider says. “But she’s also had a major impact on my life, working with her on cancer research programs.”

Preston is president of the T.J. Martell Foundation; Bider is on the board of directors.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., says, “Since 1958, when she joined BMI, Frances Preston has been an invaluable resource to the entire industry. And for more than two decades she has proved herself an invaluable resource for those of us in Washington who understand the importance of the community of songwriters, performers, composers and publishers. Her steady and visionary leadership has spanned unprecedented industry growth and several revolutions in technology and popular culture.

Hilary Rosen, former chairman/CEO of the RIAA, calls Preston “a goddess to those of us who started in the music business after her. Not only was she a role model for women, she always took the time to give Preston a hand.”

Michael Remington, a Washington lawyer and lobbyist for BMI, has known Preston since his days as a congressional staffer. He notes her early civil-rights activism and her impressive cancer-research fundraising.

“First of all, she’s been a real force, not just a part-timer. It’s her name on the wing of Vanderbilt Hospital. Some people you can judge by what they do in the workplace. Others, you can judge by what they do morally and socially outside the workplace. Frances passes both with flying colors.”

David Renzer, Universal Music Publishing president worldwide, says: “Since Preston’s retirement, BMI, Frances has left a legacy and reputation that will continue on for many years to come.”

John LoFrumento, CEO of ASCAP, says his society has “always had the utmost respect” for Preston.

“I have greatly enjoyed working with her to enhance the recognition of American music around the world,” he adds.

Since Preston was appointed president/CEO in 1986, BMI’s revenue has grown more than threefold, from $189 million to almost $630 million.

BMI’s revenue sources underwent a revolution during the Preston era. Significant new income streams.

(Continued on page 7)

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**Upfront**
**NEWSLINE**

**THE WEEK IN BRIEF**

The Federal Bureau of Investigations conducted more than 120 piracy-related searches in 27 states and 10 countries April 21. The effort was aimed at dismantling sites used to pirate music, movies and software. The initiative, known as “Operation Fastlink,” has resulted in the seizure of more than 200 computers, including 30 that served as storage and distribution hubs containing thousands of copies of pirated material. According to the FBI announcement, one server seized in the United States contained 65,000 separate pirated titles. Authorities valued the seized goods at $50 million. No arrests were immediately announced. Nearly 100 individuals worldwide have been identified by the investigation to date, many of whom are the leaders of high-level members of various international piracy organizations, according to the FBI. As the investigations continue, additional targets will be identified and pursued. In a related action, a newspaper in Phoenix reported an FBI raid of a local school district administrative office the same day. The FBI searches reached beyond the United States to the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands, Singapore and Sweden. **BILL HOLLAND**

**EMI Music Publishing** has filed a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against videogame giant Electronic Arts for copyright infringement. According to the complaint, EA used EMI songs in its videogames without obtaining the appropriate licenses or paying certain licensing fees. Specifically, EMI says EA unlawfully used 20 of its songs without permission. EA is seeking damages of $150 million for an injunction to bar EA from marketing or selling the infringement. EMI contends EA uses musical compositions and recordings to market its games. In August 2000, EA launched EA Trax, a marketing initiative using music to promote videogames. Steve Schnur, a former EMI executive, was hired to head the project. In the case in New York District Court for the Southern District of New York, allegations that EA engaged in “a widespread, systematic and willful infringement” of EMI’s rights in numerous compositions to boost sales of its games. “Since 2002, we have led the industry in creating higher standards for compensating artists and publishers for use in videogames,” an EA representative says. “We have agreements for every song used in our games. This entire lawsuit is related to a single song that samples lyrics from another song. Our use of that song was licensed directly from the artist. Every artist that contributes music to our games gets compensated.” **SANATHIA CHANG**

Speciality retailers’ share of the music market continued to erode last year, while digital-music downloads and new consumerFormats showed small incremental growth, according to the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s 2003 consumer survey. The dollar value for record shipments in the United States plunged to $11.8 billion in 2003, from $12.6 billion the previous year. Purchases at music retail stores accounted for 33.2% of all purchases last year, down from 36.8% in 2002. Non-music outlets—mass merchants, discounters, electronics and book stores and others—accounted for 52.8% of sales in 2003, up from 50.1% in 2002. Internet sales (excluding record-club purchases on the Web) took 5% of sales overall, an increase from 3.4% the previous year. Among consumer formats, digital downloads crept up to 1.3% of total sales, from 0.5% in 2002. DVD-Audio represented 2.7% of the market (up from 1.3%); in the first year the format was tracked, SACD took a 0.5% share. While still the dominant format, full-length CDs showed a slight decline, from 99.5% in 2002 to 87.8% last year. Sales among older consumers continued to grow: 26.6% of total purchases in 2003 were made by those age 45 or older. The 35-plus demographic accounted for 47.8% of all sales. Market share of younger listeners slid further: 10- to 24-year-old consumers accounted for 30.2% of purchases last year, 32.9% the previous year. Rock remained the pre-eminent music genre in 2003, accounting for 25.2% of all sales, followed by rap/hip-hop (13.3%), R&B/Urban (10.6%) and country (10.4%). The RIAA survey is conducted by Peter Hart Research and based on a survey of more than 2,900 consumers. **CHRIS MORRIS**

V2 Records has shuttered its Los Angeles office. V2 North America executive VP/GM Steve Backer, who was based in Los Angeles, has stepped down. The five other Los Angeles-based staffers, including A&R executives Jon Sidell and Keith Morris and promotion rep Kristie Vogel, will continue to work for V2, either in their homes or in other offices. V2, whose U.S. headquarters are in New York, had been based at distributor BMG’s Los Angeles branch. V2 representative Dan Cohen would not comment on why the closure occurred or whether Backer would be replaced. **MELINDA NEWMAN and CHRIS MORRIS**

**JUMPSTART**

Continued from page 5

for catalog promotion sales.

Furthermore, the catalog discount should help the company to stimulate sales in that album category, which grew 6.5% in the first quarter, slightly behind the 8.1% pace set by the overall U.S. industry during that time period.

The discount will act as one more tool in ensuring that UMG product gets the required amount of promotion. As the catalog sales grow, so do the opportunities to account for, usually paid for with cooperative advertising funds.

Under JumpStart, participating merchants are required to guarantee a certain amount of sales in-store and real estate as well as other promotional opportunities.

The announcement of the elements of the revised JumpStart also could free up $15.8 million from the sales who were sitting on the fence regarding the promotion.

Initially, one of the main criticisms of JumpStart is that it did not provide any price protection for the devaluing of inventory. As a result, most merchants said they would not lower pricing across the board until after the New Year, the cut-off point for returning product under the old UMG pricing policies. But when the New Year hit, it was clear that UMG would have to revise JumpStart, so some merchants held off re-pricing product until they could see what the new version would look like.

“Other than the lack of price protection on the front end, I have always believed [JumpStart] was a good program. We have made a number of changes in our stores, and we are very supportive of the program. If you shop our stores you will see that,” Trans World Entertainment chairman/CEO Bob Higgins says.

One merchant that did not wait was Sacramento, Calif.-based Tower Records, which selected 350 UMG titles and applied everyday low pricing from December through March. About two-figures were priced at $12.99, while one-third was at $9.99, instead of the chain’s usual $15.99-$17.99 pricing for catalog.

Cassidy says the strategy worked well, giving the chain double-digit increases.

Executive VP Del Bryant has been named Preston’s replacement. John Cody will retain his post as COO and assist Bryant in overseeing BMG’s day-to-day operations.

Preston said in a statement that the move was “carefully planned,” with Bryant’s appointment to executive VP in 2002 a step toward succeeding Preston.

Preston will stay on as president emeritus until the end of the year, she said. “I also look forward to continuing to assist BMG in the future, in whatever experience and network of personal and business relationships can be of value.”
Climbing The Digital Curve

That was just one year ago this week. Since then, iTunes has set the standard for legitimate music download services. Meanwhile, Jobs has cashed in with the sale of millions of iPods: tiny, hand-held MP3 players that can store a universe of digital music on a hard drive.

As the old saying goes, a rising tide lifts all boats, and it’s clear now that iTunes has set the stage for an explosion of other services. But what’s really fascinating is that online music is also helping to popularize older artists and those who can’t get away. That’s helping catalyze sales, and it’s helping to expose new artists. Other retailers are boosting sales by stocking MP3 players and opening downloading kiosks.

Meanwhile, record labels are increasingly using downloads to test and market new music. As Billboard senior editor Melinda Newman notes in this week’s issue, Internet downloads are now the opening shot for most marketing campaigns. Not surprisingly, many of those campaigns begin with an exclusive offering on iTunes.

Despite its rapid success, digital downloading still has a long way to go. It took the CD about 10 years to exceed the cassette tape as the No. 1 form of recorded music. Digital music is growing at a faster rate than CD usage, however, so its day will surely come.

Of course, no one can predict where the market is heading, or whether Apple will maintain its current market share. But one thing is certain: Digital music is a new dawn for the music industry and for music in general.
Veteran Artists Prep New Albums

A number of veteran artists have inked new label deals and have their first releases in many years forthcoming.

Brian Wilson's album "Gettin' in Over My Head" will be his first studio project since 1998's "Imagination" on Paladin Records.

The new set, out June 22 on Rhino Records, features guests Elton John, Eric Clapton and Paul McCartney. The release includes a duet, "Soul Searchin,'" with Wilson's late brother Carl. Wilson took Carl's lead from an earlier session and added his own harmonies.

Wilson plans a European tour this summer.

On the same day as Wilson, the Cure will release its first record under its new three-album global deal with I Am Records/Geffen.

Ross Robinson, who runs I Am Records, produced the group's still-unsigned label debut.

The Cure, helmed by founding frontman Robert Smith, will perform the first single, which is still to be picked, April 30 on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno."

The group will then headline the second night of the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival on May 2.

The group's long-term contract with Fiction/Elektra ended last year. The group signed with 1 Am Records while the imprint went through ArtistDirect Records. Following ArtistDirect's closure, I Am Records switched to Geffen.

The Neville Brothers have signed a licensing deal with Back Porch/Narda/EMI for their classic record catalogue. The group's first album of new material in six years comes out Sept. 21.

As is now tradition, the Neville Brothers will close the 35th annual New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival on May 2.

Gary U.S. Bonds gets the award for the longest time away. He will release his first studio album in 20 years June 1 on M.C. Records. Among the guests on "Back in 30" are Bruce Springsteen, Phoebe Snow and Southside Johnny.

Springsteen's involvement with Bonds goes back to Bonds' 80s albums "Dedication" and "On the Line."

Another music veteran, although certainly not of such longstanding, has just released his first solo album. Brian Vander Ark, former lead singer and primary songwriter for RCA act the Verve Pipe, has released (Continued on page 12)
GMA Honors Comic Stine With Nutt Award

Brad Stine is not the kind of guy who is easily surprised. In fact, with his keen sense of humor and pointed social observations, he’s usually the one raising eyebrows. However, he admits to being a little taken aback when he was told he was this year’s recipient of the Grady Nutt Humor Award.

Presented each year by the Gospel Music Assn. during its annual Gospel Music Week convention, the award recognizes the industry’s top comedian.

A grateful Stine says, “To receive this award is sort of the Christian community saying, ‘You are one of us. We accept you. We get it. We like it. We appreciate you. You are in.’ That’s cool.”

An Indiana native, Stine is a clean, conservative comedian with an acerbic wit and manic energy onstage. He began his career in the general market but felt God calling him to the Christian marketplace.

“I started making a living in main- stream and went [in] the other direction to the Christians,” says Stine, who records for Perpetual Entertainment.

“To be honest with you, I was thinking I was giving away my career in the mainstream, but I just felt like God was saying, ‘Here’s where I want you to go.’”

Ironically, as his career took off in the Christian market with the release last fall of his CD/DVD “Put a Helmet On,” Stine has also had more exposure and opportunities in the mainstream. In June, he’ll have a 8,000-word piece in The New Yorker magazine. He has appeared on syndicated radio shows hosted by Sean Hannity and John Boy & Billy as well as on New York station WOR.

Stine describes his brand of comedy as aggressive, in-your-face and unapologetic.

“I do make fun of atheists and liberals, but I also make fun of Christians,” says Stine, who has become a featured performer at the Christian men’s conference Promise Keepers.

“I’m trying to give a voice to the other half of America that has never had an in-your-face kind of aggressive comic who’s edgy and pushes the envelope like all these other guys do, but yet speaks from the right. They just never had a guy like that, and they want to laugh too.”

In May, Stine will be shooting a new DVD project at the Bijou Theater in Knoxville, Tenn., that is slated for release in June. He is also working on a book, “Being a Christian Without Being An Idiot.”

NEWS NOTE: The Crabb Family has taped a new show that will air weeks on TBN. The family act has also been in the studio working on its new project, “Dri- ven,” due July 13.

Sixteen-year-old singer/songwriter Jessie Daniels has signed a deal with Brettian Productions in South Africa. Brettian will release Daniels’ self-titled six-song EP May 30 throughout South Africa. Daniels also recently signed a booking agreement with Mark Van Meter of One Day Promotions.

Fusebox has signed a booking agreement with Jeff Roberts & Amaretto.

Irish Eyes

Continued from page 9

Snow Patrol Storms U.S. Shores

BY JONATHAN COHEN

NEW YORK—The quandary of how to break a non-U.S. band in the United States is an old one, but Snow Patrol and its U.S. label, A&M(Intercorp), insist they are up to the task.

The group’s third album, “Final Straw,” debuted earlier this year at a career-best No. 3 on the U.K. albums chart. The label has shipped more than 350,000 units of the project in the United Kingdom.

The core of the band is Northern Irish, but the group formed and is based in Scotland.

In North America, A&M(Intercorp) released “Final Straw” March 30. The album is No. 24 on the Billboard Top Heatseekers chart this issue.

The band’s melodic rock-pop seems primed for U.S. support, despite problems experienced by past acts.

“Our shores are littered with the corpses of English bands that have come over here,” Intercorp senior marketing executive Courtney Holt admits. “Little showcases and tastemaker support aren’t enough. The key thing was to make sure Snow Patrol was here playing shows.

“For his part, band frontman Gary Lightbody says he knows a band has to make a big commitment to break here.

“The next big thing from the U.K. tag has been the death knell of many a British band,” Lightbody muses. But he promises the band is willing to put in the legwork required to win over listeners.

The group began a 16-date North American tour April 15 in Atlanta. That marked the band’s third trip here in as many months.

Before Snow Patrol hit U.S. shores for a February tour, AOL Music selected the band for its “Breakers” program in December.

Holt says the infectious, uptempo album track “Spitting Games” was downloaded more than 1 million times through that promotion.

Intercorp’s enthusiasm for the project is not lost on Lightbody. “When we played in Los Angeles in February, apparently there were more people there from Intercorp than have ever been to see a band,” he says.

Snow Patrol further capitalized on the buzz at March’s South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin, where it played several shows.

“Spitting Games” went wide to radio as the first U.S. single earlier that week.

“That record totally fits what we do here,” says PD Eddie Gutierrez of KKEE Santa Barbara, Calif., which jumped on the single two weeks prior to its air date. “We’re getting a lot of calls for it already.”

Kitt’s “Square One” and Dempsey’s “Seize the Day” are platinum albums in Ireland (for 15,000 shipments). Dempsey, endorsed by such stars as Chrissie Hynde and Morrissey, is likely to see U.S. release of his album in the fall, according to his manager, Special Music & Media.

“Emerging Irish artists have had a phenomenal level of international exposure in the last 18 months, particularly in the U.K. and U.S.,” says Keith Johnson of the Irish Music Rights Organization (IMRO). “America is a notoriously difficult market for European artists to break into, but it has been receptive to artists like Damien Rice, the Thrills, the Frames and Gemma Hayes.

“The success of these artists has cer- tainly resulted in a focusing on Ireland by the U.K. majors, independents and, increasingly, by U.S.-based labels.”

QUALITY, NOT NATIONALITY

Although Rice and Simple Kid have given a strong Irish flavor to Vectors’ artist roster, it’s a question of “never mind the nationality, feel the quality” for co-founders Jack Rovery and Ken Levin.

“As far as being another artist from Ireland, signing [Simple Kid] was a coincidence,” Rovery says. “If you look at history, Ireland has produced some of the greatest artists, but I don’t believe there’s an Irish sound.”

“I’m convinced the reason Damien is doing great in the States is that he has spent so much time here, he’s probably on his sixth go-round now,” Rovery says. “It’s the same with Ciaran; his appeal goes way beyond his Irishness.”

In the buildup to “SKI,” Simple Kid will tour the United States in May and June, both solo shows and with his multifaceted, interactive “Simple Club” nights.

Levin adds, “Looking from afar, Ireland has always had an affinity for the creative, be it musical or literary. [This current wave] may change the focus, but it doesn’t change the quality (Continued on page 73)
Microsoft Intent On Settling Its Differences

If you can’t beat ’em, settle. That’s the message Microsoft is giving off lately.

The software giant, which is under siege in Europe for antitrust violations, settled a class action in Minnesota state court April 19.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs had accused Microsoft of abusing its monopolistic market position to overcharge for its Windows operating system. Financial terms were not disclosed. But the Minnesota class—a group of seven individuals and businesses—was seeking more than $400 million on behalf of customers who were allegedly overcharged by Microsoft.

The case is noteworthy because Microsoft chairman Bill Gates and CEO Steve Ballmer had been named as witnesses in the suit. Had the case not been settled, it would have been the first class action involving two weeks ago, Microsoft agreed to pay $40 million to settle a digital rights management lawsuit launched by InterTrust Technologies.

So far, Microsoft has paid out a total of $1.5 billion to settle antitrust litigation with nine other U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Microsoft has never conceded any wrongdoing.

WIPING TI E SLATE: For better or worse, the Recording Industry Assn. of America has canceled its Clean Slate program, which offered legal immunity to self-professed illegal file-sharers.

In court documents filed April 16, the group said the program is no longer necessary because the public is now adequately informed that illegal downloading can lead to litigation.

Under Clean Slate, which drew more than 1,000 sign-ups, individuals were required to acknowledge in writing that they had illegally shared copyrighted music online and that they would cease such activity.

The P.A.A. had launched the program last September, at around the same time it began suing individual file-sharers or copyright infringement.

SLIPPERY SLOPE: The film industry, which has long been watching how illegal downloading has decimated its music business, had better star taking notes.

Ameicans are increasingly downloading movies off the Internet, according to a report by market researcher Ipsos-Insight. In late 2003, more than 21% of downloaders aged 12 and up had downloaded a full-length motion picture from the Internet, according to the study.

“An epidemic downloading behaviors are expanding beyond music and movie toward broader digital entertainment acquisition,” says Matt Klein, a senior analyst with Ipsos-Insight’s technology group, who authored the report.

Research also indicates that 38% of users have downloaded a music video from the Internet, while 15% have downloaded a digital video.

Will it be too early to conclude how much digital downloading will affect the still-healthy film business?

Music industry observers warn it is only a matter of time before papa might just clip a picture’s stock in much the same way it has video labels.

URG E TO MERGE: Hale and Dorr of Boston will merge with Washington, D.C.-based law firm Wilmer Cutler Pickering.

The merged firm will have 1,000 attorneys and combined revenue of more than $600 million.

William J. Perlstein and William F. Lee will be co-managing partners of the combined group. The deal is expected to close by May 31.

WEEING N DEALING: The New York law firm of Weil Gotshal & Manges advised DirecTV Group in its $1 billion merger to form PanAmSat.


The deal, which is valued at $4.3 billion, is expected to close in the second half of 2004.

WHO’S NEWS: O’Melveny & Myers has named Joe Calabrese managing partner of its 100-lawyer Century City, Calif., office.

Calabrese, who has been with the firm for 22 years, is the chairman of O’Melveny’s entertainment and media practice group.

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Waters Dips Into His Catalog For ‘Ride’ Remix

When a song has long legs, why not try to extend their length? That’s what smooth jazz veteran Kim Waters has done on his new Shanachie Entertainment album “In the Name of Love,” out April 27.

The saxophonist scored a hit single with “The Ride” from his previous Shanachie disc, “Someone to Love You.” This time around, he revisits it D is also featured on another funk fest, “In Deep.”

“In the Name of Love” is Waters’ 13th album—and fourth for Shanachie. It marks his 19th anniversary as a recording artist.

The R&B-infused CD features the sweet ballad “I Wanna Do It (Is Please You)”; the grooving “Cross My Heart,” co-written with guitarist Chuck Loeb; and an upbeat take on R. Kelly’s dancefloor hit, “Step in the Name of Love.”

Another noteworthy cover, Barry White/Love Unlimited Orchestra’s classic “Love’s Theme,” is a nod to Waters’ father. “My dad always teased me that you’re not doing anything until you cover a Barry White song,” the saxophonist says. “This is one of the greatest songs of all time, and it’s great for the sax. My dad heard my take, and he loves it.”

Waters blows soprano and alto saxophones. For the smoother tunes, he favors the soprano for its melodic flow. He opts for his alto for the more straight-ahead numbers. “My preference? Definitely the alto, because I can play pretty and gritty at the same time.”

HARD COPY FOR ONLINE RADIO: After four years of global broadcasting over the Internet, smoothjazz.com is partnering with Carzino Entertainment Alliance (CEA) to release a series of smooth jazz concept compilation CDs.

Distribution of the Digipak releases of instrumental and adult vocals will be handled by Minneapoliis-based Navare Entertainment

AWARDS GALORE: New School University’s Jazz and Contemporary Music Program bestowed its prestigious Beacons in Jazz Awards March 30 on four living giants of popular music: Ahmet Ertegun, co-founder of Atlantic Records; singer icon Aretha Franklin; jazz bassist Percy Heath; and pianist/rock’n’roll granddaddy Johnny Johnson.

Guitarist George Benson accepted the award for Franklin, who earlier in the week was released from the hospital.

A cast of legends provided music at the ceremony. Aside from Heath, Billy Taylor and Ben E. King, an all-star jazz band featuring pianist McCoy Tyner and saxophonist Jimmy Heath played. Trumpeter Wynton Marsalis led another all hoc group. Recently signed Manhattan Records singer/guitarist Raul Midon won the revelation of the evening.

The get-together took place in the Grand Ballroom of New York’s Pierre Hotel. On March 8, ASCAP added seven artists to its Jazz Wall of Fame at its New York offices. In addition to honoring the careers of Quincy Jones and Marian McPartland, ASCAP inducted five musicians posthumously: Ray Brown, Carmen McRae, Woody Herman, Joe Pass and Willie “The Lion” Smith.

THREE DOT LOUNGE: On May 4, pianist/vocalist Eliane Elias will release a Bluebird/RCA Victor Group album of several firsts. The superb bossa-nova-drenched “Dreamer” marks the first time Elias has composed songs in English and recorded an album with almost the entire lyric sung in English. It’s also her debut disc with a full orchestra, conducted by arranger Rob Mathes. Under the artistic direction of bassist Ben Allison, the Jazz Composers Collective celebrated its fourth annual festival at New York’s Jazz at Lincoln Center with a series of shows April 13-18. Allison delivered sets with two different bands: Peace Pipe and Medicine Wheel, which celebrated the release of “Buzzy” (Palmetto Records) ... Guitarist John Pizzarelli celebrates the 40th anniversary of Antonio Carlos Jobim’s classic song “Girl From Ipanema” with his April 27 “Bossa Nova” album on Telarc. Jobim’s grandson Daniel Jobim appears on the album and will tour with Pizzarelli in support of the CD. ... DL Media opened a West Coast office April 15 in the Los Angeles area with longtime DL employee Brad Biesau at the helm.

For more festival information log on to betjazz.com

www.americanradiohistory.com
Bocephus!

Superstar’s Son
To Young Gun
To Country Icon

Well, my Mama met my Daddy down in Alabam’
They tied the knot, so here I am.
—"Born to Boogie"

BY RAY WADDELL

When Randall Hank Williams was born 54 years ago in Shreveport, La., he had a tough act to follow. But today he casts as wide a shadow as any artist over the country music landscape.

The pride-and-joy son of Hank Williams, arguably the most iconic of all country music figures, and his firecracker wife, Audrey, Hank Jr. moved with his parents to Nashville at 3 months old. Bocephus, as his dad nicknamed him, was heir to a legacy that he has spent a lifetime burningish and building upon.

Hank Williams died at age 29 on New Year’s Day 1953, and just a few years later, Hank Jr. was singing his father’s songs himself.

With his mother as his manager, Hank Williams Jr. made his onstage debut singing "Lovesick Blues" in Swainsboro, Ga. Three years later, Hank Jr. performed on the Grand Ole Opry for the first time, and his career was officially under way.

By the time Hank Jr. was in his mid-teens, he was a veteran of several tours, first as a member of Audrey’s Caravan of Stars and later as a headlining artist in his own right.

His companions as a youth included such legendary hell-raisers as Jerry Lee Lewis, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash and, of course, Merle Kilgore, Hank Jr.’s longtime manager and one-time opening act.

"We had a lot of fun," Kilgore remembers of the era and parties at Audrey’s house. "People like Cash, Hank Snow, Jerry Lee all came over, we all had a

(Continued on page 20)
THE #1's

HOT COUNTRY SINGLES & TRACKS
All For The Love Of Sunshine
Eleven Roses
Texas Women
Dixie On My Mind
All My Rowdy Friends
(Have Settled Down)
Honky Tonkin'
I'm For Love
Ain't Misbehavin'
Mind Your Own Business
Born To Boogie

HOT COUNTRY AIRPLAY
I'm For Love
Ain't Misbehavin'
Mind Your Own Business

HOT COUNTRY SINGLE SALES
I'm For Love
Ain't Misbehavin'
Country State Of Mind
Mind Your Own Business
Born To Boogie
Young Country

TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS
Greatest Hits

TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS
Major Moves (7 weeks)
Five-O (10 weeks)
Greatest Hits, Volume II
Montana Cafe (4 weeks)
Hank "Live"
Born To Boogie
Wild Streak (2 weeks)
Greatest Hits, Volume III (11 weeks)
Curb Records Congratulates
Hank Williams Jr.
On 5 Decades Of Music 1969 - 2004

ALBUMS
All For The Love Of Sunshine
Sweet Dreams
One Night Stands
Family Tradition
Whiskey Bent And Hell Bound
Habits Old And New
Rowdy
The Pressure Is On
The New South
High Notes
Greatest Hits (3)
Strong Stuff
Man Of Steel
Major Moves
Five-O
Greatest Hits, Volume II
Montana Cafe
Hank "Live"
Born To Boogie
Wild Streak
Greatest Hits, Volume III
Lone Wolf
America (The Way I See It)
Pure Hank
Maverick
The Best Of Hank & Hank
Out Of Left Field
Hog Wild
A.K.A. Wham Bam Sam
Men With Broken Hearts
Stormy
Almeria Club Recordings
I'm One Of You

SINGLES
All For The Love Of Sunshine
Rainin' In My Heart
Ain't That A Shame
Mobile Boogie
I'm Not Responsible
(Honey Won't You Call Me)
One Night Stands
Feelin' Better
You Love The Thunder
I Fought The Law
Old Flame, New Fire
To Love Somebody
Family Tradition
Whiskey Bent And Hell Bound
Women I've Never Had
Kaw-Liga
Old Habits
Texas Women
Dixie On My Mind
All My Rowdy Friends
(Have Settled Down)
A Country Boy Can Survive
Honky Tonkin
American Dream
(If Heaven Ain't A Lot Like Dixie)
Gonna Go Huntin' Tonight
Leave Them Boys Alone
Queen Of The Heart
Man Of Steel
Attitude Adjustment
All My Rowdy Friends Are
Coming Over Tonight
Major Moves

I'm For Love
This Ain't Dallas
Ain't Misbehavin'
Country State Of Mind
Mind Your Own Business
When Something Is Good
(Why Doesn't It Change)
Born To Boogie
Heaven Can't Be Found
Young Country
If The South Woulda Won
Early In The Morning And Late At Night
There's A Tear In My Bear
(w/ Hank Williams)
Finders And Keepers
Ain't Nobody's Business
Good Friends, Good Whiskey, Good Lovin'
Man To Man
Don't Give Us A Reason
I Mean I Love You
If It Will It Will
Angels Are Hard To Find
Hotel Whiskey
Come On Over To The Country
Everything Comes Down To Money And Love
I Ain't Goin' Peacefully
Hog Wild
America Will Survive
Outdoor Lovin Man
I'm One Of You
Why Can't We All Just Get A Longneck

* RIAA GOLD CERTIFICATION
* RIAA PLATINUM CERTIFICATION
I Like That Banjo And I Like Balls-To-The Wall Rock
Hank Williams Jr Looks Back On Family, Friends, Fans And Football

BY RAY WADDELL
You travel about 100 miles north-west of Nashville to rural Paris, Tenn., to find the offices of Hank Williams Jr. Enterprises. There, on a recent day, before sitting down for a chat with a visitor, Williams offered up the latest addition to his impressive collection of World War artifacts, an exhaustively documented musket from the Sixth Cavalry of Alabama.

Williams and longtime manager Merle Kilgore later took their visitor for a short ride out to Williams' Paradise Lodge retreat, where wild turkey and Tennessee white-tailed deer dropped by for happy hour.

"You don't see this in Green Hills," Williams remarked, referring to the upscale Nashville borough.

"This is where I'd rather have my afternoon cocktail.

Williams' collection "Greatest Hits Vol. 1" recently passed the milestone of 500 weeks combined on the Top Country Catalog and Top Country Albums charts. Meanwhile, Mercury Records has issued "The Best of Hank Williams, Jr." as part of its 20th Century Masters/The Millennium Collection, and Curb Records has released his latest CD, "I'm One of You."

And this son of country legend Hank Williams has fathered his own young country contenders. His son, Shelton Hank Williams III, and daughter, Holly Williams, are building their own music careers.

The veteran performer spared some time to talk about his life and work, from the earliest days to his current success, and to reflect on an illustrious family tradition in country music.

What are your earliest memories of performing?
We do have an [early film] of me in Swainsboro, Ga., at 8 years old. Thank God I can't remember much of it, but I've seen it. To be quite honest, it wasn't until just a couple of years later that [performing] was totally commonplace for me.

I was out there. That was 1957, and of course everybody was starved for some piece of this person [Hank Williams] that so few people actually got to see. And the ones who did were just mystified.

I would be out there at 8, 9, 10, 11, 12... People were either laughing and smiling or completely broken up. It was happiness and it was sorrow. That's the earliest thing I remember.

I really remember riding in the cars. Trailer in the back, sometimes the bass fiddle on the top. I could climb into the back window above the seat and lay down, that's how little I was. They'd have the Grand Ole Opry on, and I'd say, "Put it on WLAC, I wanna hear Hoss." Many times over the years going somewhere in a jet to make a lick, I've thought about how I'm glad I got to see some of that.

Other than the obvious impact of your father, who else influenced you early in your career? Lightnin' Hopkins, Jimmy Reed, Muddy Waters, Robert Johnson, John Lee Hooker—all of that stuff.

What was it that they did that you responded to?
I loved the Delta blues stuff, the open-G tuning, like I've been doing for years. I liked the music they were making. I liked the beat, the feel, the rhythm. I liked everything about it.

When you were a teenager and young man, you had some pretty interesting friends, like Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis. That was a pretty fast crowd to be running with for a kid.

Everybody was coming over to your home at 4916 Franklin Rd. to touch Hank's piano, number one. Jerry Lee at Mother's parties. Johnny wants to shoot the cannon. So we shoot the cannon, knock books off the shelf at the neighbor's house.

Hank Snow one night. Jerry Lee one night, Ferlin Husky one night. Or pop people, Ray Charles, Fats Domino. You never knew who would be recording in town and come by.

That's a heck of an education.
Oh, man, to have Earl Scruggs show you how to play banjo? I'd ride my little Harley over to Earl's house. What a wonderful guy. What a perfect position to be in. Talk about the planets being lined up for me: "Hold that over here, tune that key here.

Now it's come full circle: me with Kenny Chesney, Kid Rock or whatever. It's a good feeling. The music marches on.

In the first part of your career, even though you had success touring and on record, it must have been frustrating to not have your own songs and style embraced.
A lot of it I didn't care about. In the late 1960s, I probably wasn't paying much attention to it. There was a lot going on in the late '60s. And I was at that age when there's one thing on your mind above everything else, and it ain't hunting' cannonballs. [Williams] shows it in the "Kazoo, the 'Cheatin' Heart'" movie. I did 230 shows one year in a bus. Talk about touring. In '66-'67, it was one continuous road trip, and I was young enough to say, "Fine with me.

And I flew home and got married, a really brilliant move. I showed them all.

