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Spotlight Begins On Page 37

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HOT SPOTS

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The Ladies First tour starring Beyonce, Alicia Keys and Missy Elliott raises expectations for future urban outings.

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Electronic Arts’ Steve Schnur talks about the changing dynamic between the music and videogame industries.

For breaking news, analysis, jobs and newsletters visit: www.billboard.biz

Playing Games

Advertisers’ Virtual Ads Sprouting In Videogames

BY SCOTT BANERJEE

SAN FRANCISCO—Nick Kang is a bad-ass ex-cop, a cool Charles Bronson-type antihero who goes after the bad guys.

But that is only Nick’s day job—he also works as a pitchman for Puma sportswear.

And that has some parents riled. They think Nick ought to be busted just like the criminals he collars in his virtual videogame world, “True Crime: Streets of LA,” from Activision.

“It’s inherently deceptive, because they don’t disclose when ads are ads,” says Gary Ruskin, executive director of Commercial Alert, a marketing (Continued on page 82)

Crow Flies High For Sony Connect

BY SCOTT BANERJEE

At 35,000 feet, Sheryl Crow cracked a smile after she sang the words “I don’t have digital.”

The lyrics to her hit single “Soak Up the Sun” were an ironic twist on a day when she added more fuel to the legal download revolution.

Crow’s Concert in the Sky live performance was the highlight of a barnstorming tour from Chicago to Los Angeles to publicize Sony’s new online music store, Connect.

(Continued on page 82)

It Only Gets Better For Gospel Group

BY DEBORAH EVANS FRIECE

NASHVILLE—Last month ended with a bang for MercyMe. On April 28, the Gospel Music Assn. presented the Christian crossover act and its members with four Dove Awards, including artist, song and group of the year.

“I don’t know how we could have had a better Wednesday,” INO Records president Jeff Moseley says of the Dove wins (Continued on page 83)

Artist Orgs To Aid In Royalty Search

AG Wants Help To Find Colleagues

BY BILL HOLLAND

Now it’s up to artist groups to ensure that musicians and songwriters collect the some $25 million in royalty payments that major labels have kept tucked away.

New York state attorney general Eliot Spitzer handed that task to the groups this (Continued on page 83)

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Top of the News

Ten new member states join the European Union, widening the EU's trading borders and extending the scope of its copyright concerns.

8. BMI pacts with Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems and MediaBase as part of its digital initiative.

Music

1. The Beat: Phish emerges from the studio with new set "Undermind" and a renewed dedication to making records.

2. Higher Ground: Newcomer Jeremy Camp wows the Gospel Music Assn. as he heats out established artists to win one of his first two Dove Awards.

13. Legal Matters: Prosecutors turn the screws on Michael Jackson, opting to file a conspiracy charge against the singer.

Jazz Notes: North Sea Jazz Festival Cape Town celebrates South Africa's 10th year of democracy with a slate of such homegrown acts as Feya Faku.

Touring: The Ladies First tour's mainstream appeal and production pizzazz set an example for future urban outings.

R&B: Smokey Robinson's food company introduces its first entree, Soul Is in the Bowl Gumbo.

Beat Box: Erlend Øye literally makes his voice heard on his installment of the DJ Kicks series.


Studio Monitor: New York studio owners gathered at a Society of Professional Audio Recording Services meeting to find better ways to promote their services.

Retail

59. The videogame industry's strong growth will no doubt be a popular topic at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, set for May 11-14 in Los Angeles.

60. Retail Track: HMV pulls out of the United States. Why did the retail chain fall?

61. Home Video: Affordability of DVD players has fitness titles slimming their VHS shape into the DVD format.

Global

63. Canada's Michael Bublé aims to continue the international success of his self-titled album in the United States.


Features

19. Boxscore

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Charts

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"There are a lot of people in town so scared that they're going to lose their Mercedes, their parking space and their job, that they're afraid to sign anything."

BRAD COTTER

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ARTIST & COMPANY INDEX

(SIGNIFICANT MENTIONS IN THE NEWS)

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In the music & entertainment business, access to the right information can be the difference between success and failure. Getting that information used to be difficult.
Collecting Societies Under EU Microscope

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

LONDON—The role of national royalty collection societies is under scrutiny by the European Commission, Europe's executive arm, which is seeking new rules on collective licensing of music for online use.

The EC has warned 16 authors' rights societies that the way they cross-license repertoire through what is known as the "Sanita-go agreement" is "potentially in breach of European Union competition rules."

On April 19, the EC also called for new EU-wide legislation regarding the collective management of rights, and particularly on collecting societies.

A legal expert working for a major company says the EC move "was expected, but it is still unclear what they want to look at. All this is very vague."

What is clear is the EC's desire to ease Pan-European repertoire licensing.

"The marketing of intellectual-property rights needs to be facilitated in order to create a true single market in this area," EU internal market commissioner Frits Bolkestein says.