Tell me about the move to Cullman, Ala., in 1974 and the recording of "Hank Williams Jr. & Friends" in Muscle Shoals.
Now you're talking. The teenage boy was gone. Somewhere around '69-'70, it was one big party, but that's when I started thinking, "I'm going to do something different." I started laying out actual goals: I'm either going to do this or do something else. It's not going to be going out there and imitating Daddy. That's over.

A lot of depression, that's part of the reason I moved down there in the first place. Probable a lot of the same thing my son Shelton [Hank III] is going through now. You're getting pulled from all angles. It's probably harder in his case than mine. He's following a couple of pretty good hitters. One of them was a real good hitter.

In retrospect, moving to Cullman was the right thing to do.
Without a doubt. A lot of great things were coming out of Muscle Shoals. And the Allman Brothers and Lynyrd Skynyrd were happening. This is my generation. This is what I listen to. I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I'm not listening to those [other country artists]. I'm listening to Toy Caldwell. I'm playing down there with my buddies.

The Alabama move was absolutely the right thing at the right time [in the right place]. Grandaddy's right down the road; it's halfway between Nashville and Montgomery, more or less. It worked out quite well.

A lot of people ask me how many albums I've made, and I say, "None of 'em count until 'Friends.' " With "Friends," I feel good that's when I got really serious.

"Friends" arrived in 1976 and saw you team up with Caldwell, Charlie Daniels and Pete Carr, among others. Critics and fans loved it, but then you were blinded by falling off Ajax Mountain in 1975, so you didn't get much chance to enjoy the praise. It was like, "He's never going to sing again, if he lives."

They'd tell me how the album was out and they'd play it and put my picture on the screen, and all the kids would give a standing ovation. They probably [thought], "He ain't gonna make it back."

The doctors said, "We don't know if he's going to know anything or not." One of those doctors, who had been a Navy doctor in Vietnam, said, "My friend, you had a pretty bad trauma wound up there. I don't know if you're supposed to count elk or play, but you have been left here (Continued on page 18)
MESSAGE TO BOCEPHUS:

Thanks for all the years of being on the same stage and seeing you become the ICON you are today.

Today, as from day one, I am still your #1 fan!

Merle Kilgore, Personal Manager
Executive VP
Hank Williams Jr. Enterprises, Inc.

THANKS HANK! FROM THE TEAM

HANK:

Thanks for being that unique artist with a true "grip" on the importance of PR! It's a total pleasure to represent a genuine superstar...

Kirt Webster
President
Webster & Associates PR

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merle.kolgoremanagement@aol.com
www.americanradiohistory.com
Q&A
Continued from page 16

to do something.” I always remembered his words.

But when you came back, your creative vision was so focused. How would you describe what you wanted to do?

I was locked in. I got in there [in the studio] with Jimmy Bowen, and said, “This is the key. Here’s the lick. This is the intro. This is the turnaround. This is where I want the horns. This is where I want the mandolin. This is the whole thing.”

And Bowen said, “I’ll handle the board, everything outside that glass, you handle.” And that’s how we did it.

So you just assumed total control.

You bet I did. I said, I’m going to put my stamp all over this stuff. It was flowing. Writing three, four songs in one day. You just smile and get a little better. I went from 224 to 160 [pounds] in that fall, and I was slowly coming back physically, learning to see and smell and taste again, and wondering about the next operation.

Your style brought a lot of new fans to country, but some of your older fans must have been shocked.

Oh, they were. [laughs] Talk about rockin’! Full-tilt boogie. I had four 10s stacked with Marshall heads, and the Strato-caster, and I was laying it out there: Here it is, and if you don’t like it, there’s the door.

If I had 1,000 [people] there, and 400 or 500 of them left, the next time there’d be 3,500, the next time 7,000, the next time 10,000. Boom, boom, boom, just like that, in a matter of about three or four years there.

I remember doing “La Grange” on top of the piano at the Grand Ole Opry, and Roy Acuff jumped up there and did a little “La Grange” with me. They had bussed in all these older folks, and I said, “It’s nice to be here, but I won’t be back for a while. These folks ain’t bought a record in 30 years.” That’s the way I looked at it.

But even though you were packing arenas and selling records, the music industry seemed a little slower to come around. I remember when you won an award for best video, you made that comment: “I do audio, too.” Do you think the country music establishment in those days was a little scared of you?

They had to throw the stray dog a bone. Merle Haggard won something the year before, and he said, “Well, this is bullshit, it should have been Hank Jr.’s award, I know that.” I never forgot that, ol’ Hag.

What’s your approach in the studio?

This is my album, my stuff, [so] it’s going to be my way. I can play a little of this, a little of that. If we’re doing a ZZ Top song, “Blue Jean Blues” or whatever, I’ll run over to the organ and show what I want.

The trouble with me and a lot of others, we basically want to do eight-bar blues all night long.

How did recording the “Monday Night Football” theme song impact your career?

Something like that puts you out there in a whole different realm. Millions of viewers. CEOs, or somebody singing hot dogs in New Jersey, or some grandma in a nursing home, they all see it. Three Emmys and a one-year deal turned into 14, 15 years, and now it’s the 30th anniversary [of “Monday Night Football”], so they want a special song for this year. It’s a sought unbelievable attention to the touring, the shows. What a vehicle of publicity you don’t even go after; it just happens. That’s one of the big moments for me.

Even though you’ve cut back on touring, do you still get a charge out of performing live?

Oh yeah. When you walk out there and they’re singing every single word, then Kid Rock comes out on two or three shows, I don’t have to tell you the effect that has. There’s something to doing this small amount of shows.

I’ve had some real opportunities to open [for other artists], but people find out real quick I ain’t gonna do it. I ain’t doing 30 shows, and I damn sure ain’t doing 40. The energy level is a lot different when you just have those few shows. You’re really looking forward to it. There may be somebody in that area [you’re playing] you’ve known for a long time, maybe somebody who builds guitars, somebody who builds fiddlelocks, maybe a sports figure. It ain’t a bad way to make a living. And the fans—talk about loyal! It’s still amazing to me.

Your two most recent albums have both been well-received, but they’re quite different stylistically. “Almeria Club” is a rootsy, bluesy, pickers’ album, while “I’m One of You” is a more hard-edged, traditional Bocephus record.

Does shifting stylistically keep you energized?

That’s my trouble. I like to pick up that banjo and play “Foggy Mountain Breakdown,” and I like balls-to-the-wall rock. I like different styles. I’m not a guy who stands there at the microphone and never moves [and says], “Here’s another love song.” We’ve got plenty of those.

You like to feel and touch history, don’t you?

You bet I do. That yard on Franklin Road where I grew up was full of miniballs, cannon fragments, from the Battle of Nashville, and when it would rain, we found so much stuff. I still go out with that metal detector, and my daughter Holly is nuts about it.

No phonies and fakes when it comes out of the ground,

(Continued on page 25)
BOCETUS -

THANKS FOR LETTING CMT BE ONE OF YOUR LOYAL FRIENDS.

(WE LOVE YOUR NEW SONG - AND JUST TO REMIND YOU, WE CMT SPECIAL "MAKING THE VIDEO: HANK WILLIAMS JR." AIRS APRIL 30.)
Bocephus!
Continued from page 13

good time by the pool and Hank Jr. was eatin' it all up.”
Kilgore was Hank Jr.'s opening act by the time the latter
was 14, a slot Kilgore held for 25 years.

Hank sometimes performed as “Rockin’ Randall;” and at first,
“Audrey wanted him to go pop and rock. She got him gold lame
outfits; he was young, good-look-
ing. ” Kilgore says.
But the young man's country
music pedigree could not be
denied. According to Kilgore,
“People had never seen the son of
Hank Williams. They went
crazy.”

In 1963, Bocephus—his father
gave him the nickname—
“moved it on over to MGM,” as he
once sang. He broke on a Bill-
board chart for the first time
with “Long Gone Lonesome
Blues” in 1964.

Later that year, George Hamil-
ton played Hank Williams in the
film "Your Cheatin' Heart," and a 14-year-old Hank Jr. pro-
vided the vocals. He re-signed with MGM/Curb in 1969, and
at the time it was the biggest recording contract in the label's
history.

“It was a very important contract,” Curb founder and
president Mike Curb says. “Mostly all of his music in the 1960s
was either his father's songs or songs about his father. He had
been, for all practical purposes, marketed as the son of the great-
est legend in country music."

That, of course, was all about to change.

I am very proud of my Daddy's name
Although his kind of music and mine ain't exactly the same.
—"Family Tradition"

As the '60s turned into the '70s, Williams increasingly recorded
more contemporary songs, including the 1970 hit "All for the Love
of Sunshine," from the soundtrack of Clint Eastwood's film "Kelly's
Heroes." The song was the first of Williams' 10 No. 1 singles on the
Billboard Hot Country Singles chart. One year later, Williams' own
song, "Eleven Roses," also topped the charts.

Williams continued to assert his
independence, often from the stage.

"I remember his speech on his
21st birthday in Galveston, Texas,"
Kilgore says. "In effect, he said, ‘No
one's gonna tell me what to say,
what to wear or what to do, from
this day forward.’"

Williams achieved some measure
of chart success through the early '70s, but he struggled with
some of the same personal demons that plagued his father. So in
1974, thinking a change of scenery might do him good, Williams
moved from Nashville to Cullman, Ala., to chart his own musi-
cal path.

Williams ended his agent/manager relationship with the late
(Continued on page 22)

Hank’s Sway

What I do now is what I did then.
—"Born to Boogie"

Today, you can't turn on country radio without hearing
Hank Williams Jr.'s influence, as artists ranging from Brooks
& Dunn and Tim McGraw to Toby Keith and Dierks Bentley
have poured through doors that Bocephus kicked down.

"I wanted to make music that drinks well," Bentley once said,
describing his approach to songwriting and performing. "If we're
going to err, we're going to err on the side of Hank Jr."

Similarly, Williams has provided the soundtrack for many
an influential Southern night. "We used to go to what we
called bar pits, out in the country, where you dig all the top-
soil out, and we'd steal tires from the co-op, build a big fire
to keep the mosquitoes away, back the trucks up and drink

"Hank Williams Jr. was our hero, and we'd crank him up.
That influence continues today. Hank's much-publicized
friendship with Kid Rock, which includes collaborations
onstage and in the studio, has turned a whole new genera-
tion of fans on to Bocephus. Manager Merle Kilgore says of
the Kid Rock connection: "We hitched Hank up to a rocket."

—TIM McGRaw

Ray Waddell

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Hank Williams Jr.
on a truly
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HANK WILLIAMS JR.

on five decades of music
Buddy Lee and signed a new management deal with J.R. Smith, owner of an Alabama trucking business.

The move to Alabama proved to be a productive one. Williams recorded "Hank Williams Jr. & Friends" in Muscle Shoals with the help of such Southern rock stalwarts as Charlie Daniels, Toy Caldwell, Dickie Betts and Chuck Leavell. With this landmark album, the course for his musical path seemed clear.

"When I first heard the 'Friends' album, I thought, 'Whoa, he's really ready to emerge,'" Curb remembers. "That album showed more of a free-flowing style. But then the next thing I knew I got a call from Merle Kilgore saying Hank was in critical condition.

"Fate had sucker punched Williams when, just as 'Friends' arrived, the artist plummeted 500 feet face-first from Ajax Mountain while hiking on the Montana/Idaho border. He split his skull, causing massive structural damage to his face. "It was over," Kilgore says. "His brain came out of his head, and his guide, Dick Willy, pushed it back in."

Williams lay on that mountainside for seven hours before he was rescued, never losing consciousness. The doctors in Missoula, Mont., did not expect a full recovery.

"When I went to see him, his head looked like a watermelon," Kilgore recalls. But recover Williams did, although it took more than a year and a half and numerous reconstructive surgeries.

When Williams was healed, there was no looking back. As soon as he was able, he re-entered the studio. A brace of late-'70s releases on Warner Bros./Curb—"New South," produced by Waylon Jennings, and "One Night Stands"—solidified Williams' new musical stance.

By 1979, when Williams signed a new agreement with Curb, he was ready for a new generation of country fans seeking a bridge between George Jones and Lynyrd Skynyrd. The transition had its rocky moments. In concert, Williams still drew old-guard fans of his father who followed the son's career, as well as a scruffy bunch of admirers who responded to Bocephus' rowdier inclinations.

When Williams played ZZ Top and Lynyrd Skynyrd covers, along with his own Southern-tinged style, audiences soon tilted toward young rebels raised on rock.

"When he played 'Sweet Home Alabama' for 15 minutes with those Marshall amps at volume 100, he'd empty the hall," Kilgore says. "Out of 5,000, 200 would stay. But he kept on until everybody stayed." Williams released two albums in 1979 on Curb/Elektra, both of which are now considered classics: "Family Tradition" and "Whiskey Bent & Hell Bound."

"Songs from both records remain staples of his live show. They also provide much material later released as 'Greatest Hits, Vol. 1.' That album has spent more than 500 weeks combined on the Top Country Albums and Top Country Catalog Albums charts.

"When Hank first played 'Family Tradition' for [producer] Jimmy Bowen, Bowen fell off his chair," Kilgore recalls. "He said, 'This is historic.' And it was. It changed country music forever.

I'm not a walk-behind
I'm a neat right-ordered.

— "The Blues Man"

Fearless in the studio, Williams constantly pushed the envelope, ripping through traditional country boundaries by incorporating elements of rock, blues, Dixieland, gospel and R&B.

Always a prolific and innovative songwriter, Williams also retains a knack for well-conceived covers, with anybody from Aerosmith and Ernest Tubb to Fats Domino and Warren Zevon fair game.

"Hank didn't really consider himself a Nashville artist—he considered himself an artist," Curb says. "In reality, Hank Williams Jr. is a rock star who shares the name of the greatest country legend of all time."

Williams exploded with gold and platinum success in the early 1980s, a time of seemingly boundless creativity for him.


Williams often has had several albums on the Billboard country album charts simultaneously. In one incredible week—that of Oct 23, 1982—Williams had nine albums on the Billboard country album chart.

(Continued on page 25)
Over 70 hit albums. Five decades of music.
15 years of firing everybody up
on Monday nights.

(And popular with the ladies.)

Congratulations, Hank. All your rowdy friends here
wish you continued success. See you this Fall. We're ready.
Delivering The Goods On The Road
Williams Pioneered Rock-Style Tours Within Country Genre

Went on the road when I was 8 years old
When I turned 15 I was stealin' the show.
—"Born to Boogie"

BY RAY WADDELL

Hank Williams Jr. has been an arena-level superstar for more than 20 years. But the singer/musician had honed his on-stage chops the hard way for more than half his life before he turned 30.

Williams always had the goods live. His 1969 performance at Detroit’s Cobo Hall was, at the time, the highest-grossing performance by a country artist, with a box-office take of $395,000. MGM released an album of the performance later that year.

"That's nothing now," Williams says of the then-record gross. "But that was big news then. I was rolling, believe me. Young and strong and ready to rock."

Williams' Cheatin' Heart Special tour bus went everywhere in the 1970s, with the artist relentlessly taking his show to auditoriums, civic centers, fairs, festivals—anywhere he could book a date.

Indeed, the genesis of what is today known as Buddy Lee Attractions came from the partnership of Williams' mother, Audrey Williams, with ex-pro wrestler Buddy Lee of the Aud-Lee Agency to book Williams.

On stage, Bocephus plays guitar, banjo, piano, keyboards, harmonica, fiddle, drums and anything else within reach. As his own sound began to take shape, Williams moved to larger buildings in the 1980s, and he moved with the late booking agent Dan Wojcik to Entertainment Artists in the middle of the decade.

By the early 1990s, Williams had signed with the William Morris Agency. WMA VP Greg Oswald has booked his dates for more than a decade.

Williams' rowdy performances with his crack Barra Band began to routinely fill arenas, and when the amphitheater boom began in the mid-1980s, the Bocephus show was tailor-made for legendary outdoor Saturday nights.

"I've worked with Hank since the early days, and he's a phenomenal performer," says Louis Messina, veteran promoter and president of TMG/AEG Live. "I'd book Hank Jr. any time, just call 1-800-Louis."

Pioneering promoter Tony Ruffino worked with Williams every step of the way in Birmingham, Ala.

"He used to do club dates for us at a place called Brothers in Birmingham," Ruffino says. "Then we moved him up to Boutwell Auditorium at about 8,000 capacity, then the Civic Center. We still do him at Oak Mountain Amphitheater in nearby Pelham, Ala.,."

Williams was among the first country artists to bring rock-level production values to their concerts. The stage designs of the early 1990s gave fans bang for their bucks.

His "million-dollar stage" in the late 1980s came from R.A. Roth of Atlanta, which until then had only designed productions for major rock acts.

Williams was also among the first country artists to dabble in nationally promoted tours, with CFI promoting Williams coast to coast in 1992.

And, unlike most acts of any genre, Williams' career touring arc reached its zenith—and stayed there.

"One thing about Hank Williams Jr., from the day hestarted heading the big buildings, he never played anything less," Oswald says. "Here's a guy that started playing the big buildings in '80-'81. He's still there, and there's never been a time when he wasn't."

After years of playing 100-plus dates annually, Williams has cut back his schedule considerably to 20-25 choice dates annually.

He makes what dates he does play count. "I played 18 shows last year, and I remember when I sat down with my accountants and tax people, I had one of the biggest years ever, on a small number of shows."

Williams also says he feels more energized for each performance when playing a smaller number of dates.

Williams rarely works in hunting season and prefers to play weekends only. And he is that rare country artist willing and able to take a year off now and then.

"Hank will take some time off, not unlike a rock act," Oswald observes. "That's pretty much unheard-of in country. He takes time off because he wants to go back out with fresh product, to fresh markets. Hank had a rock mentality about touring when nobody else in country had it."

That's not to say Oswald wouldn't like to book more dates for Williams. "But the rules are fairly clear," he says. "We know what we need to do with Hank because we communicate." Dwindle outstrips supply. "Every buyer, every fair, festival, shed and arena out there is dying to have a Hank Jr. date," Oswald says. "Demand exceeds what we can deliver 10 to 1. I could sell 200 dates a year on him."

Hank, it's been an honor and a privilege working with a Living Legend.

Congratulations and all the best in the years to come.
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NFL Mascot

Millions of football fans have come to know Hank Williams Jr. through his "Monday Night Football" anthem on ABC, with which he has a relationship that dates back to 1990.

The song adapts Hank favorite "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight" to "All My Rowdy Friends Are Here for Monday Night," punctuated by an exuberant catchphrase, "Are you ready for some football?"

"Initially, we just loved the song," says Bob Toms, VP of production at ABC Sports. "We had no idea we were getting a great songwriter, artist, singer and one of the biggest NFL fans in the country. This relationship with Hank has not only been a great asset to ABC Sports and 'Monday Night Football' but to the NFL."

RAY WADDELL
Hank,

After 28 years of working with Bocephus, it has become a true sense of pride and is a "Family Tradition".

Your Buddy,

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Q&A
Continued from page 18

in a world of phony art or phony instruments. I've got some instruments I know where they came from 'cause they handed 'em to me.

You've signed seven contracts with Curb Records president Mike Curb over 35 years.

I have? That's a scary thought. Loyal or trapped, I don't know which. Basically, I guess when somebody has options and wants to keep exercising them, what can you do? Thirty-five years, wow.

What are you most proud of in your career?

I guess, to try to put it into one corner, when I did the tribute show for Johnny Cash a couple of months ago, Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson gave me a look I'll never forget when I sang Johnny's part. Willie had a really big smile and Kris was like, "My God, man." There was some real magic that night.

I've got a fan base I'm really proud of. Some of the albums we've made I'm really proud of, and that was always my goal. I've got some awards in there in the case.

But the real bottom line, what I'm really proud of is, I'm proud of the company I've kept. I got to ride that car with Minnie Pearl. I got to ride in that mobile home with Waylon. I got to dig up those relics with John. I got to sit at the piano with Jerry Lee at the house and have a couple of drinks. I got to go fishin' with Stringbean and Grandpa Jones.

I'm proud of Toy Caldwell and the Marshall Tucker Band, and Skynyrd, and Charlie Daniels, and Earl Scruggs, and all the people who helped me. And the fact that they took the time with me.

I'm proud I rode in that car with that bass fiddle on top. Many times in that jet I think about it.

Now, whether it's Holly Williams or Shelton Hank III, there's a whole new level. On the soundtrack of Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ", Holly's singing Daddy's song "How Can You Refuse Him Now?" The tradition goes on and on. Right now, I'm really proud of that.

Bocephus!
Continued from page 22

"It hit so hard and so fast," Kilgore marvels.

By the mid-’80s, Williams was now releasing his albums on the Warner/Curb imprint, and he switched producers from Bowen to Jim Ed Norman.

The string of success continued into the latter half of the decade with "Montana Cafe" (1986), "Hank Live" (1987), "Born to Boogie" (1987), "Wild Streak" (1988) and "Lone Wolf" (1990). Eight consecutive releases, closing out the decade, each topped the country album chart.

Williams brought out the best in producers and studio musicians. "It didn't matter who the producer was. It was pretty much just Hank doing his thing," Curb says. "The secret was Hank working with a band. Even if they were studio musicians, it sounded like a band."

Not just a pioneer in the studio, Williams was among the very first in country to explore the possibilities of music videos. He has received industry accolades for trailblazing clips for such songs as "All My Rowdy Friends Are Coming Over Tonight" and "There's a Tear in My Beer."

Upon receiving one such video award, Williams quipped, "You know, I do audio, too."

Today, even if record sales and airplay aren't at the peak they once were, Hank Williams Jr. remains one of the most charismatic figures in country music and is certainly not lacking exposure.

And Williams seems to be in a good place professionally and personally.

"I've had such a string over the last two years of everything falling in place, all these wonderful things happening musically, some of Daddy's stuff that showed up," he says. "Just finding things here and there. I'm really a blessed individual."
Evanesence Tour Employs Borderless Strategy

BY RAY WADDELL

From unknown act to global headline on an album cycle, Evanescence may well be the poster child for a new touring model in breaking an act worldwide. Evanescence’s touring efforts have complemented its global multi-platinum success (Billboard, Aug. 2, 2003), with the band’s Wind-up debut, “Fallen,” surpassing 11 million in worldwide sales, according to the label.

And, as the group preps a European tour to be followed by its biggest North American trek to date, the touring strategy is deceptively simple: “No borders,” says Dave Kirby, responsible agent for Evanescence at the Agency Group (TAG). “If there is an opportunity to play in front of people, we go there.”

But if the strategy is simple, the tactics are not. “As we developed a strategy at the beginning of Evanescence’s career, we decided to move the band around like a chess piece,” Kirby says.

With offices in numerous countries, the nature of TAG’s operations is conducive to such a philosophy, Kirby says.

TAG signed Evanescence in the fall of 2002, before the release of its debut album. “We could see there was obviously a huge amount of talent there,” Kirby says. “It was just a question of whether the marketplace would react to it.”

Kirby says Evanescence was blessed with the right manager in Dennis Rider, who takes a global view. “Rather than be intimidated by Europe, as many managers are, Dennis embraced it.”

Rider and the band went to Europe twice before the album hit retail, Kirby says, and reached out to various offices of international distributor Sony International. “He set it up so the individual branches felt a personal responsibility to help this project succeed.”

And the agency and band were willing to make the sacrifice to play for people—everywhere.

“From the beginning we worked very closely with Wind-up, the agent and management to make sure we would have a combination of touring and promotion,” says Daniel Levy, VP of international marketing for Sony Music.

“If you want to break a band, you have to move that band around,” Kirby stresses. “You only get people’s attention for a moment, and you need to be there at that moment.”

Even with increased security concerns, international touring is not cost-prohibitive, according to Kirby.

At this early stage in its career, Evanescence has made its mark with live performances in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Japan and South America.

Certainly the band was new to such globetrotting in the early days, but it has been a learning experience,” singer Amy Lee says. “I didn’t even have my passport when we first started.”

“The flights are cheaper than they’ve ever been; the systems are more streamlined in terms of immigration, cartage and taxation,” Kirby says. “This is not as complicated as it used to be.”

**CROSS-CONTINENT STOPS**

A look at Evanescence’s 2003 itinerary some remarkable jumps sandwiched amid the traditional routing. Moves from continent to continent are not uncommon.

“They played for 50,000 people at Rock Am Park in Nuremberg one day, then at the KROQ Weenie Road in L.A., the next week, then went back to Europe the week after that,” Kirby marvels. “It’s not cheap to tour a band like that, but it’s the way to pop a band wide open in a number of different countries all at once.”

Now Lee is cognizant of the differences between audiences in various countries. “The biggest difference is between Japan and the rest of the world,” she says. “They’re so respectful of what you’re doing, and they pay attention to every little cough.” The band has sold more than 400,000 albums in Japan, according to Sony.

The band broke first in Europe, where TAG’s Geoff Meall represents the group out of the agency’s London office.

But North America soon followed, and strong packaging and a cut on the “Daredevil” soundtrack helped.

Rich Levy, VP of booking/national sales and marketing for Clear Channel Entertainment (CCE), was an early believer in Evanescence. He booked the band on the inaugural Evanescence’s success on its debut album. “We knew this was going to happen when we booked the band on the tour,” Levy admits.

He’s not just content playing the major markets,” Clayton says. “He wants to develop new fans.”

Average show grosses totaled $371,055 between November 2002 and March 2003, according to Billboard Boxscore. Mayer played to 90% capacity on that tour. Of the 84 shows reported in 2001 and earlier in 2002, 55 were sellouts, and crowds filled 94% of the venues’ capacities overall.

The tour was dubbed ‘No Borders’ because of the band’s desire to break an act globally, Mayer admits.

“You grow insecure. And then you go somewhere . . . and see [the crowd] when the lights go up, and say, ‘Oh my God, I can’t believe I still have this,’” Mayer says. “The fact that I do means so much to me.”

Mayer does just fine repeating markets, Clayton says. In fact, last summer, Mayer sold out four shows in the New York market: two at Jones Beach in Long Island, N.Y., and two at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, N.J.

He also sold out two concerts at New York’s Irving Plaza and one show at Madison Square Garden in December.

“His show is really engaging,” says Amy Lee. “He’s very passionate about what he’s doing.”

As earlier tipped (billboard.biz, March 29), Mayer and special guest Maroon 5 will wind through a 42-date sold out starting July 2 at the Marcus Amphitheater in Milwaukee. Mayer will return to many of the major-market cities be played last summer with the Counting Crows.

Mayer further honed his act last November in a number of small U.S. cities. He followed that in February and March with a secondary-market arena run.

Boosting Mayer’s fan base are his Aware/Columbia releases, “Room for Squares” and “Heavier Things.” They have sold 3.5 million and 1.5 million copies, respectively, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Key to Mayer’s road achievements is his attention to secondary markets, says Scott Clayton, Mayer’s booking agent at Creative Artists Agency.
ZZ Top Hopping Back On Tour Bus

In typical little-of-band-from-Texas fashion, ZZ Top will commemorate its recent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with a summer of hard touring, beginning June 25 at Ray Yaeger Coliseum in Wichita Falls, Texas. The band, which marks its 35th anniversary, has dates on the books that conclude with a two-night stand June 24-25 at the Las Vegas Hilton. The route is a mix of arenas, amphitheaters, fairs, festivals and casinos.

Among the stops is a June 6 engagement at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas with Eric Clapton, Carlos Santana, B.B. King, Jeff Beck, Bo Diddley and Buddy Guy, as part of the Crossroads Guitar Festival. ZZ Top, which boasts founding members Frank Beard, Billy F. Gibbons and Dusty Hill, lays claim to being one of the longest-running "intact" road shows in rock history. The band is booked by Rob Light at Creative Artists Agency and is managed, as ever, by Bill Ham at Lone Wolf Management.

Author Clive Young, senior editor at Pro Sound News, talks with many of the top touring sound pros in the business, with plenty of specific tours referenced. The books current in its tech info as pros weigh in on all the modern new gear available as well as the classic stuff. One great quote comes from Bruce Springsteen's front-of-house engineer, John Cooper, who says, "I'm not here to alter the performance. I'm here to make it louder." The Boss' rising tour was indeed plenty loud. According to "Crank It Up," Springsteen's PA at his record-setting Giants Stadium run last summer boasted the largest line array rig ever constructed, a JBL VerTec loudspeaker system with 120 speakers and 56 subwoofers.

Monitor engineer Blake Sibb says he specializes in "difficult" artists, meaning those that want perfection. His last three clients were Prince, Sheryl Crow and Madonna. Young says sound techs are among the unsung heroes of the music business.

"You always hear about the George Martins or the Jimmy Jams of the world, but these guys on the road take what [producers] do and put it all together live in one take every night," Young points out. "They do all the work the artists do, but without all the fame—or the paycheck."

Another observation: Sound guys have great nicknames, among them Skitch, Quake, Flash, Fern, Cap, Poncho and Nobby. Coming soon to a venue near you.

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GOOD DOG: Bow Wow Wow, with original members Annabella Lwin and Leigh Gorman, will enlist No Doubt drummer Adrian Young for a string of summer shows that begin July 16 at B.B. King's Blues Club & Grill in New York.

The outing marks Bow Wow Wow's return to the East Coast after a six-year absence. The band reformed in the fall of 2003 for KROQ Los Angeles' third installment of its Inland Invasion station concert, which drew more than 30,000.

Gorman and Lwin will be joined onstage by special guest Phil Gough of reggae band Common Sense and Young, who will once again take original drummer Dave Barbarossa's seat behind the drums. (Barbarossa has prior commitments in the United Kingdom with dance band Cicane.) Bow Wow Wow is booked by Mitch Omkin at the MOB Agency. More dates are on tap.

LIVE & LOUD: "Crank It Up! Live Sound Secrets of the Top Tour Engineers," a new publication from Backbeat Books, offers some illuminating insights into how the pros make live shows sound as good as they do their days.
Hall Plans Comeback On Own Label

BY GAIL MITCHELL

LOS ANGELES—Aaron Hall doesn’t mince words when he talks about his decision to record again.

“I’m not a slave anymore,” he declares. Hall, who handled vocal duties for seminal new jack swing trio Guy, is referring to his experience with MCA Records.

“Martin Luther King Jr. didn’t do what he did for us [to have to] beg for money on something we did,” Hall adds. “Ever since I got shafted in my MCA deal, I knew I had to do my own thing or not at all.”

His “own thing” is Los Angeles-based independent label Artists Only International (AOI), which is close to signing a distribution agreement, according to Hall.

The singer will issue his first solo album in six years on AOI. “Adults Only” will be completed in mid-May and released July 20, Hall says.

Mixing R&B, hip-hop, reggae and other elements, “Adults Only” finds Hall reuniting with Guy cohorts Teddy Riley and Hall sibling Damion Damion on one track. Riley also teams with Hall on another song. More intriguing is Hall’s plan to record a track with fellow R&B crooner R. Kelly.

Hall’s partner in AOI is entrepreneur Dwayne Corbit, who serves as CEO. The ex-basketball player oversees various business holdings, including commercial real estate and two animation companies, Legendary Entertainment and Headstart Entertainment.

“Z-force,” one of Corbit’s animated series, is currently in production. It’s a made-for-DVD project.

Hall calls Corbit the “last of the Mohicans. He’s not from this business and hasn’t been scared by the industry. He’s a business genius who does rather than just talks.”

REACH OUT AND TOUCH

Without going into detail, Corbit says he is “financing Aaron’s dream” and that “getting into music was an accident.”

After the two met, “we became close personally,” Corbit says. “He talked about the things he wanted to do. So I reached out to friends who have been successful in this business. Given Aaron’s musical past and the fact that people know he can sing, he’s like a walking credit card.”

Among the people Corbit contacted was producer Mike Smoove, whose résumé includes Jodeci and K-Ci & JoJo. The AOI production roster also lists Marc Williams, who has worked with Janet Jackson and Madonna, and Pit Boss, who is in the studio now with B2K.

Like other artists who helm their own labels, Hall is signing additional acts. The AOI roster includes urban rock rapper J. Naught.

Hall debuted as a solo artist with the No. 1 R&B single “Don’t Be Afraid.” The song was featured on the 1992 soundtrack to “Juice.” A year later, Hall released his first Silas/MCA solo album, “The Truth.”

A second solo set, “Inside of You,” followed in 1998. It doubled as therapy: In the mid-’90s, Hall’s mother and son died within the same year. The album spun off a No. 2 R&B/No. 14 pop hit, “I Miss You.”

Hall’s solo albums have sold 966,000 and 192,000, respectively, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The six years since Hall’s previous solo album have been tumultuous. Guy reunited, releasing the “Guy III” album to a lackluster reception in 2000. Hall battled drugs and did a turn in prison in 2001. Charged with assault, he served 11 months and underwent an extensive anger management program.

All of which leads to the inevitable question: What kind of reception can Hall expect?

“Aaron Hall remains one of R&B’s signature voices,” says KHHT (Hot 92 Jamz) Los Angeles assistant MD Rick Nuhn.

Hall has been one of the popular guests at KHHT ladies’ night promotions, which regularly feature male R&B stars.

“he certainly has a large and loyal fan base,” Nuhn adds. “If [this record] is marketed and promoted properly, he will be welcomed back with open arms. The key is in the track; it has to have the right blend of vintage Aaron/Guy but still be fresh.”

Preparing a video and a possible tour with Guy, New Edition and BLACKstreet, Hall is looking forward.

Even as he deals with the new label, he’s composing theme music for comedian Steve Harvey’s KBBT morning show in Los Angeles.

“God changed me through anger management and prison,” Hall says. “God sent an angel down to help me sing again. My goal is to show you don’t need drugs, alcohol or entourages to do genuine music.”

The Isley Brothers and actor Danny Glover are the special-award honorees for the fourth annual BET Awards.

The Isley Brothers will be recognized for lifetime achievement. Still going strong after more than 40 years, the Isleys now consist of singer Ronald and guitarist Ernie. Glover will receive BET’s humanitarian award.

Names of the 2004 awards nominees in the categories of music, acting and sports will be unveiled May 12 at the Renaissance Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles. The BET ceremony, hosted again by actress/comedienne Mo’Nique, will be telecast live from L.A.’s Kodak Theatre on June 28 (8 p.m. ET/7 p.m. CT; tape-delayed in the Pacific and Mountain time zones).

MOTOWN REVISITED: “Motown is American. It deserves to stay alive.”

So says Lamont Dozier, one-third of the celebrated Motown songwriting team that also included brothers Eddie and Brian Holland. As ABC-TV reads “Motown 45” (May 17) and Michael McDonald mines the Motown vaults for another album, Dozier revisues his own interpretation of Holland/Dozier/Holland standards.

“Reflections of …” is the re-christened version of the artist’s Grammy Award-nominated set “Lamont Dozier … An American Original.” The album was available solely through the Internet when it was first released in 2002.

Then last November, WEA Distribution’s Lightyear division came calling. “Reflections of …” hit stores April 20 through Dozier’s label, Jam Right Entertainment. The R&B remix of “I Hear a Symphony” is receiving airplay. It claimed chart-bound honors in the adult R&B section of Billboard sister publication Airplay Monitor (April 16).

Combining press stops with various show dates, Dozier will visit radio stations and retail before traveling to Europe. He also plans several TV appearances, including “Live With Regis and Kelly,” “Oprah” (with Patti LaBelle and McDonald) and “Larry King Live.”

Dozier says he is ready to hit the road. “The road is a killer,” he admits. “But you’ve got to work for [success] now. The way the business is today, you have to get out there. There aren’t any more free lunches.”

His Motown legacy aside, the Las Vegas-based Dozier says Jam Right has “six artists warming up in the bullpen.” And he and producer Ron Mael wrote and produced a song for Joss Stone’s forthcoming album.

“Now I don’t know what her goal was,” Dozier says. “‘With this girl blew me away,’ Dozier says. “She’s going to be around a long time.”

MUSICAL NOTES: DKG Music artist Rhian Benson re-enlists as host of the BET and BET Jazz series “Gold Coast.” The singer-songwriter, who scored notice last year with “Say How I Feel,” also co-produces the show. Its second season kicks off May 9 on BET; May 10 on BET Jazz.

Some nonmusical guests will appear this time around. Among those who have already taped segments are LL Cool J, Jesse Jackson and Angela Bassett.

Filming is taking place in California, the United Kingdom and West Africa.

Former LaBelle member Nona Hendryx has joined the label entrepreneurial ranks. New York-based Rhythm Bank Entertainment will encompass all genres. “If you’re good and unique, that’s what we’re looking for,” Hendryx says. First signing is 10-year-old gospel singer Najysha Threatt.

Hendryx herself plans to record a Rhythm project, as well as release “something from the LaBelle vault.”

The singer-songwriter has also co-authored another musical with Charles Wright. “Skin Diver” is based on one of her earlier solo albums. (Continued on page 30)
### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums May 1, 2004

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST/SOUNDTRACK</th>
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### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Catalog Albums May 1, 2004

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### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Tapes May 1, 2004

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### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums Greatest Gainer

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### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Catalog Albums Greatest Gainer

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### Billboard Hot Shot Debut

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<td><strong>Unsimple Mechanic</strong></td>
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Records with the greatest impressions increase. © 2004, VNU Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Completed from a national sample of airplay supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Radio track service. All stations are electronically monitored 24 hours a day. A track's airplay is reported by stations that are part of the Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems' panel. This data is used to compile the Hot R&B/ Hip-Hop Singles chart. The format for the track data is provided by Promodj.com.

**Rhythm & Blues**

Continued from page 28

Hendrrix's first brush with theater was penning the music for "Blue," which starred Phylicia Rashad (Billboard, March 25, 2000). Congrats to Stevie Wonder, the recently announced recipient of the Johnny Mercer Award. He will accept the honor during the 2004 National Academy of Popular Music/Songwriters Hall of Fame ceremony, June 10 at New York's Marriott Marquis Hotel. Wonder's long-awaited Motown/Universal album is due in June. Additional 2004 inducements include Motown legends Barrett Strong and Norman Whitfield and Memphis icon Al Green.

**BLACK POWER:** Shout Factory revisits the civil-rights movement with the two-disc track "Black Power: Music of a Revolution." Reflecting the cultural and political climate of the '60s and '70s, the set features such consciousness-raising songs as Billy Paul's "I Am Black Enough For You?" Social critic Gerald Early contributes a historical essay: "And We Own the Night: Remembering Black Power." Adding extra flavor, soundbites from H. "Rap" Brown, Stokely Carmichael and other activists. "Black Power: Music of a Revolution" arrives May 18.


U.S. District Judge R. Barclay Surrick has lifted an injunction blocking the album's distribution. He ruled April 9 that a Philadelphia International Records contract the group signed in 1979 gave the label unlimited rights to issue the songs. The problem is that unrelaxed tracks the trio recorded for Gamble & Huff in the '70s and '80s. Levert and Williams filed suit April 2.
### Billboard 2004 May 1

#### Hot Dance Singles Sales

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<td>ME AGAINST THE MUSIC</td>
<td>Britney Spears ft. Madonna</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>CRUSH</td>
<td>Paul Van Dyk ft. Madonna</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>CRUSH</td>
<td>Paul Van Dyk ft. Madonna</td>
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<td>NOTHING FALLS/Nobody Knows Me (Remixes)</td>
<td>Madonna</td>
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<td>SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL (REMIXES)</td>
<td>The Rolling Stones ft. Madonna</td>
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<td>YOU PROMISED ME (I Love Fout)</td>
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<td>5TH ANGEL (REMIXES)</td>
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<td>DON'T YOU WANT THIS FEELING</td>
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<td>DANCE TO THE MUSIC</td>
<td>Love Unlimited ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>IT'S MY LIFE</td>
<td>No Doubt ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>DON'T STOP THE FEELING</td>
<td>Miley Cyrus ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>BEAUTIFUL THINGS</td>
<td>Andrea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>TRULY</td>
<td>Delerium ft. Nena Pallit ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>THE AIR THAT I BREATHE</td>
<td>Judi Tones ft. Madonna ft. Collage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>AS THE RUSH COMES</td>
<td>Motorcycle ft. Madonna</td>
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#### Hot Dance Radio Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>AS THE RUSH COMES</td>
<td>Motorcycle ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>RED BLOODED WOMAN</td>
<td>Kylie Minogue ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>TOXIC</td>
<td>Britney Spears ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>DEJA VU (IT'S HARREL TO BELIEVE)</td>
<td>The Bar Project ft. Neva Novek ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5TH ANGEL (REMIXES)</td>
<td>Feather Freight ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>DON'T YOU WANT THIS FEELING</td>
<td>Manukitch ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>90s GIRL (REMIXES)</td>
<td>En Vogue ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>BEAUTIFUL THINGS</td>
<td>Andrea ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>AS THE RUSH COMES</td>
<td>Motorcycle ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Top Electronic Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS (REMIXES)</td>
<td>Various ft. Madonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>A.B. QUANTAMILLA III PRESENTS KUNIBA KING</td>
<td>Various ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>ZERO 7</td>
<td>Various ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>THE CRYSTAL METHOD (LEGION OF BOOM)</td>
<td>Various ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>AIR</td>
<td>Various ft. Madonna ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS (PINK FEATHER'S PENTHOUSE PARTY) ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>SOUNDTRACK (CABLE CAR) ft. Madonna ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>JUMPS ft. Madonna ft.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>JOHNNY VICIOUS ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>LOUIE DEVITO ft. Madonna ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>THE ROLLER ft. Madonna ft.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Various ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>RAYV ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>THE HAPPY BOYS ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>SQUAREPUSHER ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>PAUL OAKENFOLD ft. Madonna ft.</td>
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</tbody>
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*Due to space limitations, only the top 25 entries are included.*
Country Comedians Storm ‘Flyover’ Appeal

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—Country comedy is currently a hot commodity, spawning strong-selling CDs and DVDs and receiving plenty of TV exposure.

Among the genre’s stars are Jeff Foxworthy, Bill Engvall, Rodney Carrington, Ron White, Larry the Cable Guy, Cledus T. Judd and T. Bubba Bechtol.

The burgeoning popularity of the country comedy genre is succinctly explained by J.P. Williams, head of Parallel Entertainment. The management company handles Foxworthy, Engvall, Larry the Cable Guy and White.

“Once in a large degree, everything in comedy skews to hip-hop, urban and Hispanic [audiences],” Williams says. “But between Los Angeles and New York are the so-called ‘flyover’ states, with 250 million people who want somebody they can relate to.”

Larry the Cable Guy agrees. “It’s something that resonates with people who work for a living. Those flyover states—that’s America. People going to work, having kids, doing their stuff. They can relate more to a comedian talking about real, everyday things than a comedian in a suit and tie— and they go to work and work to the stage in the same outfit.”

Larry the Cable Guy’s Hip-O album “Lord, I Apologize” recently topped the Billboard Top Country Catalog albums chart—having also reached No. 53 on the Top Country Albums chart.

White’s Parallel/HiP-O disc “Drunk in Public” is now No. 20 on the Top Country Albums chart, while Carrington’s Capitol collection “Greatest Hits” is No. 42.

Also charting are Warner Bros.’ long-established country comics Foxworthy and Engvall. “The Best of Jeff Foxworthy: Double Wide, Single Minded” is No. 60. Engvall’s “Here’s Your Sign: Rekoded” is No. 71.

Meanwhile, Larry the Cable Guy, White, Foxworthy and Engvall continue to benefit from their participation in the ongoing Blue Collar Comedy tour, the top comedy concert tour of the past two years.

The tour has engendered both a live CD (currently No. 28 on the Top Country Albums chart) and DVD (which peaked at No. 19 on the Top DVD Sales chart last season).

Williams says TV exposure will further broaden the base for his comedy clients. The WB Network is working on a series, “Blue Collar TV,” starring Foxworthy, Engvall and Larry the Cable Guy. And Engvall, White and Larry the Cable Guy will each star in their own Comedy Central specials this spring/summer.

The surprising sales success of country comedy product and concert tickets has naturally led country labels to expand their comedy artist rosters.

Warner Bros. Nashville sales VP Peter Strickland and Hip-O head Pat Lawrence indicate that their labels are looking for new country comedy artists.

Capitol, the label that brought the world Carrington, Tim Wilson and multiple albums by phone-prankster character Roy D. Mercer, has just released Unknown Hinson’s “The Future Is Unknown.” Hinson is a semi-unique male country singer whose music, Capitol sales VP Bill Kennedy notes, falls loosely under the country comedy banner.

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RANGE OF STYLES

In fact, country comedy is a loosely defined genre. Larry the Cable Guy, whose humor is more adult, points out the broad range of styles among his fellow country comedians.

“Jeff’s known for his ‘redneck’ stuff, and [his] humor is more family-type. Same with Bill Engvall,” he says. “Ron White’s more like a Southern Dean Martin. And White always knows what I’m doing, except that my crowd was Jeff’s before they got married and had kids.”

Engvall thinks his act “is very much non-country. It’s very middle-of-the-road country, real life.”

“I hear ‘country comedian,” and I think of people like Minnie Pearl and George Lindsey and T. Bubba Bechtol and Andy Griffith,” Engvall says. “Not to take away from what they did, but it’s so far from what I do. My stuff appeals to farmers, doctors, plumbers, everyone. So I say it’s not ‘country comedy’ but ‘comedy for the country.’”

Williams agrees with the “not necessarily country” nature of country comedy, “The Cledus T. Judds of the world are country, but these guys are more mainstream,” he says of his clients. “They just happen to have Southern accents.”

“If I did a show with Jerry Seinfeld, Richard Jeni and Dom Irrera, it wouldn’t be called ‘Northern comedy,’ just ‘comedy.’ And if we were just ‘country,’ we wouldn’t have the second-largest comedy tour in the last four years next to the ‘Kings of Comedy,’” Williams says.

Syndicated morning radio program “The Bob and Tom Show” has long featured comic country artists, going back to Kinley Friedman and Pinkard & Bowden.

Co-host Tom Griswold, who has produced recordings for Carrington and Wilson, notes that mostly rock stations carry his show.

“They certainly don’t have a country base, but we’ve always welcomed country comedians,” Griswold says. “There’s something about ‘good old boys’ that people always like—but you can’t throw them all in one big stew,” Griswold says. “But there is a certain commonality . . . It’s nice to find someone like Larry the Cable Guy who’s really funny and whose point of view we can all understand.”

Larry may hail from a small town in Nebraska and reside in Florida, but he notes that his “most loyal crowds” are Northeastern.

“We sold out [the Blue Collar Comedy Tour] in Portland, Maine, did two shows for 2,400 in Erie, Pa., and did ‘Old Friends,’ his first tour in Albany, N.Y.,” he says. “We can do shows all day long in Baltimore.”

MAKING MONEY WITH FUNNY

Each label takes a different approach to promoting the comedians on its roster.

Hip-O’s Lawrence cites artists’ “relentless touring” as a vital part of the label’s promotional efforts. “Our radio promotion team ties in with sponsoring stations with ticket giveaways, and then we follow-up market-by-market with local cable TV buys,” he says.

Warner Bros. Strickland, noting that the label once tried getting airplay with singles from Foxworthy albums, says it now generates 30-second “comedy takes” that can be aired “anywhere in between commercials.”

Capitol’s Kennedy notes his label’s focus on the syndicated morning shows, as well as the genre’s unique success online.

“Comedy sells albums on the digital sites, whereas so much of music sales is a [single] track business,” he says. “Comedy records may have 20 or more routines, so why pay 99 cents for one 90-second clip? It’s the flip side of what we see with pop or country [downloads].”

**Book Recounts Music City’s Broadway Scene**

**Smithsonian Books** will soon publish a fascinating look at the re-emergence of Nashville’s hopping lower Broadway music and bar scene in the mid-1990s.

**Lower Broad: The Street That Music Made,** due May 15, tells the story of that part of Music City and the artists that performed there, from Hank Williams and Willie Nelson to BR549, Greg Garing and bluegrass singer Celinda Pink.

When the Grand Ole Opry moved out of the nearby Ryman Auditorium in the 1970s, lower Broadway deteriorated into a seedy area that locals largely avoided. But in the 1990s, the block began to take on a new life. Fans were drawn downtown to hear BR549 and other acts play at such bars as Robert’s Western World, Tootsie’s Orchid Lounge, the Wagon Burner, the Turf and Music City Lounge.

Press materials aptly describe the hardcover tome as “part scrapbook, part bar tour.” The story of that period is well told through 90 gritty black-and-white photographs by documentary photographer Bill Rouda.

Also included is a foreword by artist Lucinda Williams and an introduction by David Eason, a journalist and professor of the Seigenthaler Center for First Amendment Studies at Middle Tennessee State University.

**ON THE ROW: Tim Wipperman joins Equity Music Group in Nashville as chief creative officer. He previously spent nearly 30 years at Warner/Chappell Music in Nashville, most recently as executive VPOMC. Jeff Melsetten exits his position as marketing director for the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International and the organization’s Tin Pan South Songwriters Festival to join Country Weekly magazine as marketing manager. A Mobile, Ala.-based investment group has purchased Nashville-based American Songwriter magazine for an undisclosed price. The previous owner and publisher, Jim Sharp, has stepped down. The bimonthly magazine’s new management team, associate publisher Robert Clement and editor Douglas Waterman, plan to increase the magazine’s newsstand distribution. American Songwriter marks its 20th anniversary this year.**

**ARTIST NEWS: The Country Music Assn., surprised Wynonna with its Connie B. Gay Award during her April 17 appearance at the Grand Ole Opry. Trace Adkins and CMA executive director Ed Benson presented the award to Wynonna for her outstanding service to the CMA. Last year’s “Nashville Star” finalist John Arthur Martinez will release his debut Dualtone Records album “Lone Starry Night,” May 4. Dualtone will market the record with an extensive in-store and radio campaign with a Cinco de Mayo theme in its home state of Texas. Jim Lauderdale is opening dates on Mary Chapin Carpenter’s tour this spring and summer.**

**SIGNINGS: V-Tone Records has signed singer/songwriter and full-time Bethlehem, Pa., firefighter Anthony Michael James to a recording deal. Old Friends, his first album for the Compendia-distributed label, comes out July 27.**
### Billboard Top Country Albums

**May 1, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Prior</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SCOOP 425</td>
<td>Colonial</td>
<td>Colonial</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SCOOTER</td>
<td>The Ultimate Scooter Collection</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>RASCAL FLATT'S</td>
<td>The Long Live Rascal Flatt's</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>TOBY KEITH</td>
<td>Greatest Hits</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TIM McGRAW</td>
<td>Greatest Hits</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>ALAN JACKSON</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Volume 1</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>KYLIE MINOGUE</td>
<td>Greatest Hits</td>
<td>MCA</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22,000</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>JOHN MELLENCAMP</td>
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<td>MCA</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
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**Greatest Gainer**

- **Rank**: 3
- **Artist**: SCOOTER
- **Title**: The Ultimate Scooter Collection
- **Weeks on Chart**: 23
- **Prior Sales**: 60,000
- **New Sales**: 30,000

**Pacesetter**

- **Rank**: 20
- **Artist**: SCOOTER
- **Title**: The Ultimate Scooter Collection
- **Weeks on Chart**: 20
- **Sales Data Compiled**: Nielsen SoundScan

**Hot Shot Debuts**

- **Rank**: 14
- **Artist**: DIXIE CHICKS
- **Title**: Live
- **Weeks on Chart**: 9
- **Sales Data Compiled**: Nielsen SoundScan

**RIAA Certification**

- **Platinum**: 100,000
- **Gold**: 50,000
- **Silver**: 25,000

**Notes**

- All sales data is provided by Nielsen SoundScan.
- RIAA certification information is based on sales of 50,000 units (Gold), 100,000 units (Platinum), and 200,000 units (Multi-Platinum).
### Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks

**May 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Old Man&quot;</td>
<td>Larry the Cable Guy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It's About Time&quot;</td>
<td>Brooks &amp; Dunn</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;American Pie&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Roger Miller</td>
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<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
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**Top Bluegrass Albums**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Old Man&quot;</td>
<td>Larry the Cable Guy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;American Pie&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
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<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
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**Singles & Tracks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Old Man&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I Love You&quot;</td>
<td>Roger Miller</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Records showing an asterisk (*) or dagger (†) for the first time this week. Records showing an inverted triangle (%) have been on the chart for at least 26 weeks. Records showing a double dagger (‡) have been on the chart for at least 52 weeks. Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, a division of Nielsen Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.

**Billsboard**

- ** Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems
- ** Nielsen SoundScan

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BILLY MAY 2004
**News Service Connects Music Biz, Media**

**BY LEILA COBO**

MIAMI—If you’re at all involved in the Latin music industry, chances are you’ve received reports from the Entertainment X-press Network, eX-p News.

The twice-daily bulletins, dubbed Digi Xpress, arrive by e-mail and ostensibly contain brief news capsules on the Latin music world.

But with just a couple of clicks, eX-p goes much deeper, instantly offering photos, press releases, interviews, EPKs and videos free of charge.

eX-p aims to connect the music industry and the media through the digital distribution of promotional content that is made available to some 7,000 Spanish-language news outlets nationwide, including press, radio, TV and Internet sites. The service will eventually charge labels, artists or managers for inclusion of their artists’ information in eX-p news. But media can retrieve all material digitally, 24/7, at no charge.

“Web Site & Label Sells Latin Product Exclusively Online”

**BY LEILA COBO**

MIAMI—Last year, Miami-based entrepreneur Miguel Sierralta commissioned an exhaustive study on Hispanic music buying through the Internet.

“We found that the sale of downloads was growing, but that it wasn’t being done in the Latin market,” says Sierralta, who is president/CEO of Sierralta Entertainment Group, a music, film and TV production company. “And we found that the people who were buying music via the Internet were not the same people who were going to record stores to do so.”

Seeing an opportunity, Sierralta, backed by investing partners from Spain, founded emusicalatino.com.

The venture is a Web site and label that sells its product exclusively through the Internet. Although emusicalatino.com doesn’t actually sign artists, it licenses specific catalog for...
The 15th annual Billboard Latin Music Conference is around the corner.
Following is a brief preview of events.
The kickoff panel for the conference is “The Changing Role of A&R.”
Why an A&R panel? Because in this time of dwindling sales, that role has acquired crucial importance and encompasses much more than making an album. Panelists include Sony/ATV Music Publishing VP Eddie Fernández, producer Mike Santander and Doug James, VP of EMI’s film/soundtrack division in Los Angeles.

“The Art of Endorsement and Branding,” presented by sister publication Brandweek, will focus on the growing opportunities open to Latin acts for endorsement and branding. The ensuing “Download Revolution” coincides with the launch of two download services that specifically target the Latin market, eMusic.com (Billboard, April 24) and emusiclatino.com (see story, page 37).

The relevance of this discussion was underscored by the second annual America Online/RoperASW U.S. Hispanic study, released this month. It found that Hispanics use the Internet more frequently than the general population to listen to music and download music files.

The day ends with “Show Me the Money,” moderated by Billboard editor-in-chief Keith Girard. The panel will discuss new business models and revenue streams in changing times.

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**HOT LATIN TRACKS**

### TENGOS GANAS
Producer: Victor Manuelle

### MÁS QUE TE QUIERO
Producer: Marco Antonio

### TE QUIERO TANTO
Producer: Rodolfo

### CUIDARTE EL ALMA
Producer: Chayanne

### CREO EN EL AMOR
Producer: Sin Bandera

### Y TODO QUEDA EN NADA
Producer: Ricky Martin

### TU FOTOGRAFÍA
Producer: Elier Estrella

### 4:30 AM
Producer: Obie Bermudez

### BARAJA DE ORO
Producer: Paloma

### AUNQUE NO TE PUEDE VER
Producer: Alex Laorgia

### HAZME OLVIDARLA
Producer: Conjunto Primavera

### ABRAZAR LA VIDA
Producer: Luis Fonsi

### COMO PUDE ENAMORARME DE TI
Producer: Patrulla 51

### NADIE ES ETERNO
Producer: Adas Charlas Sanchez

### CRUZ DE OLVIDO
Producer: Pepe Aguilar

### A DONDE ESTABAS?
Producer: InteCable

### TARDES NEGRAS
Producer: Tito Ferro

### TE QUIERO OLVIDAR
Producer: Grupo Monar De Durango

### ME EQUIVOCO
Producer: Mari Vargas

### DOS LOCOS
Producer: Los Horoscopos De Durango

### TU DE QUE VAS
Producer: Franco De Vita

### DESES DE COSAS IMPOSIBLES
Producer: La Oreja De Van Gogh

### PARA TODO LA VIDA
Producer: Banda El Recodo

### LA SOSPECHA
Producer: Sea De Cal

### CORTADAS
Producer: Jair/Thel /Pitbull/Pro

### TANTO LA QUERIA
Producer: Andy & Lucas

### CERCA DE TI
Producer: Thalia

### Y QUE
Producer: Los Angeles De Chart

### HAY QUE CAMBIAR
Producer: Area 305

### DALO POR HECHO
Producer: Bronco El Gigante De America

### BULERIA
Producer: David Guzman

### AMAR COMO TE AME
Producer: Juan Sebastian

### LA MILPA
Producer: Los Astros De Durango

### LA MAS DESEADA
Producer: Valentine Elizabeth

### LA BONITA
Producer: Jose Perez Leon

### SI TUS ESTUVIERAS
Producer: Los Tesoros Del Norte

### ESO
Producer: Alejandro Sanz

### NO TENGAS MIEMBRO ENAMORATE
Producer: Enrique Iglesias

### NO ES AMOR
Producer: Vicente Fernandez

### SE ME HIZO TARDE LA VIDA
Producer: Obi Bermudez

### CANSE DE TI
Producer: Edwin

### A QUE NO TE VAS
Producer: Erika

### SI PASA LO QUE PASO
Producer: Manu & Rubin

### DILE
Producer: DJ Knew

### NO PIERDA CALMA
Producer: Jennifer Lopez

### VIVO Y MUERO EN TU PIEL
Producer: Tito Sanchez

### Shot Debut
1. **TU DE QUE VAS** - Franco De Vita
2. **DESES DE COSAS IMPOSSIBLES** - La Oreja De Van Gogh
3. **PARA TODO LA VIDA** - Banda El Recodo
4. **LA SOSPECHA** - Sea De Cal
5. **CORTADAS** - Jair/Thel /Pitbull/Pro

### Greatest Gainer
**4:30 AM** - Obie Bermudez

### Billboard MAY 1, 2004

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**LATIN POP AIRPLAY**

### TITLE
1. **TE QUIERO TANTO** - Paulina Rubio
2. **AMO A LA REINA** - Anthony Santos
3. **PERDONA** - Ricky Martin
4. **AMOR ETERNO** - Los Tigres Del Norte

### Artist
1. Paulina Rubio
2. Anthony Santos
3. Ricky Martin
4. Los Tigres Del Norte

---

**TROPICAL AIRPLAY**

### TITLE
1. **TE QUIERO TANTO** - Paulina Rubio
2. **AMO A LA REINA** - Anthony Santos
3. **PERDONA** - Ricky Martin
4. **AMOR ETERNO** - Los Tigres Del Norte

### Artist
1. Paulina Rubio
2. Anthony Santos
3. Ricky Martin
4. Los Tigres Del Norte

---

**REGIONAL MEXICAN AIRPLAY**

### TITLE
1. **ATLANTE** - El Halcon
2. **EL DESCALZO** - El Halcon
3. **LA HIJOS DE LA REINA** - Los Tigres Del Norte
4. **AMO A LA REINA** - Anthony Santos

### Artist
1. El Halcon
2. El Halcon
3. Los Tigres Del Norte
4. Anthony Santos

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**BIllboard MAY 1, 2004**

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Celebrando su Quinceañera

Heineken Presents
Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards 2004

In Association With Garnier Fructis

Program Guide

April 26-29, 2004

Telemundo

Univision Radio
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Congratulations to our 2004 Billboard Latin Music Award Nominees

Alejandro Fernández
Alejandro Sanz
Ana Bárbara
Ana Gabriel
Arturo Sandoval
Celia Cruz
Chayanne
David Bisbal
Ednita Nazario
El Gran Combo De Puerto Rico
Enrique Iglesias
Fabián Gómez
Flor De Tabaco
Franco De Vita
Frankie J
Frankie Ruiz

Gilberto Santa Rosa
Grupo Manía
Héctor & Tito
Jaci Velásquez
Jae-P
Jerry Rivera
Jesús Guillén
Joe Veras
Juan Gabriel
La Ley
La Oreja De Van Gogh
Límite
Los Huracanes Del Norte
Los Toros Band
Magic Juan

Mana
Marco Antonio Solís
Monchy & Alexandra
Nelly Furtado
Noelia
Obie Bermúdez
Olga Tañón
Rudy Pérez
Samuel Hernández
Sin Bandera
The Latin Project
Tommy Torres
Valentín Elizalde
Vicente Fernández
Vico C
Victor Manuelle

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Qué Pasa?
Performers, Panels And Parties At The Billboard Latin Music Conference

BY LEILA COBO

Quinceañera. Fiesta de Quince. Quinces. These are all names for the coming-of-age party held for 15-year-old Latinas around the world. This year, the Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards marks its 15th anniversary in traditional style.

The conference, taking place April 26-29 at Eden Roc Resort & Spa in Miami Beach, celebrates a decade-and-a-half of achievement, trendsetting and bringing Latin music's hottest, brightest under one roof. The celebration culminates April 29 with the Billboard Latin Music Awards at the Miami Arena.

The Billboard Latin Music Conference, presented by Heineken and in association with Garnier Fructis, is one of a kind. It is the longest-running gathering of Latin-music professionals in the world, and it is the only one that brings together all genres of Latin music.

This year it also boasts two premier media partners. The Telemundo television network once again will broadcast the awards, but this year it will carry the show live. Univision Radio will provide coverage of the conference events and also broadcast the awards show.

The conference itself features an unprecedented showcase lineup: three days of panels featuring Latin music's top executives, artists and entrepreneurs; and a roster of sponsors that underscores the Latin market's growing clout.

Festivities begin and end with two events honoring this year's awards finalists and winners, which represent the most popular Latin-music acts and creators of the year. Kicking it all off is the second annual Billboard Bash, and the weekend-long event closes with the Billboard Latin Music Awards. The Billboard Bash is an evening of live performances and special award presentations April 26 at 1501 Barton G., a Miami nightclub.

Organizers will roll out the red carpet before the event, during which several awards—including those for top labels in each genre—will be presented.

At press time, featured performers for the Bash include finalists Vico C. and Ednita Nazario, who will perform a duet with Luis Fonsi.

Both Telemundo and Univision Radio will cover the Billboard Bash, and portions of the event will be used to promote the Billboard Latin Music Awards.

The conference opens April 27 with a panel that marries music and business. "The Changing Role of A&R" will explore how, in an era of diminishing album sales, the task of matching songs with artists is more challenging and more crucial than ever. The panel features A&R directors, producers and heads of publishing companies and film and soundtrack divisions.

Immediately afterward, (Continued on page LM-24)
New Acts Will Shine At Confab

Veteran Acts Also On Tap

BY LEILA COBO

For years, the Billboard Latin Music Conference has been a springboard for new acts and a platform for established artists with upcoming releases. Shakira, Luis Fonsi and, just last year, Tego Calderón all made their U.S. debuts at the event.

This year is no exception. An unprecedented number of conference-related showcases will take place throughout the city of Miami. It all begins the night of April 26 at the Billboard Bash, which is followed by a showcase at Macarena in South Beach.

A poolside cocktail reception on April 27, sponsored by Garnier Fructis and MTV Español/VH Uno, will feature Universal Music Latino singer/songwriter Alih Jey, whose sophomore album is set for release this summer.

In addition, Miami-based alternative act Volumen Cero, which made its major-label debut last year on Warner Music Latina, will perform songs from its upcoming sophomore effort, due this summer. Miami-based indie quartet Soniko, which blends grunge, Britpop and rock en español, completes the bill.

After relaxing poolside, listeners will move inside for the official coming-out party for Ole Records, the label founded last year by former Sony Discos head Oscar Llord.

Several of Ole’s artists will be performing, including Elvis Crespo, K1, Ángel López, Tommy Torres, Charlie Zaa and recently signed salsa icon Oscar D’León.

For Crespo, who will release “Saboréalo” May 4 on Ole, this performance is a homecoming of sorts. Crespo made his solo debut at the 1998 conference, and his album “Suavemente” went on to become the biggest-selling merengue album to date.

Other encores come courtesy of Colombian crooner Charlie Zaa, who became a phenomenon with his contemporary renditions of Latin American classics. Zaa, who performed at last year’s conference, is set to release “Puro Sentimiento” July 20 on Ole.

Meanwhile, Ángel López—fresh from his solo outing on Sony after his success with Son by Four—has recorded a more urban-oriented album, “Re-Inventado,” for Ole. It will be released May 25.