The EC's decision is based on a preliminary 19-page report, "The Management of Copyright and Related Rights in the Internal Market." The paper suggests that Pan-European legislation "would be highly desirable."

The EC paper argues that collective-rights management will be more firmly established if a legal framework on collecting societies is implemented at the EU level. This would ensure that collecting societies are efficient and transparent.

In a first step, the EC launched a consultation (Continued on page 84)

BMG U.S. Latin Quits A&R

Label Limits Role, Won't Sign Local Acts

BY LEILA COBO

MIAMI—It didn't take long for Maarten Steinkamp to conclude that BMG U.S. Latin could not continue as a traditional label.

The BMG International president, who was given direct control of Latin operations in November, is reducing the label to a marketing/promotion/distribution office that will no longer sign local acts.

The move, which Steinkamp hinted at last year, was made official during the Billboard Latin Music Conference, where the New York-based executive was a speaker at the "Presidents & Artists" panel.

At this point, BMG U.S. Latin is "first and foremost a marketing and promotional operation that helps sell our repertoire from around the world into the U.S. Latin market," Steinkamp tells Billboard.

"Second, it's about maximizing catalog and compilations," Steinkamp continues.

Additionally, he says the company will seek "repertoire we can promote and market without making the A&R investment."

The decision has raised many questions in the industry.

"I don't believe they have the structure to promote properly," says one manager with an act on the label. "And not signing local acts is a big mistake. It leaves you with no clout in the market."

Others agree that it would be a mistake not to sign acts in the biggest market for Latin music. The Miami-based operation's staff stands at 30 people, down from 44 when Steinkamp took charge. The cuts were made in December; no additional staff reductions are expected.

Some believe the changes have been made in anticipation of the planned BMG merger with Sony Music, but Steinkamp denies this. Sony continues to operate a full-service U.S. label.

Currently, BMG has only one radio promoter on staff. But Steinkamp says there are plans to hire one or two additional promotion people in the next several weeks.

What no one disputes is that BMG U.S. Latin has had multimillion-dollar losses in the past two years, fueled by large artist advances and (Continued on page 85)
Bartels New Island Prez
Move Reunites Him With Former Boss L.A. Reid

BY CHRIS MORRIS

As Island Records’ new president, Steve Bartels’ first order of business is to build upon the label’s solid rock foundation.

“The rock integrity of this label is so vital and so important,” Bartels says. “My absolute first task is to make sure I shore it up and increase it further.

“Not only the history of the label, but what’s been accomplished with it, has been fantastic. We have some incredible releases in that genre coming up.”

He cites upcoming Island projects by the Killers, Saliva and PJ Harvey as priorities. On the pop side, he says vocalist Christina Milian continues to develop.

Bartels was officially named president May 4. He is based in New York and reports to Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio “L.A.” Reid.

The move reunites Bartels with Reid. As executive VP of promotion at Arista Records, which he left in March, Bartels reported to Reid, who was formerly label president/CEO.

Bartels says of Reid, “I had an incredible working relationship with him. We bonded early on. When this opportunity became available, it seemed like a natural fit.”

Bartels spent a decade at Arista and most recently was involved in promoting such hit label acts as Usher, OutKast, Pink, Avril Lavigne and Dido. Previously, he was national director of promotion at A&M.

Assuming his Island post after a period of downsizing, both industry-wide and at parent Universal Music Group, Bartels admits that doing business with fewer resources is “a challenge.”

However, he adds, “You have to be a business person as you look at the realities of the music, but the music to me always leads, the creative process always leads. It’s a matter of, ‘Can you do it more efficiently today than you might have been able to do it 10 years ago?’ “

Bartels arrives at IDJ after a round of executive musical chairs.

Reid took the helm at IDJ a month after his dismissal at Arista in January.

He succeeded Lyor Cohen, who moved to Warner Music Group as chairman/CEO of U.S. operations.

Following Cohen’s exit, Island president/IDJ executive VP Julie Greenwald departed April 1; she has since been named president of Atlantic Records.

McCoury Sues To Halt Release Of Two Albums

BY PHYLLIS STARK

NASHVILLE—Grammy Award-winning bluegrass star Del McCoury is challenging independent label Copper Creek Records over the ownership of two recordings McCoury cut more than 25 years ago.

And in a copyright infringement suit against the Roanoke, Va.-based label, he is asking the court to determine whether those recordings can be used when transferred to ownership rights in artistic works is questioned.

The independent-label and bluegrass communities will be watching the proceedings closely.

Copper Creek is also accused of engaging in unfair trade practices and unfair competition in the civil action, which was filed April 30 in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee.

The suit concerns two records McCoury made in the early 1970s. One was recorded at Leesburg State Prison (now Bayside State Prison) in Leesburg, N.J. That recording has never been released.

The other recording was made with McCoury’s band at the time, the Dixie Flats, at a studio in Ferndale, N.Y., belonging to Paul Gery, Gerry’s recording. The Dixie Flats album released the album as “Del McCoury & the Dixie Flats” in 1975. It has been out of print for 25 years.