In contrast, singer/songwriter/producer Tommy Torres will present an acoustic set from his sophomore solo album. Torres is a finalist in the producer of the year category (Continued on page LM-26)
DIEGO TORRES UNPLUGGED

IN STORES MAY 18th

DEJA DE PEDIR PERDÓN • CANTAR HASTA MORIR • QUE SERÁ • LA ÚLTIMA NOCHE
DEJAME ESTAR • SUEÑOS (con Julieta Venegas) • DÓNDE VA • TAL VEZ • USTED (con Vicenta) • PENÉLOPE
QUE NO ME PIERDA • COLOR ESPERANZA (con La Chilinguita)

AND MANY MORE
INCLUDES 4 NEW TRACKS / 2 DUETS
Billboard Latin Music Awards Finalists

BY JOHN LANNERT

The 2004 Billboard Latin Music Awards feature a familiar cast of notables led by the late Celia Cruz, a finalist in seven categories, and followed by Juanes and Ricky Martin, each of whom are finalists in five categories.

Alongside such familiar names as Gloria Estefan, Luis Miguel and Marco Antonio Solís are some fast-rising newcomers, including Mexican hip-hop acts Akwad and Jae-P, reggaetón duo LünYunes & Noriega, singer/songwriter Obie Bermúdez and pop heartthrob David Bisbal.

Competing in 39 categories, the finalists—as opposed to "nominees"—were selected based on their performances on the Billboard radio and retail charts in the Feb. 15, 2003, issue up to and including the Feb. 7, 2004, issue. Following are profiles of some of the finalists. The number of categories in which they are finalists is in parentheses.

CEILA CRUZ (7)
The much-mourned passing last July of Cuba's best-known idol, Celia Cruz, brought about an outpouring of affection by her fans. They expressed their appreciation for the inimitable Queen of Salsa by purchasing many of her albums, including the chart-topping posthumous release "Regalo del Alma."

Following her death, Cruz occupied the top three slots of the Billboard Latin Albums chart for two weeks. In addition, the Sony Discos artist maintained three titles in the top 10 of the Top Latin Albums chart for eight consecutive weeks.

JUANES (5)

Nearly two years after the release of his Universal Latino album, "Un Día Normal," Juanes continues to reap accolades and honors for a disc that yielded an unprecedented five top 10 hits.

Helping to propel its ongoing strength at retail was the fourth single, "Fotografía," a duet with Nelly Furtado that logged three weeks atop the Hot Latin Tracks chart.

RICKY MARTIN (5)

Ricky Martin's triumphant return to the U.S. Latin market was anchored by his chart-topping Sony Discos release "Almas del Silencio." The first single, "Tal Vez," debuted at No. 1 on the Hot Latin Tracks chart.

"Almas del Silencio" remained on the Top Latin Albums chart for six straight weeks. "Tal Vez" stayed atop Hot Latin Tracks for seven consecutive weeks.

OBIE BERMÚDEZ (4)

Born in Puerto Rico and reared in New Jersey, Obie Bermúdez began as a salsero. After refashioning himself as a singer/songwriter, his single "Antes" spent four weeks at No. 1 on the Hot Latin Tracks chart. Meanwhile, a salsa remix of "Antes" peaked at No. 6 on the Tropical/Salsa Airplay chart.

Bermúdez's EMI Latin debut, "Confecciones," has remained on the Top Latin Albums chart for 34 weeks.

AKWID (3)

Without extensive radio airplay, Akwad's Sergio and Francisco Gómez exploded onto the Latin music scene with a groove-laden sound blending hip-hop and regional Mexican. Their debut album, Univision Records' "Proyecto Akwad," rose to No. 7 on the Top Latin Albums chart and No. 3 on the Regional Mexican chart.

The brothers Gómez hail from Michoacán, Mexico, which is home to many banda groups.

DAVID BISBAL (3)


CONJUNTO PRIMAVERA (3)

One of the hottest grupos around, San Antonio-based Conjunto Primavera achieved a rare chart accomplishment in 2003 when its single "Una Vez Más" reached No. 1 on the Hot Latin Tracks and Regional Mexican Airplay charts.

In addition, the band's album "Decide Tú" (Fonovisa) climbed to No. 3 on the Top Latin Albums chart and No. 1 on the Regional Mexican chart, where it remained for four straight weeks.

INDIA (3)

As she has often done in the past, India, the big-voiced bomba from New York, made chart inroads in the salsa and Latin dance sectors. Her salsa anthem "Seduceme" (Sony Discos) not only reached No. 1 on the Hot Latin Tracks chart but also logged 12 consecutive weeks atop the Tropical/Salsa Airplay chart.

The bilingual dance track "Seduceme/Seduce Me Now," released on the Jellybean/Sony Discos imprint, rose to No. 4 on the Billboard Hot Dance Music/Club Play chart.

(Continued on page LM-8)
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Finalists

Continued from page LM-6

A.B. QUINTANILLA Y LOS KUMBIA KINGS (3)
During the past five years, A.B. Quintanilla y Los Kumbia Kings have scored a string of hit albums showcasing their singular blend of hip-hop, R&B and cumbia. The band’s 14-month-old release, “A,” debuted at No. 1 on the Top Latin Albums chart, where it stayed for four consecutive weeks.

In addition, the EMI Latin stalwarts scored a top five hit with “No Tengo Dinero,” a classic tune recorded with famed songwriter Juan Gabriel and prominent Mexican rock act El Gran Silencio.

GLORIA ESTEFAN (2)
A perennial finalist and Miami’s hometown favorite, Gloria Estefan reached the top five this year on the Latin Pop Airplay and Tropical/Salsa Airplay charts with her Sony Discos hit “Hoy.”

As catchy as many of her other classics, “Hoy” tallied 26 weeks on the Latin Pop Airplay chart, peaking at No. 3. More impressively, the song remained atop the Tropical/Salsa Airplay chart for two straight weeks and eventually exited the chart after 28 weeks. “Hoy” also ascended to the apex of Hot Latin Tracks.

TIZIANO FERRO (2)
Singer/songwriter Tiziano Ferro is the latest in a long line of Italian recording artists to enter the Billboard Latin charts.


FABIAN GÓMEZ (2)
A charismatic purveyor of cumbia norteña, Fabian Gómez stormed to No. 2 on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart with his Sony Discos single “Y Como Quieres Que Te Quiera.” The galloping, good-time stomp also rose to No. 7 on Hot Latin Tracks.

In addition, “Y Como Quieres Que Te Quiera” logged 28 weeks on Hot Latin Tracks and 23 weeks on Regional Mexican Airplay.

LÍMITE (2)
Limite is by far the most successful regional Mexican band fronted by a woman. Alicia Villareal and crew kept the hits coming in 2003 with “A’l Papacito” and “Soy Asl.”

“A’l Papacito” spent 28 weeks on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart, where it peaked at No. 2. The single also reached No. 6 on Hot Latin Tracks.

Meanwhile, “Soy Asl” logged 19 weeks on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart, peaking at No. 6.

LUIS MIGUEL (2)
Long a front-ranking superstar on the Billboard radio and sales charts, Luis Miguel, a Warner Music Latina luminary, is also a top concert attraction. He grossed nearly $10.7 million in the one-year period ended Feb. 7, 2004. Nearly 145,000 fans attended 22 shows, seven of which were sellouts.

LUNYTUNES & NORIEGA (2)
Lunytunes & Noriega, the Puerto Rican reggaetón duo, raced to No. 4 on the Tropical Albums chart with their debut “Más Flow,” which was released by boricua indie VI Records. A 28-week resident of the Tropical Albums chart as of the March 6 issue, “Más Flow” also spent 14 weeks on the Top Latin Albums chart, cresting at No. 11.

OZOMATLI (2)
Much hailed by critics and fans for its kinetic live shows, the Los Angeles-based Ozomatli has one of the few EPs up for a Billboard Latin Music Award. “Coming Up” reached No. 14 on the Top Latin Albums chart and No. 5 on Top Latin Pop Albums.

MARCO ANTONIO SOLÍS (2)
Marco Antonio Solís is a living legend who continues to collect awards for his poignant anecdotes of romantic fervor. Mexico’s singer/songwriter/producer extraordinare scaled the Top Latin Albums and Regional Mexican charts with his laden album “Tu Amor o Tu Desprecio” (Fonovisa).

Typical of his previous titles, “Tu Amor o Tu Desprecio” has been a long-running chart performer that stayed atop Top Latin Albums for one week and spent six consecutive weeks at

(Continued on page LM-32)
Congratulations to its nominees on their 40 Billboard Latin Music Awards nominations.
Banda El Recodo Honored
Influential Act Receives 2004 Hall Of Fame Award

BY LEILA COBO

With 65 years of music to its credit, Mexico’s Banda el Recodo has more than earned its recognition in the realm of Latin music.

Known as the Mother of All Bands (“La Madre de Todas las Bandas”), the group founded by the late Cruz Lizárraga has done more than any other act to popularize and export the traditional banda sound throughout the world.

“We’ve been able to reap what our father sowed.”
—JOEL LIZÁRRAGA

In recognition of its achievements, Banda el Recodo is the recipient of the 2004 Hall of Fame award.

The group has won multiple Grammy, Latin Grammy and Billboard awards and has released more than 198 albums (including compilations), earning total sales of more than 10 million.

Today, Banda el Recodo is not just regarded as an institution that defines a musical genre, it is also the single most successful banda group in the world, judging from record sales and international concert bookings.

But when Lizárraga was born in 1918, there was little respect for banda music.

The son of peasant parents, Lizárraga received only a first-grade education before going to work in the fields. He liked music—banda music, the kind played in every little Mexican town as an excuse to celebrate everything from a baptism to a holiday.

Eventually, Lizárraga would create his own banda. He named it Banda el Recodo, after his hometown in the state of Sinaloa, and it would make history.

In 1951, Banda el Recodo was the first banda to record an album. After that, the group’s success multiplied. Banda el Recodo became a favorite of some of Mexico’s greatest singers, accompanying them both live and on record. It was the first banda to incorporate singers into the genre.

It also recorded original hits and translated many musical genres and styles into the banda idiom.

In retrospect, however, Lizárraga did not create a musical style, nor did he radically change what was there before. But he did recognize the potential of banda music in a way no one had before, and he took the music further than anyone thought possible.

Today, years after Lizárraga’s death, his band—now led by two of his sons, Joel and Alfonso—continues to innovate. Known for its musical excellence, Banda el Recodo has performed throughout the world and collaborated with some of the leading figures in Latin music, from Vicente Fernández to Paulina Rubio.

On Fonovisa Records for the past eight years, the group has continued to enjoy strong album sales and has been able to exploit its rich catalog in the United States.

“We’ve been able to reap what Cruz Lizárraga sowed for such a long time,” Joel Lizárraga told Billboard last year. “We’ve tried to preserve [longtime] Banda el Recodo fans and at the same time find new listeners. But the path to innovation has never come at the expense of tradition and authenticity. That’s what’s given us credibility for 65 years,” Alfonso Lizárraga says. “We are Cruz Lizárraga’s band. We’ve always maintained ourselves the way we are now.”

However, he adds, “We like to innovate. We want to leave a footprint on Mexico’s musical history.” It’s a footprint that will extend well beyond Mexico.

The Brothers Lizárraga: A Family Legacy

Like many of their artists, Sony Discos and Univision Music Group enjoyed standout performances in this year’s Billboard Latin Music Awards label categories. And EMI April and EMI Publishing turned in robust results in the publishing categories for the second year in a row.

A historically strong pop and tropical imprint, Sony Discos led the way in those genres by landing 17 titles on the Top Latin Pop Albums chart and 30 titles on Top Tropical Albums.

On the radio side, Sony placed 48 songs on Latin Pop Airplay and 50 entries on Latin Tropical Airplay. In addition, Sony charted 50 tunes on Hot Latin Tracks.

Univision, meanwhile, held sway—as usual—over the regional Mexican categories. Univision ruled the Top Latin Albums chart with 94 titles while reigning over Regional Mexican Albums with 61 entries. Univision-owned Fonovisa topped the Regional Mexican Airplay chart with 51 titles.

On the publishing front, EMI April placed 18 songs on Hot Latin Tracks, including such chart-toppers as “Antes” and “Me Cansé de Ti,” both penned by EMI Latin artist Obie Bermúdez; “Mariposa Traicionera,” recorded by Warner Music Latina’s Maná and composed by its frontman Fher; and “Para Que la Vida,” recorded and co-written by Enrique Iglesias.

As a publishing corporation, EMI Music bested its counterparts with 43 titles charting on Hot Latin Tracks.

Publishers, Labels Among Finalists

BY JOHN LANNERT

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Congratulates their nominees for the
BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC AWARDS 2004

Regional Mexican Album of the Year
Male Duo or Group
GRUPO MONTEZ DE DURANGO / De Durango a Chicago

Regional Mexican Airplay Track of the Year
Male Group
PALOMO / De Uno y de Todos los Modos

Regional Mexican Album of the Year
Female Group or Female Solo Artist
LOS ANGELES AZULES / En Vivo Al Azul Vivo

Regional Mexican Airplay Track of the Year
Male Solo Artist
JORGE LUIS CABRERA / Quedate Callada

Latin Compilation
Album of the Year
VARIOS / Historia Musical Grupera

www.disa.com.mx
Soraya Imparts Spirit Of Hope To Cancer Victims

BY LEILA COBO

While playing a fundraiser in Miami six years ago, singer/songwriter Soraya approached Nancy Brinker, the founder of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Soraya wanted to help the organization in some way in its search for a cure for breast cancer. The singer’s mother had died of the disease. So had her grandmother. And her aunt.

“I wanted to meet her to say, ‘Let me help you educate Hispanic women,'” Soraya recalls. “So we had lunch, and that lunch became dinner, and we decided I would start helping.”

In the years since, Soraya has shown tireless dedication to increasing awareness of breast cancer; helping patients, survivors and their families; and advocating for the search for a cure. As a result, Soraya is the recipient of this year’s Spirit of Hope Award.

The Spirit of Hope Award was created in memory of the late Selena Quintanilla. The award honors an artist or executive for exceptional humanitarian work and contributions.

When Soraya first got involved in the battle against breast cancer, she could not know that in June 2000, she herself would be diagnosed with stage three of the disease. Or that her personal battle would thrust her into the spotlight as the Hispanic face of the worldwide fight against breast cancer.

At first, the singer did not want to talk about her personal hardships. But she soon released a three-minute video recounting her battle with cancer.

She was immediately bombarded with thousands of letters and calls from people around the world. “Real people,” she says, “telling the most difficult stories, and the most positive stories.”

“And I said, there's this hole of [missing] information. We know of women who have publicly gone through a breast cancer diagnosis in the English-speaking world, but you're hard-pressed to find that in the Spanish market. And because of that, a lot of women were feeling alone.”

In the four years since her diagnosis, Soraya's experiences have led to one of the most remarkable and visible advocacy efforts by a Latin artist.

“The work Soraya has done has literally saved the lives of Spanish-speaking women around the world,” says Susan Carter, director of communications for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, which is online at komen.org.

“There’s a critical need for Hispanic spokespersons,” Carter adds. “People in this community, particularly celebrities, typically don’t go public with this diagnosis. It’s extremely powerful for us to have somebody of Soraya’s stature go public and support the foundation and our message.”

Soraya’s work on behalf of breast-cancer awareness is part of her daily life. In each city she visits to promote her album “Soraya,” her schedule includes some activity related to the cause—from talks at hospitals to benefit concerts.

“Basically, my life is split in three,” Soraya says. “My music career, my life and this. It’s a full-time job.”

Her message about breast cancer is also “split in three”: She speaks about early detection; she speaks to survivors about quality of life; and she speaks to doctors, nurses and researchers. Her only condition? “Please translate everything into Spanish,” she says.

Today, Soraya is looking and feeling good.

“I’m doing great. Thank God. I feel fantastic, so strong,” she says. “But because there’s no cure, she adds, “there’s no finish line. Not one day of my life goes by when I’m not approached by a survivor or a family member. I know I’m leaving some seeds behind, and those will keep growing.”

Producer Finalists On Their Craft

BY LEILA COBO

The measure of a hit is to be found in the quality of a song. But that song can only go as far as the production that defines its sound.

This year’s finalists in the Billboard Latin Music Awards producer of the year category are a versatile bunch whose credits run the gamut. Here, each producer discusses his quest for distinctive, outstanding production.

JESÚS GUILLÉN

Finalist for “Perdóname Mi Amor,” “Una Vez Más,” “Actos de un Tonto,” “Ave Cautiva” and “Hazme Olvidar,” all performed by Conjunto Primavera

“There are several reasons for success,” Guillén says. “A good song, a good voice, a good label and, above all, the audience's acceptance.

“I've had the good fortune of handling Conjunto Primavera for the past seven albums, he says. “In [his] case, my work as producer has been one of dispensing general advice. This is a group that has been together for 25 years.”

“In the beginning, they sang purely nortero music,” Guillén continues, “but with time, I convinced them to include more ballads in their repertoire. And their major success has been with the ballads.”

He adds that the group’s album “Decide Tú” is named after “a Ricardo Montanez track. [The song] hasn't been cut as a single yet, but it's a very international track. I'm interested in markets like Miami, Puerto Rico and New York for this band.”

PÉrez FUSION

RUDY PÉREZ

Finalist for “Si No Estás,” “Vive la Vida” and “Hasta que Me Olvide de Ti,” performed by Area 305; “Lo Que Yo Tuve Contigo,” performed by José Feliciano; “Más que tu Amigo,” performed by Marco Antonio Solís; “Quisiera que Me Omitas,” performed by Luis Fonsi; “Ya No Me Duele,” performed by Victoria; “Te Llamé,” performed by Cristian; “Corazón de Papel,” performed by Julio Iglesias; and “El Deseo de Tú,” performed by Daniel René

“I'm trying to fuse what's happening around me into my music,” Pérez notes. “There's a lot of South American influences I've incorporated into my sound, even as I've tried to keep a lot of the things that have worked for me through the years, like beautiful strings and melodies.

“I've moved through the times, and I've tried to respect what people are buying and what people are saying yes to,” he continues. “I'm very involved with regional Mexican sounds now, for example. But I'm always trying to do what I like, which is still romantic music. Thank God people still fall in and out of love all the time—a love song makes somebody's career, and a love song stays forever.”

KIKE SANTANDER

Finalist for “Dígále,” “Llorarás las Pena” and “Quiero Perderme en Tu Cuerpo,” performed by David Bisbal; “Entre el Delirio y la Locura” and “A Fuego Lento,” performed by Jennifer Peña; “Qué Ganas,” performed by Ricardo Montaner and “No Podrás,” performed by Olga Tañón

“My main concern is quality,” Santander says. “Very well-crafted musical arrangements, well-conceived songs and well-produced albums where all the instruments sound great. There's always the danger of overproducing, but there isn’t a pre-established formula for that.

“It's a search of the moment. I don't pretend to say I'm going to change Latin music. But I do take great pains with quality and respect the music,” he adds. “If there’s a melody, dress it well. I spent two months mixing David Bisbal's album, for example.”

“Never know the results, because you don't know for sure if something will work or not. But there's a common denominator of quality. I try to go the extra mile in the craft, which is something intangible. I take care of the last note, the last chord, the last phrase, and maybe, that all adds up,” he concludes.

TOMMY TORRES

Finalist for “Tal Vez,” “Jalo” and “Asignatura Pendiente,” all performed by Ricky Martin

“As a producer, I like to connect all the elements in an album: the songs, the arrangements, the musical and vocal performance and the artist's spiritual state of mind,” Torres says. “Lately, I've been particularly focused on repertoire.

“Over the past decade, we've seen albums become battlegrounds between producers and composers fighting to make their songs the single,” he says. “To make things worse, many producers are focused on placing their own songs on an album, sacrificing their objective in the project. I've taken a different stance.

“Not all the songs on an album have to fit the radio pattern or be the latest fashion,” he notes. "They only have to fill their moment within the album. This sets the foundation for an authentic recording and allows us to book the listener for several songs and, if we're lucky, the entire album.”
Spanish Broadcasting System, Inc. is the largest Hispanic-controlled radio broadcasting company in the United States. SBS currently owns and operates 25 stations in six of the top U.S. Hispanic markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco, and Puerto Rico. The Company also operates LaMusica.com, a bilingual Spanish-English Internet Web site providing content related to Latin music, entertainment, news and culture.
Rubio Featured In Q&A Session

BY LEILA COBO

When Paulina Rubio was a little girl, she asked for permission to redecorate the house while her mother—Mexican film star Susana Dosamantes—spent the day on a film shoot. Expecting a few chairs to be moved around, Dosamantes said yes. She returned to find walls, furniture, and drapes painted with a 7-year-old’s delighted scramble.

More than two decades later, Rubio continues to be an iconoclast, breaking the rules yet sitting pretty at the end of the process.

Rubio’s personality and insight will be on display April 28, when she sits down for the annual Q&A session that is the highlight of the Billboard Latin Music Conference. This marks the first time that the Q&A that will have featured a female performer.

In the exclusive one-on-one conversation, Rubio will discuss her upcoming tour, her international career and her crossover success. She will also offer her unique perspective on the making of her current album, “Pau-Latina”—on which she served as a producer for the first time—and her commitment to exploring new fusions within Latin music.

“Pau-Latina” (Universal Music Latino) debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart in February. Simultaneously, the first single, “Te Quise Tanto,” hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart.

“Pau-Latina” is the follow-up to Rubio’s successful English-language crossover bid, “Border Girl.” That album was preceded by “Paulina,” Rubio’s extraordinary comeback, which was the top-selling Spanish-language album on the Billboard 200 year-end charts.

What is Rubio’s secret?

Total fearlessness when it comes to broaching new styles and genres, from techno mariachi to feminist rapping. Total fearlessness when it comes to portraying an image that’s unique and genuine. And total fearlessness when it comes to expressing an opinion.

“I’m someone who was born in Mexico [and] raised in Spain. [My image is] not prefabricated,” Rubio says. “What I’m doing is something I call ‘futuristic folklore,’ where everything gets mixed.”

Universal Music Latino president John Echevarria says, “Paulina is an extremely intelligent woman. As if that weren’t enough, she’s attractive, witty and fun. Can you ask for more? Well, yes. Since the release of her album ‘Paulina,’ she’s the best-selling Latin female act.”

Universal Leads On First-Quarter Latin Charts

Company’s Strength Is Strong-Selling Roster Of Regional Mexican Acts

BY LEILA COBO

Univision Music Group (UMG) continues to be the leading Latin label in the United States for the first quarter of 2004.

According to sales figures provided by Nielsen SoundScan and year-to-date Billboard charts (from the Dec. 6, 2003, issue through the April 3, 2004, issue), UMG has an ample sales lead in the market (see charts, page LM-16).

The label, which includes Univision Records, Fonovisa Records and Disca Records, has a total of 43 titles charting on the Top Latin Albums Labels chart so far. That is almost double the number of runner-up Sony Discos, which has 24 titles.

When broken down by imprints, UMG-owned Fonovisa tops the Top Latin Albums Imprints chart with a total of 25 titles. Sony Discos follows with 20, while Univision Records comes in with 18.

UMG has a strong-selling roster of mostly regional Mexican acts. Leading the Top Latin Albums chart, for example, is Marco Antonio Solís “La Historia Continúa” (Fonovisa). At No. 2 is another Fonovisa mainstay, Los Temerarios, with “Trabuco al Amor.”

UMG has a total of seven of the top 20 titles on Top Latin Albums. Sony follows with six, including Sin Bandera’s “De Viaje” and La Oreja de Van Gogh’s “Lo Que Te Conté Mientras Te Hacias La Dormida.”

EMI ranks with A.B. Quintanilla III & Kumbia Kings “La Historia,” which comes in at No. 3 on the Top Latin Albums chart.

In a continuing trend, compilations have dominated first-quarter sales of Latin music titles—the three top-sellers in the market are greatest-hits sets from established acts Solís, Los Temerarios and A.B. Quintanilla III & Kumbia Kings.

The only new act on the Top Latin Albums chart is Akwai, with its successful debut, “Proyecto Akwai” (Univision Records).

On the Top Latin Albums Artists chart, the leader is Manó. This is in large part due to showings from its three compilation albums and its studio album, for a total of four charting titles. Solís follows with two.

Even as Univision dominates in sales, Sony Discos annually tops the Hot Latin Tracks Imprints and Hot Latin Tracks Labels charts. Sony has a total of 25 charted titles on the Imprints chart, followed by Fonovisa with 15.

On Hot Latin Tracks Labels, Sony leads with 29 charted titles, followed by Universal Music Latino with 16. Fonovisa is third with 16.

Sony was aided in its radio rally by multiple tracks from pop acts Chayanne and Sin Bandera. Universal Music Latino continued to reap the benefits of Juanes while adding tracks from David Biral and Luis Fonsi.

The Top Hot Latin Tracks title for the time period, however, belongs to neither label. It is Obe Bermúdez’s “Me Cansé de Ti,” from his EMI Latin album “Confesiones.”

Bermúdez also tops the Hot Latin Tracks Artists chart, testing such stalwarts as Chayanne, Sin Bandera and Cristian.

As reported in Billboard earlier this year, Universal Music & Video Distribution (UMVD) has confirmed its position as the leading distributor of Latin music in the country.

UMVD has seen a market-share boost thanks to distribution agreements with UMG, which includes Fonovisa Records. For this first quarter, UMVD has a total of 84 charting titles, followed by Sony with 24.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in these first-quarter charts is a no-show.

BMG is not among the top five in either the Top Latin Albums Labels or Top Latin Albums Imprints charts.

And none of its artists or titles make the Top Latin Albums Titles or Top Latin Album Artists charts.

BMG's sole showing is at No. 5 on the Hot Latin Tracks Labels chart, thanks to Mexican star Cristian.
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**Who’s On Top?**  
*A Look At The Year-To-Date Latin Charts*

The chart recaps in the Latin Music Quarterly are year-to-date from the Dec. 6, 2003, issue (the beginning of the *Billboard* chart year) through the April 3, 2004, issue. Recaps for Top Latin Albums are based on sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, while recaps for Hot Latin Tracks are based on gross audience impressions as monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Titles receive credit for sales or airplay accumulated during each week they appear on the pertinent chart.

The recaps were compiled by Anthony Colombo with assistance from Latin charts manager Ricardo Companioni.

### Hot Latin Tracks Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>ARTIST (No. of Charted Titles)</th>
<th>IMPRINT/LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>OBIE BERMUDEZ (2) <em>EMI Latin</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CHAYANNE (2) <em>Sony Discos</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SIN BANDERA (2) <em>Sony Discos</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CRISTIAN (2) <em>Anola/BMG Latin</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CONJUNTO PRIMAVERA (2) <em>Fonovisa</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>GRUPO MONTEZ DE DURANGO (3) <em>Disco</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS (1) <em>Fonovisa</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>JUANES (3) <em>Surco/Universal Latino</em></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>LUIS FONSI (2) <em>Universal Latino</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DAVID BISBAL (2) <em>Vale/Universal Latino</em></td>
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### Hot Latin Tracks Imprints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>IMPRINT (No. of Charted Titles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>SONY DISCOS</em> (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>FONOVISA</em> (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>EMI LATIN</em> (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>UNIVERSAL LATINO</em> (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>WARNER LATIN</em> (8)</td>
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</tbody>
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### Hot Latin Tracks Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>SONY DISCOS</em> (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>UNIVERSAL LATINO</em> (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>FONOVISA</em> (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>EMI LATIN</em> (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>BMG LATIN</em> (9)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Hot Latin Tracks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>TITLE—ARTIST—IMPRINT/LABEL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>ME CANSE DE TI</strong>—Obie Bermudez—EMI Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>CUIDARTE EL ALMA</strong>—Chayanne—Sony Discos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>MIENTES TAN BIEN</strong>—Sin Bandera—Sony Discos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>MAS QUE TU AMIGO</strong>—Marco Antonio Solís—Fonovisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>ANTESE</strong>—Obie Bermudez—EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>TE LLAME</strong>—Cristian—Anola/BMG Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>LA PAGA</strong>—Juanes—Surco/Universal Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>YO QUE TODO EN NADA</strong>—Ricky Martin—Sony Discos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>LAGRIMAS DE CRISTAL</strong>—Grupo Montez De Durango—Disco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>QUIEN TE DIJO ESPAÑOL</strong>—Luis Fonsi—Universal Latino</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Top Latin Albums Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>TITLE—ARTIST—IMPRINT/LABEL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>LA HISTORIA CONTINUA</strong>—Marco Antonio Solís—Fonovisa/UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>TRIBUTO AL AMOR</strong>—Los Temerarios—Fonovisa/UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>LA HISTORIA</strong>—A.B. Quintanilla III &amp; Rumba Kings—EMI Latin</td>
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</table>

### Top Latin Albums Imprints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>IMPRINT (No. of Charted Titles)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>FONOVISA</em> (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>SONY DISCOS</em> (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>WARNER LATIN</em> (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>EMI LATIN</em> (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>UNIVISION</em> (18)</td>
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### Top Latin Albums Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>LABEL (No. of Charted Titles)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP</em> (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><em>SONY DISCOS</em> (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>EMI LATIN</em> (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><em>UNIVERSAL LATINO</em> (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><em>WARNER LATIN</em> (8)</td>
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### Top Latin Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>TITLE—ARTIST—IMPRINT/LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>HACIAS LA DORMIDA</strong>—La Oreja De Van Gogh—Sony Discos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>CRONICA DE DOS GRANDES</strong>—Bronco/Los Bukis—Fonovisa/UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>POR TI</strong>—Edith Nazario—Sony Discos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>CON ORGULLO POR HERENCIA</strong>—Pepe Aguilar—Univision/UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>COLECCION DE ORO</strong>—Joan Sebastian—Musart/Balboa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Greatest Hits</strong>—Thalia—EMI Special Markets/EMI Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>HERENCIA MUSICAL</strong>—20 BOLEROS ROMANTICOS—Los Tigres Del Norte—Fonovisa/UG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>PAU-LATINA</strong>—Paulina Rubio—Universal Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>LO QUE TE CONTE MIENTRAS TE HABLAS</strong>—Juanes—Surco/Universal Latino</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Latin Music Companies

- SONY DISCOS
- FONOVISA
- EMI LATIN
- UNIVERSAL LATINO
- WARNER LATIN

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**Notes:**
- The Latin Music Quarterly is published quarterly by *Billboard* magazine.
- The chart recaps are based on year-to-date sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan and audience impressions monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems.
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- The recaps were compiled by Anthony Colombo with assistance from Latin charts manager Ricardo Companioni.
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Celia Cruz Remembered

BY LEILA COBO

In November 2002, Celia Cruz came to Miami for the video premiere of “La Negra Tiene Tumbao,” the second single from her album of the same name. Cruz wanted to chat over an informal lunch.

As was often the case with Cruz, talking about her album developed into warm and delightful conversation. At the time, neither of us knew this would be our last chat and, indeed, the last lengthy interview Cruz would give before her death in July 2003.

This year, Cruz is the leading finalist for the Billboard Latin Music Awards—a shining example of how her joy de vivre continues to live through her exuberant recordings. Following are excerpts from that final interview.

It seems to me that in the past two years there has been a Celia revival in the United States. Do you perceive that?

I blame it on the fact that a lot of people from Latin America, who knew me but had never seen me, have now come to the United States. I can’t even go to a store anymore. I can’t go to church.

I love to go to church, and I do so in every country I stop in. In Nicaragua, people went inside the church after me.

It amazes me how strong your voice continues to be...

I take very good care of myself. On bad evenings, [ones that] are spent working, when I finish working, I go to the hotel or to my house. I’m not one to get drunk or have strong drinks, because strong drinks hoarseen your voice.

Do you smoke?

I started to smoke because in my family everyone smoked—my mother, my brother. My brother was teaching me and I got a cold.

I went to the doctor, and Dr. Morales—that was his name—asked me, “Do you smoke?” And I said, “No, doctor.” And he said, “Well, if you want your voice to last, never smoke.” And right there and then, I stopped learning how to do it.

I have to take care of my vocal cords so I can give my audience what they expect of me.

How about the recording studio—are you one to lay down full tracks or record phrase by phrase?

It’s so much easier to record now. When I recorded with La Sonora, I would begin at midnight and I’d still be there at 6 a.m. with no voice left. Now, you can punch in one line. I love that system. But I still want to sing. I give more of myself singing live. Lip-synching is for TV. I will not lip-synch on a stage.

You’ve said you want to record an all-bolero album. Would it be Cuban standards?

No. I don’t like to sing what others have done. Yes, sometimes I’ll sing something old, if someone requests it. But boleros? They’ll be previously unreleased. If one’s bound to become a hit, I want to be the one to create it.

Whooop Goldberg has said she will direct and act in the movie of your life. How did you hook up with her?

Emilio and Gloria [Estefan] had this big concert after Andrew came.

The hurricane?

Ah, good. Wanted to see if you’re on the ball. [She laughs.]

So, [Goldberg] was the mistress of ceremonies, and, since she was in Miami, she said: “The only thing I can say in Spanish is azucar! I admire Celia Cruz, and I’d like to do a movie on her life.”

I was in my house watching and I thought, “How nice.” And two years later, she said it again. That’s when I sent her a fax thanking her, even though I didn’t know her.

And last year, they gave her an award in Washington [D.C.], and she asked if I could sing. So I went, and I sang “Quimbara”—all the Americans request “Quimbara.” We met onstage, and I said, “Finally!” And she said the same thing: And that’s it. I gave her permission to make the movie.

What else do you still need to do, besides your bolero album?

Ah, nothing else! That God grant me good health to continue in this. No, I have [done] many things already. And [I have] many awards that I’m thankful for from the bottom of my heart. I never thought I would win a Grammy. I never thought I’d have a star—well, here in Miami, yes, because my people are here—but on Hollywood Boulevard? Never in my life!
Pasen por su premio a la barra.
Long before the Latin explosion, Billboard Magazine was in the forefront of the Latino boom by consistently showcasing Latino artists, industry executives, producers, record labels and the music genre's trends and movement. But, who are the movers and shakers that have taken the Latino artists from the Billboard Charts to the most prestigious venues in the United States? The following is a profile of the Hispanic concert world's most coveted promoter, MBE.

When we think of Madison Avenue marketing...we know that brand association is key to advertising success. In the Hispanic market, one person has been crowned "King" of product marketing. Sabado Gigante's Don Francisco has shown corporate American the extreme in building brand loyalty and creating demand for a product. Music, in the form of jingles sung by the audience plus fun and entertainment makes "cents".

The Hispanic concert industry and promoter world also has its very own "King" if you will, of product association. When the Marquez Brothers moved to California from their native Jalisco, Mexico they longed for the flavors of the family's dairy farm products. Knowing that fellow paisanos yearned for the same, they began to produce authentic quality Mexican foods in San Jose, California. As an advertising marketing strategy for the "EL MEXICANO" products, the Marquez Brothers would buy the sponsorships of events and concerts. As the community attended these shows the association was evident. Marquez Brothers delivers two things...great food and great entertainment! With the explosion in the Hispanic population the company grew and the entertainment demands increased. Eight years ago the Marquez Brothers took a leap of faith and raised the bar for the Hispanic music industry by establishing their own promoter house under the name of MARQUEZ BROTHERS ENTERTAINMENT.

Today, MBE is the Hispanic industry's premier producer, promoter and presenter of the largest rodeos, dances, sporting events and concerts in the United States. MBE's impact is not limited to the U.S. MBE currently produces and presents shows in Mexico and is soon to enter Central and South America.
Whereas others promoters concentrate on specific genres of music MBE not only promotes the highly popular Mexican Regional acts but also present pop, international and crossover artists. In the sporting arena MBE works with major international sports franchises to bring them directly in contact with their fans in the U.S. The MBE Sports Division claims as their biggest medal of honor the sell-out soccer game COPA EL MEXICANO at the Pac Bell Park in San Francisco last year.

Driven towards excellence, Marquez Brothers Entertainment holds true to their commitment of providing quality entertainment, spectacular presentations and consumer satisfaction. This reputation has made the Marquez group the most sought after promoter by artists, managing agencies and sponsors. Always forward thinking, MBE has been instrumental in pioneering many industry "firsts"; first to put a Mexican Regional artist at the Kodak Theatre, first in staging a hometown rodeo tours in a major indoor arena setting, first corporate brand to enter the entertainment industry to own tours for the purpose of product branding and awareness.

Marquez Brothers Entertainment has come a long way from the one man, one-woman staff. Gustavo Marquez, President & CEO and Dee Aguirre, Executive VP of Entertainment, have compiled a team of experts in the fields of sponsorship sales, sporting event production, media marketing specialists and concert producers who work together to stage the industry's longest running tours.

MBE corporate headquarters remain in San Jose, with MBE's sports division in Las Vegas & Chicago, Southwest entertainment division in Phoenix and sponsorship sales offices in Miami. The promoters reach and agenda includes the top 45 Hispanic markets in the United States.

Marquez Brothers approach of "no corners cut", "no stone unturned" has attracted the loyalty of industry giants like Juan Gabriel, Joan Sebastian, Marco Antonio Solis, Alexendra Guzman, Los Tigres Del Norte, Conjunto Primavera, Banda El Recodo, Los Temerarios and many others that fill their concert rosters. In the eyes of Billboard Magazines A-listers... the road to success in the exciting world of Hispanic concert entertainment is paved by MBE.

Reporter: Zjennica Orozco
Conference
Continued from page LM-3

VNU sister publication Adweek will present “The Art of Endorsement and Branding.” This panel will detail the process of obtaining such deals for musical acts.

Another panel, “Download Revolution,” will discuss the sale and promotion of Latin music online. Gabriel Abaroa, president of the Latin Academy of Arts & Sciences, will moderate the discussion. “Show Me the Money,” sponsored by SunTrust Bank, will provide a forum for discussion of new business models and sources of revenue in the Latin music industry.

The second day of the conference will open with the traditional presidents’ panel, but with an added twist. During the discussion, artists will go head-to-head with label presidents on the vital issues affecting Latin music today.

Another conference tradition will follow. The ASCAP songwriters’ panel offers aspiring songwriters a forum for their music to be critiqued by the top ears of the industry. Participants include Beto Cuevas of La Ley, publishing heads Maximo Aguirre (Maximo Aguirre Publishing) and Gustavo Menendez (Warner/Chappell), and producers/composers Sergio George (Celia Cruz, Bacilos) and George Noriega (Ricky Martin, Robi Draco Rosa).

In the afternoon, a marquee group of artists (Akwid), producers (Byron Brizuela, the Twins) and label executives (Jeff Young, Disa) discuss the new trends and promotion of regional Mexican music, the nation’s best-selling Latin music genre.

The day’s grand finale is Billboard’s exclusive one-on-one Q&A with superstar Paulina Rubio (see story, page LM-14).

The conference begins April 29 with a round-table conversation between filmmakers and composers. Participants include Grammy Award-winning producer Gustavo Santalalla, who scored such films as “Amores Perros” and “21 Grams,” and composer/filmmaker Franc Reyes, who directed and scored “Empire,” starring John Leguizamo.

The conference ends with the second annual Latin Christian music panel, moderated by Marcos Witt, the genre’s best-selling act. A performance by Karina Moreno and Samuel Hernández will follow.

After the Billboard Latin Music Awards that night, a party sponsored by the CMX Latin Music Group will be held at Bongos nightclub. Performers include salsa star Michael Stuart, among others.
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Showcases
Continued from page LM-4

at the Billboard Latin Music Awards for his work with Ricky Martin and Ednita Nazario, among others.

Rounding out this roster of marquee acts is Venezuela's sonero king Oscar D'León. Signed to Ole after leaving Universal Music Latino, D'León is working on an album that is set for release this fall.

K1, a fusion group made up largely of former Kumbia Kings members, is the only debut act on Ole. In February, the group's first album, "Nuestro Turno," debuted at No. 19 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart.

On the evening of April 28, ASCAP will present some of its most prominent songwriters in an intimate, acoustic setting that has proved stellar in years past. This year's lineup includes an array of singer/songwriters covering all genres.

Miguel Luna, best-known in the regional Mexican realm, has had songs recorded by such acts as Pepe Aguilar, Banda el Recodo, Límite and Pablo Montero. He also co-wrote Ricardo Arjona's latest hit, "Minutos."

Yoel Henríquez is relatively new to the songwriting circuit. But in just five short years as a professional writer, he has had more than 50 songs recorded by multiple acts, most of them in the tropical field. They include Gilberto Santa Rosa, Olga Tañón, India, Marc Anthony, Huey Dunbar, Victor Manuelle and Ednita Nazario.

Jorge Luis Piloto is a stalwart of Latin music and the author of such No. 1 hits as "Cómo Se Cura una Herida" (performed by Jaci Velásquez), "Cómo Olvidar" (Olga Tañón) and "Quítame Ese Hombre," most recently recorded by Pilar Montenegro. He has also written for Chayanne, José José, Rey Ruiz, La Mafia and Jerry Rivera, among many others.

Chilean singer/songwriter Cristian Zalles has been writing music for 25 years. One of the first writers signed to Warner/Chappell by the late Ellen Moraskie, Zalles has written for such artists as Ednita Nazario, Tito Nieves and Julio Iglesias (Continued on page LM-38).
RUDY PEREZ
ASCAP Songwriter Of The Year 2004

Billboard Latin Awards finalist
PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

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JULIO IGLESIAS

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Who Found Success In '03—And How

BY LEILA COBO

What makes a successful album? In 2003, it was not just about the music. Everything from sheer chance and simple inertia to dedicated marketing made the difference between a modest success and a great one. And this year's Latin Music Awards finalists proved just that.

Take grande dame Celia Cruz, the leading finalist, with a total of seven nods. The late Cruz was no stranger to the charts or awards, but major sales long eluded her—or at least never kept pace with the import of her name.

Indeed, Cruz had not placed a single album on The Billboard 200 until last summer. Just a few weeks after her death July 16, however, she had three, including the posthumous release “Regalo del Alma” (Sony), which led the Top Latin Albums chart for three weeks. Also on the chart was "Exitos Eternos," a greatest-hits compilation on Universal, and "Hits Mix." At one point, Cruz's albums occupied five of the top 12 spots on the Top Latin Albums chart, including four of the top five.

While Cruz struggled to get on to the charts, Colombian singer/songwriter Juanes hasn’t spent much time off them. His sophomore solo album, "Un Dia Normal" (Surco/Universal), remained in the top 10 of the Top Latin Albums chart for 92 weeks. Juanes’ success can be attributed largely to airplay. While his debut solo album, "Fíjate Bien," was critically acclaimed, it had next to no radio presence in the United States. But in 2002, "Un Dia Normal" was propelled by its hit first single, "A Dios Le Pido." And last year once again saw a steady Juanes presence on airwaves. That, coupled with a major tour, TV appearances (including the Latin Grammys and MTV) and, of course, the music have made Juanes a smash.

Audiences, it seems, were ready for a different kind of Latin music. When they heard Juanes' singles on the radio, they flocked to buy the album. Juanes pens all of his material himself. His success has been buoyed, in part, by labels' increased interest in finding similarly minded, "self-contained" acts that write their own songs.

At this year's awards, singer/songwriters are present in multiple pop categories, including Latin pop album of the year, male (Alejandro Sanz), female (Soraya, Ednita Nazario) and duo or group (Sin Bandera, La Oreja de Van Gogh).

In the regional Mexican realm, Marco Antonio Solís sits pretty as a finalist in three categories, including songwriter of the year. Among new singer/songwriters, however, the standout is Obie Bermúdez. Signed to EMI Latin after one unremarkable album on (Continued on page LM-40)

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Top acts of 2003, clockwise from top, include Juanes, Obie Bermúdez, Celia Cruz, La Oreja de Van Gogh and Don Omar.
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Sponsors
Continued from page LM-3

Spa, for example, Garnier will offer "Fructini" drinks served by the Fructis Crew. Conference attendees staying at the Eden Roc will also receive complimentary Garnier Fructis products in their rooms, and Garnier Fructis goody bags will be given to celebrities. Consumers have a chance to win their own goody bags through various publications and Web sites.

"Garnier is about individuality and style," says Michael Indursky, VP of marketing for Garnier. "So we consider ourselves a good fit for this year's awards finalists, all of whom embody these qualities."

A new sponsor this year is Polaroid Corp. Polaroid's "candid" photography team, the "Polarozzi," will be available at all events to capture instant images of celebrities and VIPs.

"Polaroid has always been a patron of the arts—in any form," says Najla Frayha, senior marketing manager of Polaroid Corp. "The Polaroid brand has high recognition among Hispanic consumers. We're pleased to be able to give something back to this community by supporting Hispanic artists at the Billboard Latin Music Conference and Awards."

Also new to the awards are CMX Latin and CMX Latin Music Group. The new event and promotion company will host the Billboard Awards Afterparty, featuring a performance by Michael Stuart.

CMX Latin is the Latin arm of CMX Sports and Entertainment, a sports promotion and film production company based in Las Vegas. The company is currently in the process of building a record label, publishing company and concert division.

CMX is headed by Demetrius and Eric Brown. Its involvement with the conference and awards afterparty is the company's official debut in the Latin marketplace.

"We thought this was the perfect and most elegant way to make our first public launch," CMX Latin COO Dijon Aragon says, noting that the company plans to open offices in Miami later this year.

Univision Radio continues as the exclusive radio sponsor of the conference and awards, providing coverage of conference events, showcases and the awards themselves.

This year's panel sponsors include BDS, ASCAP (which is also hosting its now-traditional ASCAP showcase), SunTrust Bank and ¡Dimelo! Records.

Macrovision is the sponsor of this year's pocketbook guide, while Shoestring Entertainment and its artist Liliana Rokita sponsor all hotel keys. Hombre, a new men's magazine, hosts a pre-awards party April 28 at Opium Garden.
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Finalists

Continued from page LM-8

No. 1 on the Regional Mexican chart.

JACI VELÁSQUEZ (2)

With extensive promotion and touring and wise song selections, this Houston-born siren of Mexican parents has ably straddled the English- and Spanish-language secular and Christian markets for the past five years.

Powered by the five single “No Hace Falta Un Hombre,” Jaci Velásquez’s latest Sony Discos album, “Milagro,” reached No. 9 on the Top Latin Albums chart and No. 24 on Top Latin Albums.

JORGE LUIS CABRERA (1)

A handsome crooner from the Mexican state of Sinaloa, Jorge Luis Cabrera carved out a huge niche for himself in 2003 as a romantic ranchera artist. His single “Quédate Callada” (Disa) peaked at No. 2 on the Regional Mexican Airplay chart and No. 14 on the Hot Latin Tracks chart.

Apart from the heights realized, “Quédate Callada” also showed considerable chart longevity by remaining on Hot Latin Tracks for 26 weeks and Regional Mexican Airplay for 35 weeks.

EL GRAN COMBO DE PUERTO RICO (1)

Forty-two years after first forming, Puerto Rico’s venerable salsa ensemble, El Gran Combo de Puerto Rico, on Combo Records, remains a vital force on the charts. In 2003, after 27 weeks, the contagious song “Se Nos Perdió el Amor” scaled the Latin Tropical Airplay chart. It stayed there for 35 weeks.

IBRAHIM FERRER (1)

This Buena Vista Social Club alumnus has prospered as a solo artist. The 70-plus-year-old Ibrahim Ferrer topped not only the Tropical Albums chart but also the World Music chart with “Buenos Hermanos,” a splendid display of roots music from his native Cuba.

As of March 6, “Buenos Hermanos” was still charting on Tropical Albums, 44 weeks after its release by World Circuit/Nonesuch/AG. The album also appeared on the Top Latin Albums chart, rising to No. 6. It remained on the chart for 23 weeks.

ANA GABRIEL (1)

One of Mexico’s most popular singer/songwriters of the past 20 years, Ana Gabriel has successfully released a variety of contemporary music albums. In addition, such traditional Mexican releases as “Dulce y Salado” rose to No. 11 on the Regional Mexican chart.

JENNIFER LOPEZ (1)

Jennifer Lopez’s Latin dance following grooved to her 2003 club track “I’m Glad,” which was remixed by Paul Oakenfold. Ascending to No. 2 on the Hot Dance Singles Sales chart, the song wound up spending 32 weeks on the chart.

GRUPO MONTEZ DE DURANGO (1)

Largely unknown outside of Chicago a couple of years ago, Grupo Montez de Durango, the regional Mexican outfit headed by José Luis Terrazas, has ridden its new album to sudden national notoriety.

Debuting at No. 1 on the Regional Mexican chart, “De Durango a Chicago” held the upper rung for six weeks in a row. The album peaked at No. 2 on Top Latin Albums.

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(Continued on page LM-34)
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Finalists
Continued from page LM-32

EDNITA NAZARIO (1)
A fixture on the U.S. Latin music scene for more than 20 years, this petite Puerto Rican powerhouse made her biggest retail splash ever in 2003. Ednita Nazario's "Por Ti" debuted simultaneously at the zenith of the Top Latin Albums and Top Latin Pop Albums charts. The album, released by Sony Discos, yielded two hits, "Si No Me Amas" and "A Que Te Vas."

ARTURO SANDOVAL (1)
Always respected and often awarded, this legendary Cuban trumpeter has cut a variety of albums exploring jazz, Afro-Cuban roots and classical. Arturo Sandoval's 2003 Crescent Moon/Columbia release, "Trumpet Evolution," climbed to No. 6 on the Top Jazz Albums chart, where it remained for 18 weeks.

GILBERTO SANTA ROSA (1)
One of the most durable salsa vocalists, Sony Discos' Gilberto Santa Rosa returns once again as a finalist with "Si Te Dijeron." It's another inviting Santa Rosa shaker, which topped the Latin Tropical Airplay chart for three straight weeks. The song also tallied 38 weeks on the Latin Tropical Airplay chart.

JOE VERAS (1)
Precious few debut acts hang around the Latin Tropical Airplay chart for 33 weeks with a leadoff single. But Joe Veras, an emotive upstart vocalist from the Dominican Republic, achieved this uncommon performance with his J & N Records song "Inténtalo Tú." The single was a sentimental romantic yarn that reached No. 3 on Latin Tropical Airplay.

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Estefan Enterprises Congratulates all the Billboard Latin Music Award Nominees...

"¡Que siga nuestra tradición!"
BY JOHN LANNERT

It began modestly.
The generically named Latin Music Seminar, sponsored by Billboard, started as a one-day event in May 1990 in Miami. It consisted of five industry panels, two artist showcases and an awards show televised from the 4,000-seat James L. Knight Center. About 150 people attended the conference, according to the June 16, 1990, issue of Billboard.

Now in its 15th year, the Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards has evolved into a four-day, must-attend happening that brims with panels, big-name sponsors, numerous artist showcases, networking parties and a dazzling awards show that will be broadcast live on TV and radio from Miami Arena.

"The Billboard Latin conference has become a premier get-together for the Latin music industry," says Oscar Llord, an attendee at the initial conference who is now founder and president of Olé Entertainment.

"The conference attracts executives from different areas of our industry—retail, radio, producer, artists—and you have the opportunity to discuss the pertinent issues that are affecting the industry at the time," Llord says.

Through the years, the Billboard Latin Music Conference has grown and developed with the U.S. Latin music business, providing forums and stages to introduce new industry concepts and artists.

Many of the artists who participated in the early years of the conference went on to become Latin stars, including Selena, Jon Secada, Shakira, Marc Anthony, Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias.

As the conference gained stature through the 1990s, its list of keynote speakers also expanded. It includes such prominent executives as Ralph Peer, Emilio Estefan Jr., Ed Murphy, Jay Berman, Mac Tichenor, Tom Freston and K.C. Porter.

In recent years, the conference has opened with exclusive interviews with such superstars as Iglesias, Martin, Anthony and Alejandro Sanz. Industry veteran George Zamora, who most recently was president of Warner Music Latina, says the Billboard Latin conference has come a long way. He notes that the inaugural gathering was like a wake-up call for those attendees unaware that sales of Spanish recorded product were primed to explode at general market record stores.

"The first conference was a shocker for a lot of the American retailers who were there," Zamora says. "As the years have gone by, the growth of Latin product in the U.S. mainstream retail has almost tripled. Almost all of the major labels today are counting about 50% to 60% of their retail sales coming from U.S. mainstream accounts. So, the biggest plus of the Billboard Latin conferences is that they made mainstream retailers aware of Latin product. Now the Billboard conference is like a Latin retail conference."

Notably, despite the wide variety of panels that helped the conference become the pre-eminent gathering of its kind, the five panel topics featured at the first conference remain.

(Continued on page LM-40)
El Evento Musical del Año

Alejandro Fernández
Luis Fonsi

Gloria Estefan
Paulina Rubio

La Ley
Arturo Sandoval

Banda El Recodo
Pilar Montenegro

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Success
Continued from page LM-28

BMG, Bermúdez delivered a highly personal second set.

"Confesiones," released last summer, struck a chord with listeners because of its sincerity and heartfelt delivery.

"The magic is in how he tells stories," says Jorge Pino, president/chairman of EMI Latin USA. "He's the new storyteller."

Bermúdez benefited from a heavy push at radio, where he achieved a rare level of success for a new act. And although he has not climbed high on the Top Latin Albums chart, he has been a constant seller. In March, he received a gold album for shipments of more than 100,000 units.

The other newcomer to make it big in 2003 was Akwid, the duo of brothers Sergio and Francisco Gómez.

Signed to Univision Music Group, Akwid spearheaded the movement now known as urban regional or "banda" rap, which blends hip-hop beats with traditional regional Mexican music.

The stylistic blend in itself is not new; several acts have been experimenting with it for the past two years. But Akwid was the first to make it big with banda rap, thanks in no small part to regular airplay on popular Los Angeles radio station KBUE (103.5 FM).

In its quest for radio attention, Akwid followed a tried and true hip-hop formula—the duo sampled a popular track from Mexican singer Juan Gabriel.

Although Akwid's song "No Hay Manera" did not receive major airplay outside L.A., its exposure at that market gave the duo's debut album, "Proyecto Akwid," a push. The album remained in the top 10 of the Top Latin Albums chart for eight weeks.

"Other than just the hip-hop crowd, we have real Mexican people with hats and boots and belts [at our show]," Sergio Gómez says of his band's broad appeal.

Akwid's success opened the door for other urban regional acts, most notably Jae-P, whose debut album, also on Univision Records, is a finalist in two categories.

On the reggaeton end, Don Omar and Lunytunes & Noviaga are finalists in two categories each, under-scoring the genre's growing mainstream presence.

However, no success story is sweeter than one with a comeback. This year, that story belongs to Ricky Martin's "Almas del Silencio," his first all-Spanish album in five years.

Martin scored the biggest-selling debut on the Top Latin Albums chart since the chart's inception. Likewise, the first single, "Al Vez" (penned by singer/songwriter Franco Del Val), debuted at No. 1 on Hot Latin Tracks.

But the "comeback kid" tag was not the sole reason for the record's success. Martin promoted "Almas" tirelessly, setting up interviews with radio shows on both coasts and appearing at in-stores nationwide, in addition to a constant stream of radio, TV and press activity.

As a result, he is a finalist in five categories, for both sales and airplay.

"You have to have a winner's mentality. And winners are fighters," Martin told Billboard last year, explaining his decision to promote incessantly, despite his superstar status. "My first 12 years in music were ones of constant battling. Is there any other way to do it?"

15th Confab
Continued from page LM-36

industry issues 15 years later—piracy, distribution, radio, copyrights, and music TV and video.

"Piracy should be a panel topic every year," says Tony Moreno, president of MP Records, an independent label based in Miami. "The panel could be enhanced by talking about the different subscription codes on CDs and by bringing in someone from the [Recording Industry Assn. of America]." (Moreno is another executive who attended the first conference.)

The awards show also has changed through the years. Initially, Billboard teamed with Univision for that network's "Premio Lo Nuestro a la Musica Latina" program.

From 1994 to 1998, Billboard self-produced an awards show that featured such famed hosts as TV stars Michael DiLorenzo, Essai Morales and Daisy Fuentes.

In 1999, Telemundo began broadcasting the awards show on a taped basis. Telemundo will broadcast the show live this year.
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Def Jam B00001269
RELEASE DATE: April 20
At times gutsy, at the MC formerly known as Ghostface Killah, was one of the Wu-Tang Clan’s most understated members, with RZA and Method Man more focused on film—and DJ Muggs (aka Ol’ Dirty Bastard) focusing on whatever. Ghostface is finally getting the attention he deserves. On this, his fourth overall set and Def Jam debut, the Staten Island, native truly shines. “Save Me Dear,” blends an old-school hip-hop backbeat with a vintage R&B sample (Freddie Scott’s “You Got What I Need”) to craft a tale of true love. Ghostface shows his more aggressive side on lead single “Run.” Featuring Jadakiss, the RZA-produced single is already a proven hit in the underground. Other highlights include the haunting “It’s Over,” “Holla” and the club anthem “Tush” (featuring Missy Elliott).—RH

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

▲ STEPHANIE COOK
Everyday
PRODUCERS: various
King Street Sounds KCD 239
RELEASE DATE: April 13
Launched in 1997, Stephanie Cook received her musical training in church. In the underground house scene, she is a revered artist. Her hits are many, and they are all included on “Everything.” The global club smash “Rain” opens the album. From there, club enthusiasts are treated to such peak-hour jams as “Alight,” “I Thank You” and current single “I Never Told You, You Could Stay.” Providing the rich grooves and melodic production are 9 North, Big Moses, Blaze, DJ Spinna and others. Cooke makes the kind of dance music that R&B purists could embrace—that is, if they are introduced to it.—MP

ESSENTIAL REVIEWS

STEFON HARRIS & BLACKOUT
Evolution
PRODUCER: Stefon Harris
Blue Note 07243 5 97363 2
RELEASE DATE: April 13
Thirty-year-old vibes and marimba player Stef ton Harris is already celebrated as a master musician who is steeped in jazz tradition. But with his new band, Blackout—Casey Benjamin on alto sax, Darryl Hall on acoustic bass, drummer John Beasley and Marc Carey on Fender Rhodes and keyboard—Harris gives props to the myriad kinds of music that fill his ears. There is a lovely and poignant cover of Sting’s “Ung” as well as an Afrofunk-inspired version of jazz pianist Herbie Hancock’s “Kut’s Strut.” Through it all, the unmistakable imprint of hip-hop permeates Blackout’s consciousness. On one level, Harris’s all-encompassing embrace, paired with his sensitive musicianship, makes “Evolution” a persuasive statement about the viability of avoiding confining genre barriers. Blackout’s instrumentation, however, somewhat limits its tonal and textural scope—a reality at odds with Harris’s artistic vision.—AT

BILL TAPIA
Tropical Swing
PRODUCER: Mike Spengler
MoonRoomRecords 40942
RELEASE DATE: April 13
In an era of manufactured and quickly forgotten pop acts, a debut solo album from a 56-year-old man is quite a surprise. Hailed as Hawaiian guitar/ukulele legend Bill Tapias Tropical Swing is as delightful as it is surprising. A member of Hawaii’s first-ever jazz combo, Tapias’s 86-year career includes jam sessions with long-gone pioneers of American music, including Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday and Fats Waller. On this solo debut offering—every bit as smooth and melow as one might expect—Tapias takes his rightful place alongside those greats. He retains a sharp improvisational skill and capable instrumental ability, offering breezy, laid-back renditions of such standards as “Stardust” and “Mack the Knife.” Also included are two 1936 recordings: the title track and “Stars and Stripes Forever.” Racked by the Mound Apple Co. in Honolulu.—CW

GOSPEL

▲ RICKY DILLARD & NEW G
Unplugged... the Way Church Used to Be
PRODUCERS: Ricky Dillard, Michael Taylor, Derrick Harris, Ernon Williams
Crystal:Jazz F-73924 0 97942
RELEASE DATE: April 11
As a strong influence in urban (Continued on page 42)
Two venerable family-operated music publishers, Carl Fischer and Theodore Presser Co., are joining forces.

Fischer has signed an agreement to acquire Presser and looks forward to exploiting their respective strengths in the print- and performance-music fields.

“We are thrilled with the opportunity to acquire Presser and look forward to combining our efforts to further expand and develop both companies,” says Fischer chairman Hayden Connor, who is a fourth-generation publisher and founder of Carl Fischer. “It is an historic union of two great publishing firms and two marvelously talented staffs.”

Founded in 1872, New York-based Carl Fischer is known for its educational music publications and also publishes numerous American composers, including Howard Hanson, Lukas Foss, Henry Brant and Martin Bresnick.

The King of Prussia, Pa.-based Theodore Presser Co., which launched in 1883 as a magazine for music teachers, has diversified from an educational music publisher, it publishes or reps such composers as Charles Ives, William Schuman, Ellen Zwilich, Lowell Liebermann, Chen Yi, Olivier Messiaen and Astor Piazzolla.

The combined print catalogs of the two companies, which also involve approximately 100 domestically distributed international publishers, will total about 35,000 active titles. But Theodore Presser will retain its name and identity with Tom Brodlo staying on as president.

Theodore Presser chairman (and Tom Brodlo’s father) Arnold Brodlo says, “I am pleased to have the historic name and venerable contributions of Theodore Presser Co. assured in what promises to be a bright future.”

Carl Fischer president/CFO Lauren Keiser adds, “We think this is definitely a case where the sum is greater than its parts. We look forward to merging the great skills of both companies by developing unique products and publications, promoting and nurturing composers and using our strengths to grow both businesses into a major new force within the music industry.”

EUPHEMISTIC PACT: Windsept Holdings has paired with songwriter/producer Greg Prestopino’s Ufemizm publishing and production company.

Windsept, which owns or reps songwriters and publishing catalogs including the Trio/Quartet catalog, Pete Townshend and Hilco, will provide funding for a co-venture with Ufemizm. The venture will focus on discovering and developing songwriter talents at all levels.

“It’s easy to get caught up in looking for only one specific style,” says Prestopino, whose own songwriter credits include tunes cut by Puff Daddy, Celine Dion, Natalie Cole, Aaron Neville andette Midler. “The truth is that talent is talent, whether you find it in pop, R&B, jazz or on Broadway. And when you find it, nurture it.”

The Windsept/Ufemizm venture is registered with ASCAP as Ufemizm Music and with BMI as Elliptic Songs.

RICHELIEU HOSTS HOPE: Lionel Richie is hosting Songs of Hope III, the latest silent auction benefit for the City of Hope, May 19 at his Beverly Hills home. The event again hinges on a silent auction of rare and one-of-a-kind sheet music, original lyrics and Academy Award-nominated scores and songs signed by internationally recognized songwriters and artists.

Among the artists who have autographed items are Babyface, the Bee Gees, Sheryl Crow, Billy Joel, Paul McCartney, Dolly Parton, and U2.

“Unfortunately, too many of us know someone affected by serious illness,” says Universal Music Publishing Group worldwide president David Renzer, Songs of Hope event chair. “Since its inception, Songs of Hope has raised nearly $200,000 for lifesaving research, treatment and education programs at City of Hope. We are pleased to have Lionel Richie’s support to advance the world-class efforts of City of Hope.”

AND THE JACOBS GOES TO: Stevie Wonder will receive this year’s Johnny Mercer Award at the 2004 National Academy of Popular Music/Songwriters Hall of Fame Awards dinner, slated for June 10 at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York.

Named for the organization’s fabled co-founder, the Mercer Award is presented to a songwriter who is recognized by a Hall of Fame inductee and whose body of work meets Johnny Mercer’s standard.

It goes to a songwriter’s songwriter, says chairman/CEO Hal David, himself a past Mercer Award winner. “I can think of no one who is more deserving of this accolade than Stevie Wonder. His music is known and loved around the world and has made a difference in the lives of so many.”
Goin’ Digital
Digital Music Sales Boost Portable Players

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

The portable digital music market has plenty of room to grow.
By the end of 2003, 13% of U.S. households had at least one portable MP3 player, up six-fold from 2% in 2001, according to the Consumer Electronics Assn. (CEA).
Leading vendors agree that with more legitimate download services offering more tracks and the addition of video and photo capability, a “transformed” MP3 market should grow significantly.
“There’s certainly some correlation this past year with the introduction of many of these services and higher MP3 player household penetration,” CEA senior analyst Sean Wargo says.
Factory-to-dealer sales of combined flash-memory and hard-drive players skyrocketed 121% to 3.84 million in 2003.

Confab Roots For Interoperability

BY JILL KIPNIS

SANTA MONICA, Calif.—The digital music industry has a new buzzword: interoperability.
Participants at the Digital Hollywood conference believe the ability to transfer music easily between digital hardware and software—without running into digital rights management (DRM) problems—will be the key to getting music consumers to open their wallets.
The conference took place March 29-31 at the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel here.
In a sentiment that was echoed throughout Digital Hollywood, Bob Ohlweiler, senior VP of business development for Musicmatch, said, “Interoperability is the music industry’s biggest issue.”
However, record labels, consumer electronics manufacturers and technology companies say a better dialogue must exist among the different entities before defining an interoperability standard is even possible.
There currently aren’t any products that address the interoperability issue.
“The technology solutions are there, but the market forces need to get together,” said Travis Kalanick, founder and chairman of Red Swoosh. The Los Angeles-based company coordinates distributed networking infrastructures.
“Apple and Microsoft will have to agree on interoperability strategies or converge somewhere in the middle.”
Interoperability issues may largely be the province of hardware firms, according to Lucy Goldenhersh, principal of consulting company IP Digital Rights Management.
She said that content companies should “insist on interoperability if content is being sold to drive hardware,” adding that the recently formed Content Reference Forum (CRF) strives to bridge the gap between technology and content companies in this area.
CRF chairman Alby Galuten said content companies should work to move content within their personal networks seamlessly. “[CRF] has a standard and [is] just waiting for the market,” he concluded.
From the record-label perspective, the application of DRM is crucial before companies will back interoperability standards.
Amanda Marks, senior VP of eLabs at Universal Music Group, said DRM is not that complex but added that “our hands are tied” by the technology companies and by limitations of use set by publishers.
It is unlikely there will be one DRM solution, said Mike Harburg, CTO of Loudeye, a firm that creates business-to-business digital media solutions for companies that want to expand into the digital arena.
“We don’t have one format for digital distribution, and we won’t have one DRM,” he concluded.
“It would be easy to have one, but it would also be easy if everyone spoke one language.”
Digital Hollywood participants also debated consumers’ reception of à la carte digital music offerings vs. subscription-based services.
Scott Cohen, president of the Orchard, a digital and physical distributor of non-major-label music, predicted that in the near future, “subscriptions will be drivers” in the music business.
He said that consumers will pay a monthly subscription for music, much like they do for cable TV offerings.
Guitarist/producer/club owner Eric "Roscoe" Ambel has founded his own label, Lakeside Lounge Records, and will issue his first titles June 22.


Ambel, a true rock n' roll flame-keeper, has cut a solid groove as a sideman over the course of two decades. After establishing himself in Joan Jett's Blackhearts, he was a key member of New York's Del-Lords.

He most recently partnered with Dan Baird of the Georgia Satellites in roots unit the Yayhoos, and he has worked extensively with Steve Earle as lead guitarist for the singer-songwriter's band the Dukes.

But Ambel is a strong writer, singer and player in his own right, as the three Lakeside Lounge titles demonstrate.

Fans will welcome "Knucklehead," a rocking retrospective that includes appearances by the Yayhoos, the Del-Lords, Roscoe's Gang and the Bottle Rockets.

Tracks include originals, covers of the Flamin' Groovies' "Shake Some Action" and Neil Young's "Revolution Blues" and a previously unreleased Steve Earle tune, "The Usual Time."

All three Digipak packages include extensive new liner notes. Lakeside Lounge's releases are currently available from online retailers Myles of Music and Village Records, and at Ambel's site, ericambel.com.


The 26-song compilation includes previously unreleased tracks by such marquee names as Alkaline Trio, Sum 41, the Get Up Kids, the Ataris, the Descendents, New Found Glory and NOFX, plus songs by Jello Biafra & D.O.A., Pennywise, the Offspring and Social Distortion.

The collection also includes a bonus DVD of music videos and political content. A second volume is scheduled for August.

"Rock Against Bush" is the brainchild of Fat Wreck Chords operator and NOFX vocalist/bassist Fat Mike, who has been a prime mover in the establishment of non-profit group Punkvoter.

Citing the example of such punk progenitors as the MC5, the Sex Pistols, the Clash, Minor Threat and Crass, the organization is dedicated to mobilizing disaffected punk voters. It hopes to register 500,000 for the November election.

Punkvoter has set up a Web site, which includes voter registration information, at punkvoter.com.

The group is also taking its message to the stage: Punkvoter has mounted a series of concerts in clubs around the country, featuring such acts as NOFX, Alkaline Trio, Biafra, the Lunachicks, Bouncing Souls and Jade Tree United.

BLOODSHOT GROOVES: As hinted here last week, Berkeley, Calif.-based Runt Distribution has signed a deal with Bloodshot Records to manufacture and distribute the Chicago roots label's vinyl releases.

Bloodshot's impressive roster includes Jon Langford, Sally Timms, Kelly Hogan, the Legendary Shack Shakers, Neko Case, Wayne Hancock, Paul Burch and Bobby Bare Jr. Its catalog includes the earliest solo work of Ryan Adams.


Due this summer from Go-Kart are albums by veteran Southern California bands Pigmy Love Circus and Ten Foot Pole.

The label has also issued albums by long-running punk acts the Buzzcocks, GBH, Anti-Flag and the Lunachicks.
Value Central Hosts Heroes At New Memphis Store

How great is this year so far? The industry has enjoyed 8.2% growth in album sales as of April 18, according to Nielsen SoundScan. We are on our way back to a two-configuration business (see story, page 1), and I hope I don’t have to remind you that’s when the industry is healthiest. And when I look around the retail landscape, I see strength, even in places that were worrying the labels as recently as the fourth quarter of last year.

Look at the Musicland Group, and see the new life injected into it by Sun Capital. Or look at Tower Records, which made headlines for going Chapter 11 then pulled off one of the shortest bankruptcy-protection stays in history—an amazing feat that was virtually ignored by the mainstream press. For that matter, look at the subject of last week’s column, Virgin Entertainment Group North America, and you’ll see a chain on the rebound. Or look to the Marietta, Ga.-based Value Central Entertainment chain, which emerged from Chapter 11 protection Nov. 18. The process resulted in the chain’s store count dropping from 125 to 63, but it is coming back strong. It even purchased four stores along the way.

Value Central acquired two stores last month, one in Charlotte, N.C., the other in Columbia, S.C. Thanks to Carl Singmaster’s move to discontinue sound on retail by selling off the Manifest Discs & Tapes chain. Last December, Value Central picked up two MusicNet work stores, one in Memphis and one in Atlanta. The chain’s store count is now 67.

“What a store we got in Memphis,” Value Central CEO Rob Perkins says. “It’s on the corner of Poplar and Highland, and has over 100,000 cars a day pass the store. Memphis only has a population of 600,000.”

The new space—which is trading under the logo SpinStreet—measures 16,000 square feet. Once upon a time it was a Blockbuster Music outlet, then it became part of Wherehouse Entertainment until Music Network acquired it. After buying the store, Value Central began renovations. “Since it has so much traffic going by, we have put up tremendous outside signage, including reading boards that give constant messages to drivers,” Perkins says.

If that isn’t enough to trigger rubbernecking, the company put a two-story Elvis Presley statue in the front window. Aside from physical renovations, Value Central enhanced the store’s music and DVD selection, put in a host of lifestyle accessories and opened its first-ever rental department for movies and videogames.

The store opening was tied to the debut of the Memphis Heroes Awards, according to Brian Poehner, Value Central VP of merchandising. The company signed on as a primary sponsor of the awards, which are organized by the local National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences chapter in Memphis. The SpinStreet grand opening also served as a kickoff reception for VIP attendees of the awards show, which was held the following night.

This year’s Memphis Heroes Awards honored D.J. Fontana, Scotty Moore and the late Bill Black (Elvis Presley’s first band). Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown, Ike Turner and Big Star.

In addition to many of the honorees, such musicians as Mike Mills of R.E.M., Sam the Sham & the Pharaohs, Pinetop Perkins and the Dempseys showed up at the Value Central party, Poehner reports.

In fact, Fontana and Moore cut the ribbon on the new SpinStreet. “It is a very exciting, unique store, and we really romanced the people of Memphis,” Rob Perkins says.

Goin’ Digital

Continued from page 45

“So far, and through the foreseeable future to 2007, we see solid-state flash memory continuing to win the battle with cheaper manufacturing and higher capacity,” Wargo says.

The No. 1 format for MP3 playback is the CD player, with 4.9 million shipped in 2003, about $248 million at wholesale or an average of $51 per unit. Automobile CD in-dash players with MP3 playback capability topped 1.9 million shipments, worth $308 million at wholesale, or $168 per unit.

APPLE: COMING TO FRUITION

“Apple’s iPod has been phenomenally successful because of its incredibly small size and huge storage capacity,” claims Daniko Cleary, Apple worldwide product manager.

Three models shared the market last year: the 15GB hard drive for 3,700 songs at $299, 20GB for 5,000 songs at $399 and 40GB for 10,000 songs at $499. All came with earphones, AC adapter, FireWire cable and PC FireWire adapter. The 20GB and 40GB models also offer a wired remote, a carrying case with belt clip and an iPod dock.

On Feb. 20, the iPod Mini, which holds 1,000 songs and comes in five colors, debuted for $249. Cleary confirms pre-orders of more than 100,000 units.

All seamlessly integrate with iTunes and iTunes Music Store, the No. 1 online store that houses more than 500,000 tracks and claims 50 million downloads since its April 2003 launch (see story, page 1).

“We certainly see growth in the next few years, with a pretty good upward curve ahead,” Cleary says. “We like to attract new customers. Last year we did a number of four-related events, including Moby’s Area Two festival and an American Skateboard Assn. high-school tour to help educate kids on legal music download stores.”

FLASH GREAT WITH DRIVER

The best-selling iRiver model, iFP 390T ($199.99), features a built-in FM tuner, voice and FM recorder and the ability to record MP3s on the fly from any source. It has up to 24 hours of battery life on a single AA, plus Sennheiser earphones, a sport armband and a neck strap.

“We had a great year with flash and introduced hard-drive and micro-drive models for the holiday quarter,” iRiver president Jonathan Sase says.

Microsoft is currently working with iRiver on a portable video device with a media-centric user interface that would let purchasers collect digital photos, video content and audio files in a TiVo-like hard-drive unit.

“Our initial model will incorporate as large a color screen and hard-drive capacity as possible with a minimum 20GB capacity,” Sase says, adding that it will be priced in the $499-$599 range. (Continued on page 73)
Video Companies Target Mom's & Dad's Day

BY JILL KIPNIS

LOS ANGELES—Looking for the perfect gift for Mother's Day or Father's Day? Home video companies are spearheading extensive mom- and dad-oriented DVD campaigns just in time for both holidays.

“Every year, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day get bigger for DVD,” says Lori MacPherson, VP of brand marketing for Buena Vista Home Entertainment. According to a 2003 report from the Consumer Electronics Assn., 66% of women who do not own a DVD player are interested in purchasing one; meanwhile, interest in DVD players among women increased 7% last year compared to 2002.

When DVD originally launched, MacPherson says, “it was the male early adopters who were excited about it and were receiving DVDs for Father’s Day. Within the past two years, we have seen this trend growing for women as well.”

Displaying multiple entertainment formats for Mother’s and Father’s Day “increases DVD sales overall during these holidays, says Dave Alder, senior VP of marketing and strategic development for Virgin Megastores. Virgin will position such mom-friendly DVDs as “Possession” (Universal Studios Home Video) and “Fried Green Tomatoes” (Universal) with CDs from Tom Jones and Barry Manilow, books including “How to Make a New Mother Happy” (Chronicle Books) and female-skewing accessories.

Father’s Day displays will include Westerns, pop culture and war movies. Such titles as “Easy Rider” (Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment), “Dog Day Afternoon” (Warner Home Video) and “Black Hawk Down” (Columbia TriStar) will be mixed with male-oriented music, books and accessories.

DRAMAS, MUSICALS FOR MOM

Retailers will also display a range of new-release or new-to-DVD catalog titles for mom in the weeks before the May 9 Mother’s Day holiday.

Bueno Vista’s tentpole title is “Calend~

girls” (May 4, $29.99), a film about a group of 35 women who create an all-rukle calendar to raise funds for a hospital. The DVD includes deleted scenes and the behind-the-scenes feature “The Naked Truth.” It is also available on VHS for $24.99.

MacPherson says that Bueno Vista will market the title through prime-time TV advertising and through in-store price-and-positioning.

“Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment has already released two sets of Mother’s Day catalog titles. Its holiday collection includes four musicals—Call Me Madam,” “Give My Regards to Broad St.,” “Roxie Hart” and “Stair” — and four Marilyn Monroe films — “As Young As You Feel,” “Let’s Make It Legal,” “Love Nest” and “We’re Not Married.” Each of these new-to-DVD titles is available for $14.98.

“The whole theme generation that is getting something for mom is very DVD-centric,” notes Steve Feldstein, senior VP of marketing communications for Fox.

Fox will work with retailers to “create gift destinations” in stores Feldstein says.

Warner Home Video (WHV) will prepare for Mother’s Day by promoting its new Judy Garland DVDs (Billboard, March 6), which include the two-disc anniversary edition of “Meet Me in St. Louis,” “For Me and My Gal,” “In the Good Old Summertime,” “Love Finds Andy Hardy” and “Ziegfeld Girl.” “Meet Me in St. Louis” is $26.99, while the others are $19.98 each.

The company will support the Garland DVDs with print ads in such publications as People, Entertainment Weekly and In Style, according to Michael Radioloff, WHV VP of theatrical catalog marketing.

Consumers who purchase BBC Home Video’s “A Room With a View” ($26.99) or “Meet Me in St. Louis” are eligible for a special offer, according to Megan Brani-

gan, senior director of video marketing for BBC Worldwide. If they also purchase one copy of “Casablanca,” “Doctor Zhivago,” “My Fair Lady” or “Singin’ in the Rain,” all are eligible for $10 back.

SPORTS, ACTION FOR DAD

Video companies will heavily market sports titles ahead of the June 20 Father’s Day holiday.

Warner Home Video (WHV) is releasing several DVD sets June 1, including “NFL Super Bowl Collection: Super Bowl XI XX” ($64.92), “NBA Dynasty Series: Chicago Bulls 1996” ($49.98) and “NBA Dynasty Series: L.A. Lakers Complete History” ($64.92).

“There are millions of fathers out there that are sports fans,” says Norbert Hudak, WHV marketing director of sports franchises. For the Super Bowl set, WHV will advertise in Sports Illustrated and on sports talk radio shows. The company is also hoping to enlist former Super Bowl players to participate in store appearances or radio tours.

The “NBA Dynasty” DVDs mark the first time the NBA has allowed full games to be released on video. Hudak says: previous videos have included only game highlights.

The marketing efforts for both NBA sets will focus on the local markets of Chicago and Los Angeles.

Buena Vista’s key Father’s Day title is “Miracle,” which debuts May 18 as a two-disc DVD ($29.99) and on VHS ($24.99). The story of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team also includes such features as “The Making of Miracle,” director and filmmaker audio commentary, outtakes and a tribute to coach Herb Brooks.

Columbia TriStar will be promoting numerous documentary titles for dad, including the new DVD “The Fog of War” (May 11, $26.96) and such previous releases as “Spellbound” and “Winged Migration.”

A group of former network and studio executives has formed First Family Entertainment. MGM Home Entertainment will exclusively distribute the video label.

Created by former UPN president/CEO Ed Zandt, former MGM Home Entertainment president Richard Cohen and former Artisan Entertainment executive VP chief strategic officer Nicolas Van Dyk, First Family will develop and produce niche-oriented, direct-to-video family products.

“More than ever, as I rummaged through the shelves for stuff for my kids to watch, I started feeling that there wasn’t enough quality G-rated content for kids,” Valentine says. “There are niche segments within this family market that are also underrepresented.”

First Family plans to release four or five titles yearly targeted to the African-American and Hispanic markets. Budget for the live-action features is $3 million each.

MGM, which distributes its own preschool-oriented MGM Kids line, will hold domestic and international distribution rights to First Family titles. The multi-year agreement also includes a first-look deal with MGM on any television or film features that First Family develops.

“It is primarily because of retailer feedback that we decided to pursue this,” MGM Home Entertainment president/COO David Bishop says.

‘’KILL BILL’’ KILLS: Combined VHS and DVD sales of Quentin Taran-

tino’s “Kill Bill Vol. 1” (Miramax Home Entertain-

ment) topped 2 million on its April 13 release date, according to distributor Buena Vista Home Entertainment. The DVD version is available for $29.99; the VHS for $24.99.

Though nowhere near first-day record-holder “Finding Nemo” — “Bueno Vista’s title, which sold 8 million combined units on its first day (Billboard, Nov. 15, 2003) — sales of “Kill Bill Vol. 1” are likely to remain strong for weeks, thanks to the April 16 theatrical release of “Kill Bill Vol. 2.”

At the release party for “Kill Bill Vol. 1,” which took place April 12 at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles, the film’s stars said they were excited by the timing of the video release and the next theatrical film.

“This will renew interest in Vol. 1 and make fans want to see both films,” Vivica A. Fox said. “The two movies are totally different.”

David Carradine, who is barely seen in “Vol. 1,” said that the first film gets “funnier and campier with age. It’s the biggest movie I’ve ever been in.”

Consumers can expect a special-edition version of “Vol. 1” to be available when “Vol. 2” comes out on home video. The distributor will also release a set comprising both films.

The current “Vol. 1” DVD contains only a few extra features, including a making-of featurette and trailers.
Merging Into The Mainstream

Audiophile Formats Strive For Mass-Market Success

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

In the years since DVD-Audio and Super Audio CD (SACD) launched, these two dazzling formats have grabbed audiophiles' ears but suffered neglect from mainstream music buyers.

Slowly, that has begun to change.

DVD-A and SACD are registering higher sales each month. Record companies are increasingly supporting the formats by releasing new titles in both configurations the same day they reach retail as conventional CDs.

And as it happened with the early days of the CD, labels are also reaching deep into their catalogs to present classic recordings in unique ways in these formats.

This spring brings the DVD-A release of landmark albums including "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" from Elton John, "Tommy" from the Who, "Let's Get It On" from Marvin Gaye and "September of My Years" from Frank Sinatra. SACD versions of "Layla" from Derek & the Dominos and "Eat a Peach" from the Allman Brothers, among other titles, are also scheduled.

While DVD has taken off like no other format in history, DVD-A and SACD proponents say they never expected the formats to achieve overnight success.

Rather, that success has come gradually, driven by collaboration between record companies, hardware manufacturers and retailers.

In the past year, major and independent labels have strengthened DVD-A and SACD by releasing high-profile titles in one or both formats.

With support from Warner Music Group (WMG), EMI, Universal and BMG, DVD-A boasts a broad spectrum of music, from the Beach Boy's 1966 opus "Pet Sounds" to the Flaming Lips' 2002 release, "Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots."

The consumer electronics divisions of Sony and Philips developed SACD. Sony Music Entertainment boosted it via releases of front-line artists.

(Continued on page 52)

An increasing number of classic catalog and current titles are arriving on DVD-A and SACD.
Spring Blooms With SACD, DVD-A Titles

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Super Audio CD discs will play on conventional CD players, while offering high-resolution audio on appropriately equipped players. DVD-Audio discs will play on nearly all DVD players. Universal players, as the designation suggests, play all formats.

With all that hardware in place, companies are stepping up the release of DVD-A and SACD software. The five multinational major labels each have strong release schedules this spring for discs in both formats. So do many independent labels.

MAJORS’ TITLES

A key development is the release of major artists’ titles in a high-resolution audio format simultaneous with the conventional CD release.

For example, Diana Krall’s new Verve/Universal album, “The Girl in the Other Room,” was set for an April 27 release both as a conventional CD and on SACD.

Universal’s spring slate of DVD-A releases includes the classic catalog titles “Gaucho” from Steely Dan, “Tommy” from the Who, “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” from Elton John and “Let’s Get It On” from Marvin Gaye. “Up!” from Shania Twain also got the DVD-A treatment. All five titles have been released already on SACD.

Universal also will release DVD-A versions of “North” by Elvis Costello, “Bring the Family” by John Hiatt, and “Every Breath You Take: The Classics” by the Police, all previously available on SACD.


Coming this month on SACD are the Allman Brothers Band classics “Eat a Peach” and “Live at the Fillmore East.” Other upcoming SACD titles include Eric Clapton’s “461 Ocean Blvd.,” and “Slowhand,” plus Derek & the Dominos’ “Layla.”

The Warner Music Group, DVD-A’s most enthusiastic supporter among the five majors, continues an aggressive release schedule.

Last month, Warner Bros. Records was set to release DVD-A versions of the Jackson Brown titles “Running on Empty” and “The Naked Ride Home” and the Frank Sinatra albums “September of My Years” and “Frank Sinatra and Jobim.”

This month, Warner Bros. plans 11 titles, including R.E.M.’s “Green,” “Out of Time,” “Monster,” “New Adventures in Hi-Fi” and “Up.” Warner also will release “Roses in the Snow” by Emmylou Harris, “Cosmic Thing” by the B-52’s and the Cars’ first album, among others.

BMW is supplementing its initial DVD-A releases with more front-line product, including Britney Spears’ “In the Zone” and R. Kelly’s “Chocolate Factory.” Also set for DVD-A release is Pink’s recent album, “Try This.”

“We got into the format because of the visual elements of it,” says Kevin Clement, BMW senior director of new technology. “Consumers really like the video aspect: photo galleries, motion menus. We really think that as a format, it offers a tremendous amount of flexibility.”

EMI, which supports both DVD-A and SACD, will release Bonnie Raitt’s “Nick of Time” on DVD-A in July. In September 2003, EMI and DTS Entertainment announced the DTS Signature Series, surround-sound versions of various EMI label recordings on the DVD-A format.

Sony Music, following the success of its 15-disc SACD set of Bob Dylan’s catalog, is expected to produce remastered SACD series by other classic artists from its notable roster. Additional Bob Dylan titles on SACD also are likely.

ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT

The 5.1 Entertainment Group has been one of DVD-A’s leading proponents. It releases albums through its Silverline, Immergent and Mystopia labels. The company’s 5.1 Production Services arm also provides mixing and authoring for other labels.

Upcoming Silverline releases include “Don’t Tell the Band” from Widespread Panic, “Cyclo- rama” from Styx, “Grimes of Passion” from Big Head Todd & the Monsters and a number of recordings by the Utah Symphony Orchestra.

“We’re continuing a very aggressive release schedule,” says John Trickett, 5.1 Entertainment Group chairman/CEO, “averaging at least 10 titles per month.”

For example, most DVD-A discs feature high-resolution stereo mixes as well as surround-sound mixes and video content, while most SACDs offer both standard two-channel CD audio and high-resolution surround sound.

Some SACD releases, such as ABKCO Records’ Rolling Stones Remastered series, are simply 2-channel hybrid discs. In the case of three-track recordings from decades past, record companies often present the recording in the same configuration, the disc sending audio information to the left/center/right speakers of a home theater.

The same is true of quad mixes made in the 1970s. Rather than creating a new 5.1-channel mix, the “4.0” quad mix is sometimes presented.

Formats Offer Diversity

Today, more than 700 DVD-Audio and some 2,000 Super Audio CD titles are available. The generous cross-section of musical genre and era matches the diversity of options the two formats offer.

For example, most DVD-A discs feature high-resolution stereo mixes as well as surround-sound mixes and video content, while most SACDs offer both standard two-channel CD audio and high-resolution surround sound.

Some SACD releases, such as ABKCO Records’ Rolling Stones Remastered series, are simply 2-channel hybrid discs. In the case of three-track recordings from decades past, record companies often present the recording in the same configuration, the disc sending audio information to the left/center/right speakers of a home theater.

The same is true of quad mixes made in the 1970s. Rather than creating a new 5.1-channel mix, the “4.0” quad mix is sometimes presented.

Home theaters allowing 5.1 channels of high-resolution audio now number in the millions.

“5.1 surround mixes of music are definite- ly becoming more and more exciting to more and more people every day,” says David Del-Grosso, DTS Entertainment VP of marketing.

“There is no doubt in our minds that signifi- cantly more people will be listening to music in 5.1 surround by the end of this year, for the home, the automobile and PC sound systems.”

DTS Entertainment, the label arm of tech- nology company Digital Theater Systems (DTS), has made many contributions to multichannel music, releasing DVD-A discs from acts including Queen, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Graham Nash and Megadeth.

DTS also has released 5.1 surround-sound mixes of the CB5 “Live at Fillmore East” from the Allman Brothers Band, “Hell Freezes Over” from the Eagles, “Days of Future Passed” from the Moody Blues and others.

CHRISTOPHER WALSH
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Merging

Continued from page 49

titles and catalog albums from such major Sony artists as Bob Dylan. SACD now has gained support from Universal and an abundance of independent labels, including ABKCO, Telarc, Rounder, Chesky and Concord.

Additionally, EMI Recorded Music has released Pink Floyd’s classic “The Dark Side of the Moon” on hybrid SACD in the United States through Capitol Records and released other SACD titles through its Virgin and Blue Note labels. BMG’s Jive Records also offers several SACD titles.

As software availability increases in both formats, hardware manufacturers are seeking the market with players—in particular, universal players capable of playing CD, DVD, DVD-A and SACD. As a result, the growth of DVD-A and SACD formats appears inevitable.

“We’re starting to have pretty compelling releases where you can have an apples-to-apples viewpoint of what a release is like in CD, SACD, and DVD-Audio,” says Paul Bishow, Universal eLabs VP of marketing, new formats.

Universal is emerging as a leading proponent of high-resolution, multi-channel music.

“Artists like Sting, Beck and 3 Doors Down are out in both formats,” Bishow says.

He notes Universal’s excitement over the DVD-A release of “Tommy” and “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road.”

“These are both very compelling SACDs, and on DVD-Audio, ‘Tommy’ has some things that people are going
to get very excited about,” he predicts.

The 5.1 Entertainment Group launched its Silverline Classics series in March with the first DVD-A releases of content from the Vanguard catalog. The 5.1 Entertainment Group’s deal with Artemis Records, which acquired the original Vanguard recordings in 2003, will allow a wealth of new DVD-A content.

“I’m really feeling very positive about it,” says John Trickett, chairman/CEO of the 5.1 Entertainment Group, of DVD-A’s slow but steady climb to mass-market stature. “We hoped we’d have more [success] in 2003 than we did. But at the same time, it certainly went up, both in terms of unit sales and the breadth of the market.”

David Kawakami, director of Sony Corp. of America’s Super Audio Project, says that an average of 90 SACD titles are now entering the market from various labels every month.

Kawakami is encouraged by “how aggressively the independents have embraced the format.

“From the standpoint of whether SACD has taken off in the mass market, we believe it has,” Kawakami adds. “That’s based on the number of releases happening and the number of discs that are selling through.”

SACD also benefits from its own versatility: Most releases are hybrids, allowing playback in SACD and standard CD players. Further, while the SACD layer of most discs offers multi-channel audio, certain labels, such as ABKCO, are reissuing classic recordings with the existing stereo mix on a hybrid SACD. This is a backward- and forward-compatible disc that, played on a SACD player, offers fidelity and nuance the 16-bit/44.1kHz CD cannot.

SONY MUSIC’S REMASTERED SERIES

Sony Music’s remastered series of Dylan albums, some of which were given a 5.1-channel remix, have collectively sold more than 200,000 units in the United States, Kawakami says.

Whatever the format, supporters agree that consumers will only recognize the sonic nirvana of DVD-A and SACD through personal experience.

“There are not enough places yet able to give really accurate, good demonstrations of this technology,” says Bob Woods, president/senior producer of Telarc International, which supports SACD. “That’s a handicap we have, and we go around the country trying to help with that.

We participate in seminars and put our own money into education. If you don’t give people the experience, you could talk to them forever and do all the print ads you want; it won’t sell anything.”

The concurrent existence of two distinct physical formats, each offering fidelity far superior to CD and multi-channel audio, is troubling for some, but not all, DVD-A and SACD proponents.

“If there was one format, we’d be a lot further ahead,” says Robin Hurley, Warner Strategic Marketing/ Rhino senior VP of A&R. “But I can’t pay attention to that. I’ve got to get as many WMG titles out as I can.”

Woods says, “There is no need for a format war. It’s not like a beta-size cassette and a VHS-size cassette. The discs are all the same shape and size, and compatible players that can play them all are there.”

Bishow says, “The great equalizer in all this and what, in the end, probably wins the day, are the Pioneers, the Yamahas, the Denons, who all make universal players. It’s a bitchin’ machine. You put a round, shiny disc in, hit play and music comes out. These begin to really spread this out to the mainstream.”

At this year’s Consumer Electronics Show, Kawakami says, “We counted 118 SACD-compatible models from 26 manufacturers. There’s lots of SACD hardware flowing into the market.”

SACD and DVD-A champions see 2004 as a year to build the base for their respective formats.

A consortium of hardware and software companies formed the DVD-Audio Council to build momentum for that format, while Sony helped demonstrate SACD for a mainstream audience by bundling 1.3 million discs in Rolling Stone magazine’s Dec. 11, 2003, issue.

“I’d like to say this was the tipping year,” Woods says, “but it’s not. We’re probably two or three years away. It’s still an issue of consumer playback; equipment coming out, of which there is more and more.”

Bishow adds, “It’s like the little engine that could. We keep trudging up the hill, and sales are getting a little bit better every month. The formats are starting to gain traction and interest in the marketplace.”

CD/DVD Hybrids Catch Fire

Aside from their support for DVD-A and SACD, the five major labels are assessing their recent test marketing, in Boston and Seattle, of the DualDisc, a two-sided CD/DVD hybrid.

If record companies adopt and launch the DualDisc, the format would enable the addition of high-resolution, 5.1-channel mixes, music videos and additional content to CDs, similar to DVD-Videos currently bundled with CD releases.

DualDisc also could provide hybrid capability to DVD-Audio, thus rivaling SACD’s compatibility advantage. It is unclear how the proliferation of DualDisc would affect SACD. But SACD’s current strength is obvious from support for the format among labels and for its existing infrastructure both at the creative end and among consumers.

Rounder Records has also made a commitment to a CD/DVD hybrid with its adoption of the dual-sided DVD-A disc plus late in 2003, Rounder released Kathleen Edwards’ “Live From the Bowery Ballroom” EP, featuring CD audio on one side and DVD-Video on the other.

Rounder has also forged a partnership with PBS’ New York station Thirteen/WNET to release films from the “American Masters” series of documentaries, also in the DVD Plus format.

“We’d like to have three or four releases by the end of the year,” says Rounder Records Group GM Paul Foley, who notes that Rounder has also released 12 SACD titles. “It’s the right thing to do for us, and it fits in with our continued expansion into DVD.”

CHRISTOPHER WALSH

DVD-A Takes A Test Drive

In a move that cheered supporters of DVD-Audio, Acura debuted its 2004 TL Series in October 2003. It is the first vehicle in North America to be equipped with a standard DVD-A surround sound system.

Elliott Scheiner, a leading surround-sound mix engineer, designed the Acura/ELS Premium Surround Sound System in collaboration with Panasonic Automotive Systems Co. of America.

“The automobile is a great venue, because I know where you’re sitting,” says Kevin Clement, BMG senior director of new technology. Late in 2003, BMG began releasing DVD-A titles by acts including Santana, Alicia Keys and OutKast. More high-profile discs are due in 2004.

“When you buy a ‘home theater in a box’ and take it home,” Clement adds, “I as a content company don’t know where you put those speakers. I’m not guaranteed that you’re going to get a good experience at home. The car is a great opportunity to focus on a specific spot and be able to deliver the highest-quality experience you can get.”

More automobile manufacturers will follow Acura’s lead, according to John Trickett, chairman/CEO of the 5.1 Entertainment Group. “There’s going to be more,” he says. “There’s a lot of excitement in that side of it. I think Elliott’s doing a great job helping to promote it.”

CHRISTOPHER WALSH
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**TOP DVD SALES**

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<th>Week Ending</th>
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<th>Performers</th>
<th>Label/Distributing Label</th>
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<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>MATRIX REVOLUTIONS (2 DISC WIDESCREEN EDITION)</td>
<td>Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne</td>
<td>LIONSGATE / HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>matrix revolutions (2 disc PAN &amp; SCAN EDITION)</td>
<td>Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne</td>
<td>LIONSGATE HOME VIDEO</td>
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<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>BROTHER BEAR</td>
<td>Animated</td>
<td>WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAINMENT/BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
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<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>FRIENDS: COMPLETE SEVENTH SEASON (4-DISC SET)</td>
<td>Jennifer Aniston, Matthew Perry</td>
<td>N/ A</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$49.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>Jennifer Beals, Eric Balfour</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>THE MATRIX (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne</td>
<td>WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$19.98</td>
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<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>IN LIVING COLOR: SEASON ONE</td>
<td>Keenen Ivory Wayans, Jim Carrey</td>
<td>NICKELODEON VIDEO/PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne</td>
<td>WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$17.98</td>
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<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>THE RUNDOWN (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>Mike Myers</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$17.98</td>
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<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>DR. SEUSS' CAT IN THE HAT (PAN &amp; SCAN)</td>
<td>Mike Myers</td>
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<td>CHAPPELLE'S SHOW: SEASON ONE</td>
<td>Dave Chappelle</td>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>SCHOOL OF ROCK (WIDESCREEN SPECIAL EDITION)</td>
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<td>BREAKFAST CLUB</td>
<td>Molly Ringwald, Anthony Michael Hall</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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**TOP VIDEO GAME RENTALS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Ending</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>XBOX: TOM CLANCY'S SPLENDOR CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW</td>
<td>Ubisoft</td>
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<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>PS2: TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD</td>
<td>Ubisoft</td>
<td>$30</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>PS2: MAFIA</td>
<td>Take 2 Interactive</td>
<td>$25</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>PS2: JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING</td>
<td>Electronic Arts</td>
<td>$25</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>PS2: NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND</td>
<td>Electronic Arts</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>XBOX: NINJA GAIDEN</td>
<td>Tecmo</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>N64-POKEMON: COLOSSEUM</td>
<td>Nintendo</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>PS2: NFL STREET</td>
<td>Electronic Arts</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY 1, 2004</td>
<td>PS2: TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RIDER: JUNGLE STORM</td>
<td>Ubisoft</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Rodeo Kings Ride Into Mainstream**

**Roots Music Trio Snags Radio Hit**

**BY LARRY LEBLANC**

TORONTO—Blackie & the Rodeo Kings are roping in sizable mainstream recognition after a decade as a cult act in Canadian roots-music circles.

Riding a Canadian top 20 rock hit with "Heaven Knows Your Name," the trio appeared at the Juno Awards April 4 in Edmonton, Alberta. The band—consisting of established singer-songwriters Colin Linden, Stephen Fearing and Tom Wilson—performed "Water or Gasoline," featuring vocals by Canadian roots diva Kathleen Edwards.

Linden says, "The Junos was a fantastic night. My own band did the Junos a decade ago. You feel pretty damn lucky that somebody still cares 10 years later to have you on again."

(Continued on page 58)

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**Gruppo Prisa Exits Record Biz**

**BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN**

MADRID—Declining music sales and the high level of piracy in Spain have forced media giant Gruppo Prisa out of the front line of the record business here. But the company may yet return to the fray.

Universal Music Spain acquired the majority of Gruppo Prisa's recorded-music operations April 14 for 14.2 million euros ($17 million). However, Gruppo Prisa retains a buy-back option that can be exercised in five years' time. A company statement calls the agreement with Universal a "temporary cessation" of its music operation.

Gruppo Prisa's recorded-music activities through its subsidiary Gran Via Musical (GVM) centered on key label Muxxic. GVM launched it in late 1999, an event trumpeted as "the birth of the world's biggest Latin music company" by Gruppo Prisa-owned Spanish daily newspaper El País.

GVM CEO Luis Merino says, "There were two main problems: Muxxic was born just before the current crisis hit the music industry and [physical] piracy hit the company especially hard.

"Unlike truly big operations," the Madrid-based executive adds, "Muxxic had no international roster or back catalog. Each Muxxic release required massive marketing investment, and despite big sales, the label entered into crisis. The accounts didn't add up."

**IMPORTANT REPertoire**

Muxxic and its two imprints, Horus and Eurotropical, claimed a 6% share of recorded-music shipments in Spain during 2003. The labels will continue as imprints of Universal Spain.

Muxxic spent too much on advertising, and it did not have the "indie" spirit.

—YANN PADRON, Universal Spain

Spain under the deal. Their acts include Antonio Orozco, Tamara, Sober, María Jiménez, Los Del Rio and Raúl, plus Hugo and Vega. Two stars of reality TV show "Operación Triunfo."

"The additional local repertoire will be very important to us," Universal Spain president Marce-lo Castello Branco says.

Universal Music Group and GVM had licenc-ing and distribution links since shortly after the latter launched. Universal has distributed Muxxic artists in Latin America and the United States, while GVM worked Universal acts like Paulina Rubio and Los Tigres del Norte in Spain.

One result of that cooperation was the creation in 2002 of Miami-based joint-venture label Muxxic Latina, whose aim was to sign and develop Latin artists in Latin America and the States. Muxxic Latina wound down in July 2003.

GVM has another joint operation, Sunnyluna, with Sony Music and Miami-based producer Emilio Estefan Jr. That label will be dissolved shortly, Merino says.

Sunnyluna acts include Miami Sound Machine, Shalim, Gian Marco and Jon Secada.

**NEW RELEASES**

A new album by flamenco-influenced pop artist Orozco will be the first Muxxic release under Universal Spain. Due domestically in May, it arrives in Latin America and the United States in July.

"In the first few months, we'll move hot Muxxic titles such as Orozco and Sober," says the label's Muxxic Latino head. "From July, we'll tackle Muxxic's catalog."

Orozco and labelmate Tamara are "already developing in Mexico and Puerto Rico," notes Jesús López,

(Continued on page 59)
## Hits of the World

**JAPAN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEW</th>
<th>SINGLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>AYA AYA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>MOMENTS</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>ARUN</td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>BEECH CREATION TOY FACTORY</td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>YASASHIKISHI O SHITE</td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>OH JAPAN OUR TIME IS NOW</td>
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<td>JUPITER</td>
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<td>HOMINO DE GOZAIMASU NIE</td>
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**ALBUMS**

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<td>HITOTYO</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS JPN</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>QUEEN</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
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**CANADA**

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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>JUST A LITTLE WHILE</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>LOVE PROFESSION</td>
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**ITALY**

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<td>DROGOSTA DIN TEI</td>
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<td>GUARDIANI NIGGI OCCHI</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>PARA LLENARTE DE TI</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>SUPERSTAR</td>
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<td>YEAH!</td>
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<td>VOORB!</td>
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<td>IN LOVE WITH YOU AGAIN</td>
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**SWITZERLAND**

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Hits of the World is compiled at Billboard/London.


**BILLBOARD** MAY 1, 2004

NEW = New Entry  RE = Re-Entry
The John Butler Trio’s 2001 album “Three” rewrote the rules for Australian independent acts by selling 150,000 units. Now, the act’s latest album, “Sunrise Over Sea,” has shifted the goal posts by debuting atop the official Australian Recording Industry Assn. charts. Not bad for a release through the tiny Jarrh Records label, which Butler and folk-rocker the Waifs set up without any marketing.

Butler, a guitarist/singer who began as a busker eight years ago, formed his trio in 1999. The group’s fiery roots-based performances and radical environmental politics have established it as a top five live and gained it college radio support in the United States and Europe. “All my influences are on this record—reggae, hip-hop, punk, Appalachian folk, Celtic, country and the epicness of Led Zeppelin and the Verve,” he says. The IBI tours internationally throughout 2004. CHRISTIE ELZER

The AMAZING VASCO: Veteran rockers Vasco Rosi’s rich status in Italy. But even his label, Capitol, is surprised by the success of this latest pro-

GOING FAR: Danish singer-songwriter Tina Dico may be familiar to fans of Zero 7, as she appears on two tracks from the UK-based chillout duo’s second album, “When It Falls” (Ultimate Dilemma). Now, the spotlight falls on her solo work, with the May 10 release of her mini-album “Par” on Finest Gramophone (Shellshock/</span>
Australasian Idols Boost BMG’s Local A&R

This story was prepared by John Ferguson in Auckland and Christie Eliezer in Sydney.

BMG New Zealand is looking to make the local version of the interna-
tionally successful “Pop Idol” TV show a key part of its A&R strategy.

The company is hoping to replicate the success of its sister company in Australia, which has painstakingly exploit-
ed repertoire based on the reality TV show, developed internationally by FremantleMedia and 19TV. The show has been rolled out in more than 20 markets globally.

BMG New Zealand GM Mike Brad-
shaw says that for the past three years, his company has focused on interna-
tional repertoire and catalog material. BMG’s current involvement with “NZ Idol” is part of a wide, multi-year plan of building a fresh local roster, he explains.

“The soul of any company is what we call in the local market,” Bradshaw says, “and that’s what we’re turning our attention to.” To that end, BMG NZ recently signed local rock bands Eight and Evolver and inked distribution deals with New Zealand indie labels Heart Music, Sugar Licks Recordings and Capital Recordings in 2003.

“NZ Idol” bowed Feb. 1 on state broadcaster TV2, winning 64% of viewers in its time slot. Bradshaw sug-
gests that such high ratings could translate to sales of 100,000 for the eventual winner’s debut album fol-
lowing the May 10 final.

“That’s obviously going to help me in signing other hands,” he says, “because I’ll have had some success on the board.”

The first album from the New Zealand series, “NZ Idol—The Final 10: Homegrown,” arrived April 21. It fea-
tured 11 songs by established Kiwi artists including Crowded House, Dave Dob-
yn and Supermax and was premiered during an episode of the show. One of the three judges for “NZ Idol” is Paul Ellis, former VP of A&R at Sony Music Publishing in New York. New Zealand’s radio stations have licen-
sed the album has shipped 484,000 copies of his album “Just As I Am” in Australia. The Malaysia-born R&B singer’s album is set for release in six Asian territories during Q2.

As in other international markets, BMG’s Australian affiliate had first options to release material by the “Pop Idol” contestants. Notably, the company picked up an option on runner-up Shannon Noll, whose pop-rock album “That’s What I’m Talking About” has sold 300,000 in Australia. St. John says that level of success has boosted BMG Australia to expand its domestic roster in recent months.

Despite that success, the “Idol” approach to A&R has been criti-
cized by some in Australia and New Zealand.

“They will get good record sales ini-
tially,” says Sean Coleman, managing director of Sounds, New Zealand’s largest specialist music chain. “But I’m not a great fan of this sort of thing. The people don’t seem to build a career out of it. It also takes the mystique out of the whole process.”

While acknowledging the views of such critics as Coleman, St. John says, “At this point we’re just starting to look at these artists as interesting per-
fomers [rather than as] ‘Idol’ winners. We at BMG made that distinction a long time ago.”

“Winning with ‘Idol’ is not merely about it taking these kids famous,” he insists. “It allows us to discover all this talent and give them a plat-
form to be heard. Some will work, some won’t. Nevertheless, it’s a posi-
tive development.”

Rodeo Kings

Continued from page 55

Many local record industry execs and music observers believe that Canadian radio has embraced the roots-style “Heaven Knows Your Name.” It peaked at No. 14 on Canada’s Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems rock chart for the week ended April 5.

Linden says, “You do the music you do and hope that a few times in your career you intersect with the mainstream enough that you can build an audience.”

“Heaven Knows Your Name” is from the Rodeo Kings’ third True North album “Bark,” released in Canada in June 2003. The album has sold 13,000 units in Canada, according to the label.

In January, True North released “Bark” through independent distribu-
tors in several other territories. It is being issued by the Bad Reputation label in France.

“The album is slowly getting out around the world,” says Bernie Finkel-
stein, president of Toronto-based True North.

The group’s True North release “Bark” April 13 in the United States, with distribution by Rounder Select. On April 12, True North serviced U.S.-based album adult radio with a four-track sampler featuring “Water or Gasoline,” “If I Catch You Crying,” “Stoned” and “Had Enough of You Today.” The same day, True North serv-
ed American stations in the United States with the full album.

“We are waiting to see what the con-
sensus track is,” Finkelstein says. The album is the Rodeo Kings’ first U.S. release. Finkelstein calls it “the most commercial record we’ve released through our distribution agreement with Rounder.” True North also licens-
es Fearing and Bruce Cockburn recordings through Rounder.

Booked in North America by the Agency Group, the Rodeo Kings are gearing up for a 13-show Canadian tour with Merle Haggard in May.

“This record has gone on longer than we thought it would,” Linden says with a laugh. “I just started a solo tour in Western Canada. I had booked it before ‘Had Enough of You Today’ became a hit. I thought Blackie would be able to do all by himself.”

NOT JUST A TRIO

The Rodeo Kings trio each have busy backgrounds. Fearing, who has been with True North for a decade, and Lien-
den and Wilson have recorded exten-
sively for Sony Music Canada. Linden recently signed with True North as a solo artist.

In 1996, the Rodeo Kings released their debut album “High on Hurt.” It was a collection of songs penned by revered Canadian song-
writer Willie P. Bennett. In 1999, the trio released its sophomore set, the 23-
track double album “Kings of Love” on True North.

The three artists are close friends and have supported each other on solo projects. For example, Linden pro-
duced Fearing’s two True North albums “So Many Miles” (2000) and “We’re Only What We Make It” (2002).

During two decades, Linden has produced more than 40 albums, working with such Canadians as Cockburn, Jason McCoy, Sue Foley and Colin James. He provided instrumental music for the Coen Brothers’ 2000 film “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” and appeared as a guitar-playing priest in the Coens’ film “Intolerable Cruelty.”

“Bark,” produced by Linden, features 12 original songs, as well as covers of Bennett’s “Willie’s Diamond Joe” and Cockburn’s “Tie Me at the Crossroads.”

Linden says, “Bruce and Willie are like live wires for us. We had to keep them with what’s going on.”

Recording tracks at the Studio in the Country in Bogolusa, La., Linden says, was “exciting and stimulating” and had the Rodeo Kings “feeling like we were more than a band.”

Linden indicates that recording in America’s Deep South also made mem-
bers feel as if they were working in a different era. “It put you in a different frame of mind recording there,” he says. “Bogol-
usa is where [producer] Studio Long was born. The sense of iroque he brought with his music permeated our sessions at all times.”

...
Politicians Rally Behind Canadian Music Biz

BY LARRY LEBLANC

TORONTO—Canada’s top politicians have come forward to support the domestic music industry in its fight against online copyright infringement.

The Federal Court of Canada in Ottawa denied a motion March 31 from labels body the Canadian Recording Industry Assn. (CRIA) that Canadian Internet service providers (ISPs) be forced to reveal the identities of alleged uploaders of digital music. The trade body filed an appeal against the decision by Justice Konrad von Finckenstein April 13.

Prime Minister Paul Martin and Minster of Canadian Heritage Bill de la Baume both pledged to protect Canada’s music industry April 2 at the opening reception of the annual Juno Awards in Edmonton, Alberta.

“We are going to let an industry that is so important to this country, so important to our ability to tell our stories and sing our songs, be jeopardized,” Martin vowed.

Scherer has since been meeting with music-industry associations, artists and songwriters to discuss the issue.

CRIA president Brian Robertson says the political support is “encouraging.” He adds, “The government has now got the message on how inadequate the copyright laws are.”

WORLDWIDE IMPACT

Robertson says the CRIA’s appeal of the ruling is important for all Canadian copyright owners. “Any owner of intellectual property that can be digitally transmitted has a stake in this appeal process,” he says.

Denise Donlon, president of Sony Music Canada, says, “Since the Federal Court decision, the international community has looked at Canada as a pariah nation in terms of our inability to keep the Copyright Act up to date.”

Canada’s music industry has been impatient with the slow pace of the Liberal government’s copyright agenda.

The CRIA is one of 26 industry bodies pressuring the government to ratify two World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) treaties that were signed in 1997. The Performances and Phonogram Treaty and the Copyright Treaty both address copyright protection in the digital age.

Bernie Finklestein, president of Toronto-based True North Records, is hopeful that the Federal Court decision may have galvanized the government to finally ratify the WIPO agreements. “I’m expecting to see something done within the next three months,” he says. “As far as I’m concerned, they made a promise.”

But Brian Chater, president of the Canadian Independent Record Production Assn., is skeptical. “I will believe it when I see it. However, this is a step in the right direction.”

If the Federal Court had approved the CRIAs motion, it would have allowed the body to begin suing individuals who make music available online (Billboard, April 10). The Federal Court ruled that five named ISPs could not be forced to reveal the names and addresses of 29 users who had allegedly shared a “high volume” of songs in November and December 2003.

In its ruling, Justice von Finckenstein said the CRIA did not prove there was copyright infringement by the alleged music uploaders. He also ruled that downloading and making copies of files available for sharing does not constitute copyright infringement under current Canadian law.

Robertson says, “The court decision has only made things a lot clearer through to the government that you cannot have interpretation of the Copyright Act. You must have firm guidelines and updated laws to deal with online use.”

Michael McCarth, president of EMI Music Publishing Canada, argues that even more legislation is needed. “Even if we ratify the WIPO treaties, we won’t have an up-to-date Copyright Act,” he says. “Things are changing so rapidly.”

Grupo Prisa

Continued from page 55

The contracts of some Muxic artists are being renegotiated, Branco adds.

LOCAL FOCUS

Warner/Chappell Music Spain managing director Alvaro de Torres says Muxic’s demise “reflects the bad state of sound-carrier sales.”

“Muxic had a good A&R policy and an attractive roster,” he suggests, “but I never thought it had a future as it was. It wanted to operate internationally as a Latin label, but it became a hybrid that did not have the weight or agility. Basing itself just on local repertoire was not enough.” Universal’s acquisition, he adds, could be “a very intelligent one.”

Muxic was not a member of Spanish indie label group UFI. The body bars membership of any label that has a market share greater than 5% or belongs to a larger communications group. UFI VP Yann Padrón explains, “It’s always a shame when a label disappears,” Padron says, but notes that “Universal and Muxic had the same business model, based not on seeking and developing new talent but on selling artists massively through aggressive and huge marketing campaigns. Muxic spent too much on advertising, and it did not have the ‘indy’ spirit.”

OTHER INTERESTS

At the Grupo Prisa annual shareholders’ meeting April 15, the company declared total 2003 revenue of 1.3 billion euros ($1.55 billion). The group’s main interests are in broadcasting and newspaper/magazine publishing.

GVM remains Grupo Prisa’s umbrella company for its music activities. Those are now largely focused on publishing companies Nova and Lirics & Music. Merino says record- ed music represented 15% of GVM’s revenue in 2003.

GVM also operates independent distributor El Diablos! and concert promoters Rock en el Pabellón and Conciertos el Olimpico. The company’s streaming services, Sono.net, and on-demand music services, Sono.net, also remain with GVM. They are used for CDs and DVDs that the company distributes with its magazines and newspapers.

Spanish authors and publishers society SGAE collected 268.7 million euros ($325 million) in authors’ rights last year, an increase of 5.2% over 2002. SGAE’s 77,000 members shared 262.5 million euros ($317.6 million) of that amount, representing a 6% increase in revenue distributed. Rights income from concerts, which increased 10% to 14.4 million euros ($17.4 million), boosted the overall annual figure.

The increases came despite a fall in legitimate CD shipments from 71 million in 2002 to 64 million in 2003. SGAE executive president Teddy Bautista says, “Spain has again failed to reach the psychological barrier of two CDs bought per person a year.” Bautista notes.

HOWELL LLEWELLYN

British independent music marketing and distribution firm 3MV has ceased trading. Until recently, the company counted Ministry of Sound, Rough Trade, V2 and Palm Pictures among its clients. “The companies trading under the 3MV label are insolvent and need to go into liquidation,” says Paul Appleton, managing partner of the London-based company’s appointed administrators David Rubin & Partners. A creditors’ meeting will be held April 30. 3MV will have to liquidate the company’s closure in a statement, “3MV is a victim of the diminishing margins in sales and distribution.” It said, “The market has grown tougher, and the business model that has previously worked for us is viable no longer.” Neither 3MV nor its administrators would comment further. Founded in the early ‘90s by Tral and Max Kenny, 3MV has distributed such labels as Nude, Rhythm King, Mushroom and Creation Records.

LARS BRANDLE

London venue Wembley Arena will be replaced by a purpose-built, temporary 10,000-seat structure for most of 2005 when the arena is closed for refurbishment. The 11,500-capacity Wembley Arena is London’s biggest indoor venue. It will be closed from January to August 2005 while its owner, Quintain Estates and Development, and operator, Wembley (London) Ltd., carry out a £20 million ($36.4 million) upgrade. The redeveloped arena site will add retail outlets, hotels, bars, offices and housing to the leisure complex. The temporary facility is expected to cost about £2 million ($3.6 million) and will be located next to the existing arena. Wembley Arena director of sales and marketing Peter Tudor is confident the planning permits needed for the alternate arena to be built will be in place during May. “People think it will be like some temporary tent,” he says. “On the contrary, it will be very sophisticated, with full heating and lighting and permanent seating.”

JULIANA KORANTENG

Alejandro Sanz dominated Spain’s annual Premios de la Música awards April 15, winning five of his seven nominated categories at the Madrid ceremony. The awards are organized by the Academy of Music Arts and Sciences (AACM) on behalf of Spanish authors and publishers society SGAE and artists body AIE. Winners were based on votes from 5,000 AACM members including music industry executives and artists. Miami-based Sanz is on a lengthy U.S. tour and did not attend the ceremony. Cuba’s Bebo Valdés and gypsy flamenco singer Diego el Cigala won three awards. The ceremony was broadcast “as live” with a delay April 15 by public TV network TV2 and on SGAE’s own Internet service, Tele Latina.

HOWELL LLEWELLYN

Clive Calder’s sale of his music company Zomba Group to BMG in 2002 has placed the executive at the top of the annual Hot 100 “Tribe of the Century” list, published April 18. It is the first time South African-born Calder has appeared on the list. The weekly national U.K. newspaper publishes the music listing annually, based on its more general “Rich List.” The latter estimates the minimum wealth of the United Kingdom’s richest people or families. The Sunday Times puts Calder’s personal coffers at £1.24 billion ($2.22 billion). He ranks No. 23 among Britain’s wealthiest residents in the main list. Paul McCartney’s Rich List value stayed unchanged from last year’s figure of £600 million ($1.35 billion) to earn him No. 2 status on “Music Millionaires” and a 40th position overall. In third place on the music list is composer Andrew Lloyd-Webber, with an estimated wealth of £400 million ($720 million).

LARS BRANDLE

For the latest breaking news, go to billboard.biz.
SSL, Guitar Center Form Distribution Pact

Solid State Logic, the leading manufacturer of large-format recording and mixing consoles, is once again making news.

The Oxford, England-based company introduced the AWS 900 Analogue Workstation System at the National Assn. of Broadcasters' spring convention April 19 in Las Vegas (Billboard, April 24).

But a follow-up announcement is also noteworthy: SSL's distribution arrangement with musical instrument retailer Guitar Center and its GC Pro professional audio division.

The AWS 900, the first SSL product of its kind, is an integrated hybrid of its SuperAnalogue consoles and a digital audio workstation interface. At $87,000, the AWS 900 costs substantially less than SSL's large-format consoles, but it provides the SSL signal path and processing that audio professionals crave.

The establishment of GC Pro was a clear sign of the musical-instrument retail sector's increasing attention to high-end recording equipment, accelerated by the rapid evolution of the DAW.

The GC Pro division formed when the retail giant formalized what many of its sales representatives already practiced: outbound business-to-business service to professional audio clients.

“Many of the people who need the same high-end systems and system integration also happen to be drummers, guitar players and keyboard players,” Guitar Center executive VP David Angress says. The chain's distribution agreement with SSL, he adds, “really does make Guitar Center a one-stop shop.”

SSL will also sell the AWS 900 directly to its core client base and broadcast clientele. SSL and Guitar Center will jointly offer product training, system consulting and installation services.

In 2003, SSL introduced its XLogic line of rack-mounted outboard signal processing equipment developed from the XL 9000 K Series console. That product line, also available through Guitar Center, similarly acknowledges the emerging dominance of DAWs in professional recording.

MODERN JAZZ: The search for an operator/renter of the recording studio under construction in Frederick P. Rose Hall at New York's Time Warner Center is nearing conclusion (billboard.biz, Feb. 13).

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MODERN JAZZ: The search for an operator/renter of the recording studio under construction in Frederick P. Rose Hall at New York's Time Warner Center is nearing conclusion (billboard.biz, Feb. 13).

The operator will be responsible for recording and archiving many performances at the hall's Rose Theater, Allen Room and Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola venues.

Candidates submitted bids through Request for Proposals to Chris Stone, founder of Record Plant Studios and World Studio Group. Stone is serving as contact for Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC), the nonprofit arts organization conducting the search.

“We've got a great group,” Stone says of the candidates. “The final choice, which then has to be submitted to the City of New York, is going to provide Frederick P. Rose Hall the finest sound and video that's possible.”

Stone adds, “The quality of operator we're going to get is going to give jazz a whole new look and sound that's going to take [JALC] forward into the 21st century.”

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HELP WANTED

Director
Entertainment Ministries (EM) of Hollywood Presbyterian Church (HPC) is seeking its next Director. HPC has been a landmark institution in Hollywood and worldwide Christianity for over 100 years. The Director will provide full-time leadership, management, vision development and implementation, fundraising and public relations direction and serve as the primary liaison between the programs and ministries of EM, HPC and the global community impacted by our programs. The successful candidate will be a mature Christian with a background in the entertainment industry. Visit www.fpc.org for a detailed position description. We will only consider those candidates who respond via email with a resume and cover letter describing their interests, background, passion for such a leadership position, Christian journey, and other relevant information. This material should be sent to emsearch@fpc.org by May 15, 2004.

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Please forward your resume to:
Trish Ellis
The Wentworth Company, Inc.
Fax 310-732-2315 - Wentworth@wentco.com

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- Develop sales initiatives both in-store and externally through media marketing.
- Negotiate co-op advertising and terms.
- Analyze regional market trends.
- Review all catalog products.
- Partner with Merchandise Planner to optimize sales, in-stocks, and inventory levels.
- Special projects as requested.

Must have a minimum of 3 years’ retail music buying experience with strong independent product knowledge. Additionally, a keen understanding of basic business principles (i.e. inventory control, margin maximization, marketing, etc.) is essential. A working knowledge of MS Office including MS Access is also required. EOE. Women, Minorities encouraged to apply.

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Trans World Recruiting Team
jobs@twec.com
38 Corporate Circle
Albany, NY 12203
Fax: 518-862-9519

Hastings Entertainment, Inc.
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**New York University**

**FACULTY POSITION**

**Tisch School of the Arts**

**Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music**

The Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music is searching to fill a full-time faculty appointment for the 2004/2005 academic year. This position is available at either the junior or senior level for Arts Professor, open rank (1-5 year contract), or on a one-year visiting basis for a senior faculty applicant or for a professional in the industry.

The department seeks a world-class audio professional/producer with a minimum of 12 years' experience in contemporary music recording and production. Candidates should have an impressive discography, be internationally recognized in the recording industry, with substantial contacts, and have extensive experience in teaching and developing young talent.

The department’s new studio complex is a state-of-the-art audio production and teaching facility, which includes an SSL K series console, Pro Tools HD and Studer multitrack analogue tape machine.

Faculty will teach five courses per year, advise undergraduate students, and participate in departmental and school wide committees. On-going professional work while teaching is encouraged and expected. Salary to be negotiated; excellent benefits package.

Please send a letter stating your qualifications, teaching pedagogy, curriculum vitae and list of references by June 15, 2004 to: Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music Search Committee, Attn: Jeffrey Tang, Administrative Director, Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music, Tisch School of the Arts, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, 194 Mercer Street 5th Floor, New York, NY 10012-1502. Finalists will be asked to submit creative portfolio.

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EU

Continued from page 5

He added that it is problematic that the music industry is relying on creativity rather than fixed assets, and banks view it as a high-risk business.

In his recommendations, Howells suggested several mechanisms to help address these problems:

- institute fiscal measures to stimulate independent production and distribution;
- train music professionals to better understand the requirements of the financial community;
- seek tax incentives, which would make music more attractive to investors;
- develop a Creative Industries Bank, whose sole focus would be to finance the sector.

The discussion also looked at whether there should be more intervention from the European Commission, the EU’s executive body, in shaping up and financing specific programs for the music sector.

One senior EU official told delegates that they should not expect too much from the commission, which has limited powers and means to act. “We can [only] do modest things that can make a difference,” said Nikolaus van der Pas, director general of the commission’s Education and Culture Department.

One of the things the commission can do, he said, is to address imbalances in the market. “The European music market is not an open market,” he said. “Things are not ideal when it comes to the circulation of artists and works throughout the union. Things are not as good as they should be.”

In the “Support Policies in Music” session, attendees called for the intervention of the EU if it helped create added value, especially if it had the effect of enhancing cultural diversity and the mobility of artists and goods.

The final recommendation of the session was that support schemes for touring and promotion of artists across the EU were needed and that the commission could help finance these schemes.

A more helpful fiscal policy was recommended, especially in the touring sector, where tour promoters have to deal with as many fiscal systems as there are countries.

The commission is currently reviewing its new cultural program, to be implemented in 2007. Jean-François Michel, director of Brussels-based lobbying group the European Music Office, says this was the occasion for the EU to take into consideration the specific needs of the music sector.

He advocates the more proactive involvement of the commission. “The seminar shows that the commission needs to act,” he says. “It will not take the place of national policies, but it can certainly facilitate exchanges between member states.”

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No Talent? No Problem

One of the funniest parts of "American Idol" is watching the horrendously bad auditions. But do any of these dreadful singers need to be rewarded with record deals? Stop the insanity!

It's truly disturbing that a tone-deaf "American Idol" wanna-be like William Hung is being celebrated as some kind of hero. It's a slap in the face to the immensely talented people who don't have a record deal and are deserving of one.

Worse, a lot of people must be falling for the hype, since Hung's debut album on Koch Records, "Inspiration," bowed in the April 24 issue at No. 34 on The Billboard 200 and at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Independent Albums chart.

When Koch GM-executive VP Alan Grubblatt declares in a press release that Hung is "the new Elvis," we know he is joking. But with Hung's ubiquitous presence on TV, it's a bad joke that needs to go away.

Music video network Fuse is shamelessly jumped on the Hung bandwagon by financing his video for "She Bangs" in exchange for the video's exclusive airing on Fuse.

But TV networks' fascination with bad singing doesn't stop there. The WB TV network is launching reality series "The WB's Superstar USA" that will parody the "American Idol" phenomenon. Premiering May 17, the seven episode series (which has already been filmed) deliberately chooses the worst singers among unsuspecting contestants who go on to compete for a grand prize of a record deal worth $100,000.

In keeping with the show's low-rent theme, former music stars Tone-Loc and Vitamin C have signed on to be celebrity judges. Former MTV VJ Brian McFayden is the host.

Although choosing untaileted singers is part of the joke, the WB promises that the grand prize will be real. A WB spokesman says that the participating record company will be announced.

It seems warped that any company in the music industry would lower its credibility to sign any of these wanna-be singers. It's no wonder so many people think the music industry is in shambles. We hope this obvious trend of giving record deals to bad reality show singers dies quickly.

Lousy singers like Hung—who are funny for only about five minutes of their 15 minutes of fame—need to leave our TV screens and record-store shelves and go back to singing in the shower.

IN BRIEF: On May 31, USA Network will premiere the concert special "Willie Nelson & Friends: One More For the Road." The concert takes place May 5 at the Williams Theatre in Los Angeles. Confirmed acts at press time include Nelson, Lucinda Williams and the Holmes Brothers.

The WB is developing a TV movie biopic about late Nirvana singer Kurt Cobain. Robert Munic is writing the script, which will be based on the 2001 Charles Cross book "Heavier Than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain."

BET is launching the program "Concert Series" for its 2004-2005 season. Ashanti, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds and Joe are among the entertainers who will appear on the show.

Musician/surfer Jack Johnson is the subject of a TV documentary, "Kokua," about his involvement in the Kokua Festival, which took place Jan. 3 in Honolulu. Johnson hosted the festival, which was staged to raise funds and awareness for environmental preservation.

Fox Cable Networks channel Fuel will premier the show the weekend of May 29.
Hoobastank Has ‘Reason’ To Party

Rock band Hoobastank takes advantage of an otherwise chilly sales week to earn its first top 10 album on The Billboard 200.

Holidays come and go, and when one stirs music sales, its exit leaves a void. The sales charts from the post-Easter frame vividly illustrate that challenge, as most albums sell less than they did a week earlier.

Yet, armed with the growth of title track “The Reason” at multiple formats, Hoobastank easily swells against the tide. A 6% gain that would likely prompt a modest chart jump in most weeks propels an eye-catching 18.3 leap for the quartet’s second album.

“The Reason,” in fact, is the only set in the top 20 to show a sales gain over the previous week, and it is one of just 22 titles on the entire 200 position chart to show any kind of increase. That is in sharp contrast to last week’s list, when most albums showed an increase.

Consequently, we adjusted bullet criteria on The Billboard 200, not only rewarding albums that gain at least one sale over the previous week but also awarding those that show declines of 15% or less. Billboard made similar adjustments on all of its sales charts.

Overall album volume is down 21.6% from the prior week, while The Billboard 200 is down even more, by about 33%.

Usher Can’t Pass Usher At No. 1

The answer at the top of The Billboard Hot 100 is still “Yeah!” as no one has been able to unseat Usher’s song from its perch—not even Usher, whose follow-up “Burn” (LaFace), inches to No. 3.

With Lil Jon and Ludacris on board as featured artists, “Yeah!” notches its 10th week in pole position. It is the 20th song of the rock era to retain its crown for 10 weeks or more, and the first to pass the double-digit mark since Eminem’s “Lose Yourself” reigned for 12 weeks from November 2002 to January 2003.

If he retains his current momentum, Usher could end up with three songs in the top 10. His latest, “Confessions Part II,” takes Hot Shot Debut honors by entering at No. 48. That’s the third-highest debut of 2004, after Clay Aiken’s opening at No. 4 with “Solitaire” and Janet Jackson’s arrival at No. 47 with “Just a Little While.”

Usher, Aiken and Jackson have the only three songs to bow in the upper half of the Hot 100 this calendar year. That’s dead even with 2002, when the third song to debut in the top 50 portion of the chart arrived during this same week in May.

In 2003, the fourth title to enter in the top half of the chart debuted during this same week in May.

‘AIN’T IS THE REAL THING: Alicia Keys made her first appearance on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks three years ago this week. As if in commemoration, her latest hit, “If I Ain’t Got You” (J), advances to No. 1 this issue.

It’s the third chart-topper for Keys on this tally. That’s more No. 1 R&B hits than any other solo female artist this century.

DON’T WORRY, “BE” HAPPY: You’d be happy too, if you were the song that allowed Lonestar to set a new record.

“Let’s Be Us Again” (BNA) takes a three-point hike to No. 9, coincidentally becoming Lonestar’s ninth song to reach the top 10 of the chart this decade.

That’s more top 10 hits in the ‘90s than any other act. Knocked down to second place with eight top 10 hits this decade are the Dixie Chicks. The trio was last in the top 10 with “Travelin’ Soldier” in March 2003.

OUTRAGEOUS: Lionel Richie’s last song to debut on the Hot 100 was “Angel,” which entered at No. 70 exactly three years ago this issue. Now, Richie is back with “Just for You” (Island), which opens at No. 99.

This new song arrives just six weeks shy of Richie’s 30th anniversary on the Hot 100. He made his first appearance on the survey the week of June 15, 1974, as a member of the Commodores.

The Motown group’s first single to chart was “Machine Gun,” which peaked at No. 22.
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**Over The Counter**

Continued from page 65

This issue, for example, despite a 35% slide from Easter week (302,500 copies), his lead over the No. 2 spot widens, as “Now 15” has an even stronger decline (122,000 copies, down 56%).

Figure that Usher will remain similarly unflustered next issue, despite worthy competition from new album by R&B superstar Mario Winans and veteran star Prince, the latter with his first major-distributed album since 1999. Why does that ring bell a bell when I think of that guy?

The total for Prince’s first Columbia outing will be enhanced by new-fangled venue sales, too. To remain consistent with other pre-street-sales windows—including direct-to-consumer sales or albums that are sold in Christian outlets before they move to mainstream channels—The Billboard 200 will no longer count CDs from shows that happened on or after the date street for Prince’s “Musicology.”

The cycle for venue sales is Thurs- day through Wednesday because of the two-step required to verify that data, so the only show from the tracking week that will count toward Prince’s opening week will be the April 21 show at Colonial Center in Columbia, S.C. Capacity for that venue is 17,500, so that is the maximum contribution that concert-distributed CDs will yield for the week. Got it?

Winans’ story is much less complicated. No orders bundled with tickets, and the clock started with the album’s April 20 release date. Looks as if he will sell more, too.

Even with Prince getting added sales from that Carolina concert, Winans will earn the big chart’s Hot Shot Debut. Before retailers—by their first day numbers, sales crunchers put his “ Hurt No More” at 200,000 copies, while Prince looks as if he will start with about 165,000-185,000.

One chart watcher thinks Usher will slide by 14%, which would keep him well ahead of the pack with about 260,000.

Those sales projections suggest that R&B will monopolize the big chart’s top three next issue for the first time since last July, when Ashanti, Beyoncé and Luther Vandross led the chart. That is, if you consider the versatile Prince to be an R&B act.

SLIM PICKINGS: The April 13 slate was not as inportant as Trans World Entertainment executive Jerry Kramler predicted, but a high ballpark (Retail Track, Billboard, April 17). The chain’s divisional music merchandiser manager wondered if any of the releases that came out the week after Easter 2004 would reach The Billboard 200. Given did, with independently distributed Sugarcult leading that pack at No. 46—the lowest rank this year of any week’s Hot Shot Debut.

Even more curious was the lack of a powerhouse debut this Easter frame, when Tamia led all new entries at No. 17 with 71,000 (now No. 35).

By contrast, the Easter frame of 2003 included the release of new titles by Kelly Clarkson, 50 Cent, Fleetwood Mac and Darryl Worley. Those albums entered the big chart’s top four slots, amounting to 975,000 copies between them.

Four new albums also locked up the next two rungs during Easter 2002, when Celine Dion’s “Now,” a World Wrestling Entertainment title and Jay-Z’s pairing with R. Kelly combined to provide almost 1.3 million units of new business.
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**Billboard** MAY 1, 2004

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Alicia Keys earns her second consecutive No. 1 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks with "If I Ain’t Got You." The follow-up to "You Don’t Know My Name," which spent nine weeks atop the chart earlier this year, register

more than 90 million audience impressions and has a 12 million listener leader over its closest competitor, "I Don’t Wanna Know" by Mario Winans featuring Enya & P. Diddy.

Meanwhile, a third Keys single, "Diary" featuring Tony! Tony! Tone!, is bubbling under the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay chart with 3.3 million in audience at R&B/hip-hop outlets.

Further down the Singles & Tracks chart, Brandy returns to the list after more than a year-and-a-half absence.

Enlisting producer/artist Kanye West, Brandy enters with Hot Shot Debut honors at No. 52 with "Talk About Our Love." Though West is at the helm of her initial single "Candyland" mostly produced her as-yet-unreleased fourth album, which is slated to hit shelves June 22.

ONE AND DONE: There is a new No. 1 atop the Modern Rock chart for the third straight week, as "I Love You" from Silvio Pietroluongo, "Love" jumps 3-1 with a 277-detection gain, one week after posting a drop of 14

on the spin ledger. "I Love You" is 311’s first No. 1 since "Down" in September 1999 and surpasses the No. 2 peak of the Cure’s original version from 1989.

"I Love You" takes over the top spot on the chart from Looptrope’s "Long Train Home," which bumped Hoobastank’s "The Reason" after one week.

Prior to Hoobastank’s ascension, "I Miss You" by Blink-182 was wrapping up a two-week run at No. 1, so there have been four No. 1 modern songs in the past four weeks. The last time the top of the modern chart had this much turnover was in December 1999.

During the past two years or so, the multi-week No. 1 smash at modern rock radio has dissipated. Of the 10 No. 1 in 2002, three spent more than one month at the top, accounting for 29 chart-topping weeks, led by Red Hot Chili Peppers’ "By The Way" with 14.

Last year, five of 15 No. 1 songs held for five or more weeks (also accounting for 29 weeks) with a high of seven, by Snow Patrol’s "Run.

As the fifth month of 2004 begins, there have already been seven No. 1 tracks, five with two or fewer weeks (excluding "Love Song") and two with six-week runs (including Linkin Park’s "Numb," which split its 12 weeks at No. 1 evenly between 2003 and 2004). While a revolving door of No. 1 atop the modern chart could be seen as a signal that the format lacks a true radio staple, we think the constant battle for No. 1 indicates a healthy stable of hits from which to choose.

As mentioned in last week’s column, more modern rock tracks are making their way to the upper regions of the Mainstream Top 40 chart than in years past. Album sales for some of the relative newcomers topping the chart, like Hoobastank and Looptrope, have been extremely strong, proving that these acts are making a connection with the consumer, despite short reigns at No. 1.

GIRL TALK: Martina McBride is closing in on her biggest Adult Contemporary hit, as "This One’s For You" takes over No. 1 in the format. McBride, who provided featured vocals on Jim Brickman’s No. 3 AC hit from 1997, "I’ll Be Missing You" with Faith Evans and Jennifer Lopez, has been an extremely strong, as "This One’s For You."

The male dearth is certainly not for lack of product, as such acts as Keith Urban, Rascal Flatts, Steve Holy and Chris Cagle have tracked the past couple of years that would have certainly resonated with the female-heavy AC audience.

While country songs have a proving record track at AC, the number of crossover hits is limited, as radio programmers are not apt to go out and find the right country tracks to fit their format on their own, preferring to wait for the labels to commit songs to the format.

With the ever-increasing cost of radio promotion, labels do not often take that monetary risk, and a host of potential AC hits fail by the wayside. Perhaps McBride’s current success will make the gamble seem more worthwhile.

Since 2002, Faith Hill, Shania Twain and Dixie Chicks have hit No. 1 at AC with top-charting country hits, while Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Joe Dee Missina and currently Wynonna have all hit the top 20.

Male country artists have fared less well. Only Garth Brooks and Tim McGraw have charted during this time, and both did so with songs that were not country hits. The previous male country group to chart was The First Cut is The Deepest.
Advertisers Aim To Connect With Hispanics
Sponsors For Billboard Latin Awards Reflect Growing Focus

In a reflection of the market in general, a record number of sponsors has signed on for the upcoming Billboard Latin Music Conference and Awards.

Nearly 30 companies, including such major brands as Heineken, Garnier Fructis, Polaroid and American Express, will have significant presence at the events surrounding the conference, taking place April 26-29 at the Eden Roc Resort in Miami Beach, and the awards, taking place April 29 at the Miami Arena.

The final sponsor tally was made public almost simultaneously with the results of a study by the Assn. of Hispanic Advertising Agencies (AHAA).

The growth of Hispanic advertising since 2000 has outpaced fourfold that of the general market, according to the AHAA study which examined 671 advertisers.

Examining Hispanic print and TV advertising accounts for 5.1% of national corporate advertising budgets.

That number, however, is still far below the organization's recommendation of 9%.

Indeed, while strides have been made in marketing to the Hispanic market, only one-fifth of the product categories examined in the study are investing at levels commensurate with Hispanic spending in those categories.

Some companies are clearly trying to play catch-up.

"In general, I see more companies looking at the Latino consumer and more Latinos becoming integrated into overall campaigns," says Karen Benezra, editor of Billboard sister publication Broadcasting.

An example of this movement is the Diamond Information Center (DIC), which will host a "Three Stone Diamond Suite" backstage at the Miami Arena during the Billboard Latin Music Awards.

The DIC will make available a $5 million collection of three-stone diamond jewelry for performers, artists and presenters to wear at the awards show.

"I think there's a broad interest in Latin music and Latin stars," DIC partner Sally Morrison says. "But I think Latin music has been an overlooked category.

"We see an opportunity in the Hispanic market," she adds.

Although the DIC has worked with the Grammy Awards and the Academy Awards, this is the first time it has targeted a Latin music awards show.

"Indeed, this is the first time the center has targeted the Latin community at all.

"Generally, awards shows are becoming much more popular with brands, and we know what happens at the Grammy and Emmy [awards], where even everyday products feel they can get more attention by being in the hands of a celebrity," Benezra says.

At the Billboard Latin Music Conference and Awards, for example, Garnier Fructis will treat hotel guests to its hair products. Polaroid will take instant pictures of attendees with a team of photographers dubbed the "PolaraZZi."

Heineken, the event's title sponsor, has a long history of Hispanic marketing.

Label commitment to a new act is often reflected in creative marketing programs.

In Akwid's case, when major airplay failed, the label adopted a street marketing strategy.

With newcomers, La Propiedad de Durango, Disa concentrated on building a fan base in the group's Chicago hub before branching out.

EMI is working closely with AOL Music on a new promotional campaign to support a new artist, Natalia, whose debut is due this summer.

And with Bisbal, Universal simply pushed to the hit.

"I still see many new acts, but they don't have the resources to promote themselves in conventional ways," says Gabriel Abaroa, president of the Latin Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences.

This year, Abaroa notes, the number of entries for the best new artist category in the Latin Grammy Awards has remained steady.

The phrase he uses is "back to the basics," and that certainly applies to new acts. What is more back to the basics than these big, major acts see doing in stores? The opportunities are there.

But even specialized retailers with labels would partner more closely with them to push new faces to the fore.

"None of the multinationals have a program in place for developing artists," says David Massry, owner of the Riffro Latin logo, who is key player in breaking new acts in a world of mass merchants.

"They used to," he says. "For a development act, they need to bring it there, they need to make sure I put sufficient product in the store—not just one or two pieces—there has to be presence in the store. A listing station, in-store displays and money to get the product in the stores, we could work together."

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"I believe in inanimate programmers—those who are sensitive and can decide what song people will like and play it," says Garza, who adds that 20% to 25% of his programming is new material.

However, he concede, research often brings results that run counter to new acts.

"If the other [stations] don't step up to the plate, you can't be that open, or they will beat you," he says.

White airplay is tough to acquire, programmers also say that label promotion of new acts is often haphazard.

"There are labels that never set foot here," Garza says.

And had major success in other markets prior to entering the United States, and Bisbal and Yahir were launched on TV shows.

The lack of pop acts relates to a paucity of Latin top 40 radio outlets and the absence of a video channel. Also, labels often try to break pop acts at a national level, as opposed to concentrating on a single geographic region first. This strategy raises costs.

Launching a new single for a priority pop/rock/hip hop act, including video costs, can run $200,000 to $300,000, sources say. That includes promotion at radio, video channels in Puerto Rico and some

BELINDA: CHILD STAR TURNED CHART ACT

FRANKIE J: "NEW ARTIST IN NAME ONLY"

LELA COBO
Stores are lining up to take advantage of broadband hinges on how of subscription music are posing significant issues for record labels, which until now, have been on the sidelines. For example, executives say the future looks bright but there is no set timetable.

Outsourcing CDs Total digital music sales in the United States—downloads, on-demand streaming music and subscription sales—have combined—are expected to exceed more than triple to 2004 to $250 million, according to some digital service forecasts. The forecasters estimate that the U.S. digital market produced $70 million in overall revenue last year.

On a comparative basis, early adoption of digital music is outpacing the consumer embrace of the CD in its early days. Based on digital tracks sales monitored by Nielsen SoundScan, sales of a carte downloads alone are on pace to top $120 million in 2004—two years for the digital music market.

That figure excludes digital album purchases, which Nielsen SoundScan does not track, and revenue from subscription services.

Those services now claim close to 1 million subscribers, who pay between $5 and $10 per month to access music. But the complexities of international expansion and the lack of portability of subscription music are also roasting two-month-old growth.

Whether digital music can continue to beat historical comparisons to the CD hinges on how quickly labels, publishers and retailers can work out those issues.

Thin Market Share For legal downloads to match the sales of the $11.2 billion CD business, broadband penetration must increase, the number of consumers must be simplified and portable devices must be cheaper, experts say.

So far, the digital format is connecting with a relatively small percentage of technology-savvy music enthusiasts with high-speed Internet connections.

Overall, digital music will represent roughly 2% of the $11.9 billion U.S. music market this year, according to current projections.

It took the CD almost a decade to surpass cassette sales in popularity.

Retailers expect a massive growth spurt in digital sales during the next five years because brick-and-mortar stores are lining up to take advantage of the Internet and more products related to digital music are on the way.

However, it is unclear when this will turn around the industry. Unlike the CD format, which is album-driven, digital music thus far is driven by the 99 cent single.

At 99 cents, it's a volume game to flag dramatically in 1997, positive trend lines in digital music offer a welcome glimmer of hope.

"It shows there's light at the end of the tunnel," EMI Music vice chairman David Munns says. "A little over a year ago, we were at zero. Now the growth curve is quite strong."

Illegal P2P Proves To Be Resilient

BY SCOTT BANEREE

Is the music industry's fight against peer-to-peer (P2P) networks really just a game of "whacks-a-mole"?

When the Recording Industry Assn. of America finally wielded its "stick" and sued music pirates, it also knew it needed a "carrot" to be effective. That carrot was Apple's iTunes.

But though Steve Jobs has created an elegant experience to buy music online, a huge number of file sharers remain unconvinced and continue to illegally download a staggering number of songs.

While iTunes' sale of 50 million digital tracks is certainly a milestone, illegal downloaders outnumber their legal counterparts by 13-to-1, according to NPD Music Watch Digital. The service tracks legal and illegal online music distribution.

In January, music industry executives received heartening news when the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported that illegal music file sharing was down 50% among file traders age 18 and older.

But since the survey was conducted over a month-long period, some technology companies say it conflicts with evidence that they have gathered on their own.

"P2P traffic tends to rise and fall with seasonal factors, such as holidays, new computer purchases, new music releases or new music player purchases," NPD Vice President Russ Munns says.

Since the first RIAA sues against individual file sharers, the "lighter users" have fled P2P networks, he notes. But the "core users" have stayed on the systems.

Jim Graham, spokesperson with Bay TSP, the Los Cato, Calif., company that works with music labels and recording studios to track P2P usage, says file sharing drops off for about a month every time new lawsuits are filed.

"Then it starts to grow again. Within about two months, right back to where it was before," he says.

Phil Leagh, president of Tampa, Fla.-based consulting firm Inside Digital Media, says the chances of reducing P2P file sharing are about the same as reducing spammers.

"Some infringing activity will continue forever. It will gradually force people to upload in jurisdictions with weak copyright laws."

Mind-Set Needs To Change

To modify behavior, the RIAA must get file sharers to buy into the idea that the activity is wrong.

"But that doesn't get you anywhere unless you provide them with an alternative," says Michael Page, partner with San Francisco-based Kreker and Van Neit, which is defending file-sharing network Grokster.

Legal alternatives like iTunes and online jukebox Rhidio (which just signed its 450,000th subscriber) are gaining traction.

So has the slow uphill climb begun?

While illegal downloading remains pervasive, executives say Apple made it cool to buy online music and raised the water level for all legal downloads.

"We had been fighting free," says Jim Urie, president of Seattle-based Loudeye Corp. "A lot of people feel there is no money to be made selling downloads. But it's like saying you can't make money selling gum or gasoline."

To achieve significant volume, the industry will have to address such issues as compatibility among competing services, which remains one of the biggest sticking points for the industry.

Some of the leading technology players—Apple, Microsoft, Sony and RealNetworks—are all pouring their services using proprietary digital rights management (DRM) standards, none of which are currently compatible.

"It's an ominous sign," says Phil Wiser, chief technology officer at Sony Music Entertainment. "Now format war is the quick acceleration of the market."

In the latest sign of deepening entrenched among competitors, Apple in April released features from RealNetworks to make the iPod compatible with the RealPlayer Music Store.

Apple, which has now sold close to 3 million iPods, currently controls more than 30% of the digital music market, according to NPD Group research.

"Interoperability is going to be a significant issue over the next year," says Sean Ryan, VP of music services at RealNetworks. "The question of what can I buy, and what can I play it on? is going to be confusing for customers."

Industry Push

The recording industry is pushing technology companies to make competing music standards compatible with each other within the next year.

But since DRMs expect like Michael Miron, co-chairman, CEO of Microsoft, and Time Warner-backed ContentGuard, that until that company or other than Apple can come up with a device as compelling as the iPod, interoperability will remain an Achilles heel.

That's because Apple currently does not have any incentive to open its business to others.

"PC to hand-held transfer is an acute problem," Miron says. "Musically, there's no real good answer."

Meanwhile, U.S.-based services have been slow to establish a presence in international markets because of myriad licensing and resource issues.

Apple, Roxio and Sony Connect have announced plans for expansion in Europe later this year (see story, page 77).

Pushing up digital storefronts is not foreseen on a Pan-European basis. As a result, U.S. services must go through a painstaking process of establishing offerings on a country-by-country basis.

The situation is so bad that some services are questioning the need to make Europe a front-burner issue.

With finite resources and the United States just starting to show signs of adoption, some companies think their efforts are best focused on the home front.

"It's not that important," Ryan says of European expansion in 2004. "It's going to eventually happen there. No, but there's no race to the line on this one."

That's not stopping the majors from scrambling to clear content for European distribution.

"Some people believe Europe is not a good candidate for broadband digital distribution," Wiser says. "We disagree. We think there is a great potential for a legitimate market there."

A bigger priority for some services—are especially those focused on subscriptions—is the introduction of subscription portability.

Microsoft is expected shortly to debut a new technology that will allow consumers to transfer subscription music to a portable, iPod-like device.

The technology, which until now has been on the sidelines of the digital music revolution, is expected to use its subscription portability solution as an opportunity to make its mark in the business.

Other sellers of subscription services

(Continued on page 77)
Europe Prep For Digital Invasion

BY JULIANA KORANTEG

Europe is bracing for a mass invasion of the digital music market this year, despite copyright clearance challenges. U.S. digital retailers are crossing the Atlantic to compete with local services, encouraged by the growing use of litigation in Europe to stamp out online copyright theft. They are also buoyed by the emergence of secure platforms and the increasing willingness of major labels to license their hits for digital distribution.

Apple Computer's iTunes Music Store, Napster 2.0, Sony Corp.'s Connect and RealNetworks' Rhapsody all have European ambitions in 2004. "We saw successful models in the U.S. last year, so it was only a matter of time before these were extended into Europe," says Leanne Sharram, VP/GM of Napster U.K., which is scheduled to launch by the end of this summer. "We're inspired and driven by consumer demand."

The U.S. operators will join 50-plus local Web sites that offered legal downloads and streamed music in 2003. Those five include 35 powered by the region's leading digital service provider, U.K.-based OD2, with clients such as Apple's Tiscali, French retailer FNAC, the U.K.'s HMV, MTV Networks Europe and Microsoft's MSN.

This year, numerous European digital stores have debuted featuring content from both the majors and independents. In March, German labels joined forces to launch pan-industry digital platform Phonoline with 250,000 songs.

The same month, Germany-based Internet service provider (ISP) T-Online upgraded its music load.de service to include 100,000 titles, while AOL Germany introduced its own dedicated service with 100,000 songs.

Back in January, Coca-Cola Co. started its own U.K. service (mycokemusic.com), with access to 250,000 songs.

U.K.-based digital-music operator Wippit is planning to enter the German, Swedish and Spanish markets soon with a subscription-based service.

The US-based Fiddler Music Group Meade Fiddler Music Group is kickstarting a global download venture in May.

The recent decision by the International Federation of Phonographic Industry to take legal action against unauthorized file sharing in Denmark, Germany and Italy has reassured content owners that copyright protection remains paramount.

Simultaneously, major and independent labels across the region have accelerated the digitization of their European catalogs, making nearly 700,000 recordings from more than 27,000 albums available for licensing.

OD2 handles the delivery and copyright licensing for its retailer clients. It says that 1 million songs were legitimately downloaded through its affiliates in the first quarter of this year—a ten-fold jump compared with the same period a year ago.

Copyright clearance by the majors can still be hard work, as illustrated by the experience of U.K.-based ISP PlayLouder, which has indefinitely postponed a content service scheduled to launch mid-April.

"Licenses from the majors have been incredibly slow," says Simon Wheeler, head of new media at London-based indie music company Beggars Group, a PlayLouder shareholder. "Until they come through, we're really stuck. But talks are still ongoing.

One of the biggest problems fac- ing companies looking to progress on the digital front is Europe's multi-market structure, where country-by-country rights licensing is compulsory.

"Some of the U.S. companies are still complaining about copyright licensing issues that are making it difficult for them to launch," says Simon Dyson, senior analyst at Informa Media Group in London.

"They will still launch something, even if it's limited in the big European countries, but it won't be anything compared to what they really want to achieve, which is likely to be in 2005."

Digital Downloads Signify More Than Online Music Sales

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

Internet download services such as the iTunes Music Store are becoming more than a way to sell music for the record industry.

Digital downloads are providing an instant snapshot of an act's "vibe and feel" and opening up new ways to market music, according to industry insiders.

"There are a lot of areas of the record business where we've still stuck in how we read records," says Steve Berman, senior marketing executive for International G7M. "Now we can garner a much more immediate reaction to the vibe and feel."

In some cases, he says, the download pattern may tell the label to work a record in different directions or to change direction.

"The speed of the response gives us an incredible opportunity to react," Berman says.

At Warner Bros. Records, the launch of Apple Computer's iTunes last April provided "a whole new marketing model," says Robin Bechtel, Warner Bros/Reprise VP of new media.

Reprise act Green Day took part in Apple's promotion with Pepsi to provide 100 million free downloads.

The marketing plan kicked off during January's Super Bowl and featured a commercial with Green Day and its cover of "I Fought the Law."

"We marketed the track to Green Day fans so they could download it before the spot aired," Bechtel says. It was No. 11 before the commercial, then it shot to No. 1 for a couple of weeks [on iTunes chart]. There was a direct, immediate response."

DOWNLOADS DRIVE CAMPAIGNS

Internet downloads are now the opening act for most marketing campaigns.

"We start our [download] campaigns before something else is happening," Bechtel says.

For example, to set up Seal's most recent album, "Seal IV," Warner Bros. compiled two EPs featuring new versions of songs from previous Seal albums. It sold the EPs first on iTunes and then through all the download services.

"The acoustic EP went to No. 1 on iTunes for a week," Bechtel says. "People saw that, and it helped create awareness for Seal and to set up the new album, which came in at No. 3 on The Billboard 200."

Executives also say that the download services have convinced that "now" is still a viable time for digital tunes, even though the industry has moved away from physical singles.

"This just reinforces the fact that people are interested in songs," says Jordan Katz, executive VP of BMI Distribution. "We also had 12-inch and DVD singles of [OutKast's] 'Hey Ya!' available."

The question remains, however, how to move the single download sales to album buys.

"Just because a track is getting a response doesn't mean the artist is getting a response; those are two very different things," Berman says.

"It may be that someone who downloads the song isn't ready to make the investment into the album," Katz says.

Sometimes it takes two or three songs from the album to do that. It's like chopping down a tree—one single has an impact.

Warner Bros. has been aggressive in selling full albums for download, often before they are available for sale at traditional retail.

The label put the debut album from rock act Secret Machines on sale digitally three months before its physical release.

Bolstered by special online promotions, Bechtel says Reprise sold 1,000 downloads of the Secret Machines set without any other marketing effort.

"All the digital services were so instrumental, because they all wanted to get behind the project and show that digital marketing alone could sell records."

But there is still a long way to go.

"We are still in the infancy mode for downloads," Berman says. "There are millions of people living in the digital world, but it's only 2% or so of our business."

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A: Jobs grew up in the apricot orchards that later became known as Silicon Valley. He still lives there with his wife and three of his four children.

Q: Has iTunes helped bring back music into people's lives?

A: Yes, there's no question . . . On the iTunes Music Store, someone has bought over 95% of the songs just once, and that included over a half-million songs. This is not a service that's just selling the hits. There's a tremendous breadth of interest in music on the eclectic edge. The most important thing we did is let people listen to 30-second previews for free. People are listening to songs they've never heard. When they hear 20% to 25% of the song for free, they get a chance to bounce all around the store.

Q: What is your view of the album as an art form, and to what extent has the personalized playlist displaced it?

A: Well, first, let's look at the data. Just under half the songs we've sold are part of albums. We have given our customers a choice. They've chosen to buy half their music as songs and half as albums. I think that's terrific. And frankly, it surprises everyone, including us.

We thought the album ratio would be less. Now, we're doing the opposite: price the songs at 99 cents but let the albums float depending on how much we have to buy them for from the labels. The album percentage could be higher if the labels let us price them more competitively. Personally, I'd like to see a $7.99 album. Rather than buy three songs off an album, I think more people would buy the entire album if it were priced at $7.99.

Q: Are there any concerns on your part in terms of wholesale pricing strategies and your ability to keep prices low?

A: The important thing is to keep the price of the single no higher than 99 cents. The customers have told us loud and clear that that's what they want, and we're pretty passionate about that.  

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color monitor. Now he's done it again.

Before iTunes opened a year ago on April 28, record labels had been searching for an effective alternative to their nemesis: illegal peer-to-peer file sharing networks.

All five majors took a chance on Jobs and his plan to sell songs for 99 cents through iTunes. A year later, music pirates are slowly being converted into music buyers, and some are calling the innovation a possible savior of the beleaguered industry.

"iTunes provided an important glimmer of hope for an industry that was really under siege," says Cary Sherman, president of the industry's trade group.

Now iTunes is projected to sell more than 125 million songs per year.

Jobs grew up in the apricot orchards that later became known as Silicon Valley. He still lives there with his wife and three of his four children.

Q: When you launched iTunes one year ago, people were skeptical. One year later, iTunes is a huge success. What did it take?

A: When we launched iTunes, the legal download market was dead; it was a failure. There were three things that we were able to bring to it. Many of the legal models had been subscription-based. We felt strongly that people didn't want to rent their music. If they were old enough to buy LPs, CDs, cassettes, they didn't want to rent it, they wanted to buy it. With DVDs, the pendulum has swung from renting your movies to buying and owning them.

You've got people like Blockbuster hurting.

There needed to be some commonality and simplicity in terms of pricing. We had to work with the labels and convince them that uniformity of pricing in terms of singles and uniformity of personal use rights were paramount to make this work. We fought very hard for that, and we were successful.

The second component was the iTunes Music Store. It looks simple, but it's a complex piece of technology. Our competitors saw this and thought they could create one of these in a month. It turned out to be a lot harder than it looks.

And then the third thing was marketing. We've invested a lot to market iTunes. We see that as an investment we'll have to continue to make for years to come. A lot of our competitors don't want to or don't have the money to make that marketing investment.

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Q: Exclusives are increasingly popular on iTunes. One of the advantages is that they're available before they hit radio or other stores. Will we see more of these on iTunes?

A: We like it and we promote it. I think people see iTunes as an interesting way to break a new record. We've got millions of people a day going to iTunes to see what's new. We had an "American Idol" break on iTunes, and it was No. 2 for a week. I think you're going to start to see more and more of that.

Q: What's your take on the compatibility landscape of the digital music industry?

A: The only people talking about that are the sour grapes comments from the guys that are losing. I don't think customers are talking about that at all—they're just going out and buying an iPod.

Q: CDs and DVDs play in the same devices. Shouldn't the same level of simplicity exist for downloads?

A: The iPod will load mp3s from anywhere. You can go buy a CD and run it on any jukebox. You can run iTunes on Windows and load these tunes into your iPod. The iPod can take music from anywhere. The iPod had a market share of 46% of all the mp3 players sold in December. That's including the $50 players. Most of those are given as gifts, but they're never used because they only hold, like, 16 songs. If you look at the portable music players that are in use—there aren't statistics on this—but our guess is the iPod is well over half. And the iTunes Music Store has a market share of 70% of the legally downloaded music in this country.

Q: How do you view the subscription model vs. the iTunes à la carte download model?

A: We have more discussions with the content owners than anyone else. This is something we've pursued right from day one. If for $10 a month you could put 10,000 songs on your iPod, we'd like to know about it. But you can't, because there's no business model that makes sense for the labels, or the subscription fees you would have to pay are ridiculous. It doesn't matter what kind of technology we develop or Microsoft develops for something like that if there's no content to be licensed with acceptable terms to use it. One of the failings of technology companies is that they build technologies thinking everything else will work out. Look at Microsoft's tablet PC. It's a terrible failure. Just because you build it doesn't mean they will come.

Q: Subscription services claim close to 1 million subscribers. Do you see that as a meaningful number at this point?

A: It defines what you're comparing it to. It's more meaningful than it was a few years ago, but compared to the number of people who are purchasing music and downloading it, it's not a meaningful number.

Q: Do you perceive illegal file sharing on peer-to-peer networks as a continuing threat to the commercial digital music industry?

A: There will always be music on the Internet that people can steal. What's new is not theft. What's new is a distribution channel for stolen property called the Internet. So there will always be illegal music on the Internet. We have to offer a far better experience than you can get by stealing music. We have to offer reliable, fast downloads; pristine encoding; we have to offer a phenomenal user interface that lets you sample music and learn about artists.

We have to do it for a really reasonable price, and you have to compete with stealing music. We're in the early stages of competing successfully with stealing music, and no one's going to claim that the tide has been turned, but we have a little glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel. And hopefully with a lot of work over the next few years that will grow, and we'll see the legal download market as 10% of the legal music sold on CDs in the next four or five years.

I think in the course of 10 years, that can be pretty explosive; that it can be much higher in 10 years. I think over time we're going to make some serious headway. And I think we've shown the way, all in one year.

Q: With more than 50 million tracks downloaded on iTunes, how has the consumer adoption rate worked out in the first year?

A: We are selling songs at the rate of over 125 million a year. Ten billion songs are sold on CDs in the U.S. per year. So we're selling about 1.25% of the legally sold music in the U.S. And while that's quite an achievement for the first year, it does put in perspective that most music is delivered on CDs. So when you talk about iPods, most of the music on iPods is gotten from people's CD libraries.

Q: What was made of the Pepsi arrangement? What was the take-away for marketing tie-ins for digital music?

A: I think there's a good opportunity for marketing tie-ins. You'll hear more about that.