Copper Creek purchased the masters to both recordings and all assets of Revonah Records from Gerry’s widow.

In February, Copper Creek executives informed McCoury that the label planned to release the “Dixie Flats” album supplemented with a few tracks from the unreleased prison recording.

In his letter, Copper Creek attorney, San Francisco-based David Given, disagrees.

In a March 4 response to Crow, Given says the lack of a written contract makes any transfer of ownership rights from the artist to the record label void under the statute of frauds provision of the federal Copyright Act.

Given also disputes Crow’s claims that the recordings were works made for hire. Among several arguments, (Continued on page 85)
The Latin Grammy Awards returns to Los Angeles in 2004, after a one-year stint in Miami. The Fifth Annual Latin Grammy Awards will take place Sept 1 at the Shrine Auditorium and will once again be broadcast live on CBS. The Latin Grammys will also air in approximately 100 other countries, L.A. was a practical choice: The show's production staff is based there, and moving that staff is costly, sources say. Award nominees will be announced July 14.

LEILA COBO

Celebrate Brooklyn, one of the nation’s oldest free performing-arts festivals, will honor Clive Davis, BMG North America chairman and Brooklynn, N.Y., native, at a June 16 gala. The event at Brooklynn’s 7,000-capacity Prospect Park Bandshell marks the opening of the festival’s 20th season. Highlights of the summer-long concert series include Los Lobos, South Africa’s Lady-smith Black Mambazo, rising Latin stars Natalie LaPouenade and Bacilos, reggae superstar Burning Spear and a multi-artist tribute to the songs of Neil Young. Davis grew up in a working-class Jewish neighborhood in Crown Heights. He attended Brooklynn’s Erasmus Hall High School, earning membership in the Arista Society for New York’s top students. Davis later adopted the organization’s name for his record company: “It stood for excellence,” he says.

THOM DUFFY

Universal Music Group Nashville and sister label DreamWorks are expected to consolidate operations May 7. Sources say DreamWorks chief executive James Stroud and current UMG chairman Luke Lewis will jointly run the combined labels. DreamWorks senior executive for promotion and artist development Scott Borchetta likely will helm the promotion efforts for DreamWorks, MCA Nashville, Mercury and Lost Highway Records.

PHYLLIS STARK

VNU leads its European presence in the airplay-monitoring business by acquiring Music Control and Aircheck. VNU, Billboard Information Group’s parent company, says regulatory authorities have approved both transactions. Music Control is the leading Pan-European radio-airplay-monitoring service. Based in Germany and Ireland, Music Control also operates in Italy, Switzerland, Austria, the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Scandinavia, Greece and Mexico. It monitors more than 600 radio stations and provides Billboard with the weekly Pan-European Airplay Top 20 chart. Aircheck monitors 20 Dutch radio stations. Prior to the purchase, VNU owned a majority stake in Aircheck, which is a partnership between VNU and Dutch collecting society Buma/Stemra. Both companies will be integrated into VNU’s Nielsen Entertainment, which also includes U.S. airplay-monitoring service Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems and U.S. sales chart compiler Nielsen SoundScan.

EMMANUEL LEGRAND

Broken Bow Records has ended its 18-month relationship with management and marketing firm the Consortium. The two companies were partners in label imprint C4 Records. RED Distribution distributes Nashville-based indie label Broken Bow. Its roster includes Craig Morgan, Sherrie Austin, Lila McCarter and C4 flagship artist Joe Diffie. Partners Mike Martinson, Stan Moress, Bernard Porter and Al Schlitz formed the Consortium in 2001. All four are veteran artist managers.

PHYLLIS STARK

Clear Channel Communications started the year strongly, according to a recent report by financial services firm William Blair & Co. In CJC’s radio division, the growth of spot advertising drove revenue of $383.2 million, an increase of almost 5%. The report was less enthusiastic about CJC’s live-entertainment division, Clear Channel Entertainment, where higher-than-expected expenses offset better-than-expected revenue. CJC currently trades at $23.3 times William Blair’s 2005 EPS estimate, according to the report. See billboard.biz for more analysis.

RAY WADDELL

Ry lokid is finalizing the purchase of Los Angeles-based independent Emperor Norton Records, according to a source familiar with the deal. Ry lokid’s distribution arm, Ryko Distribution, began handling Emperor Norton releases May 3. The label previously went through Caroline Distribution. Peter Getty, grandson of late billionaire J. Paul Getty, founded Emperor Norton. The label’s most recent hit was the soundtrack to director Sofia Coppola’s Oscar-winning film “Lost in Translation.” The soundtrack sold more than 140,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Emperor Norton president Craig Pross and GM Van Riker will join Ryko’s staff in A&R and marketing capacities. Pross and Ryko Label Group president Joe Regas did not return calls seeking comment, and Riker declined to comment.

CHRIS MORRIS

For the latest breaking news, go to billboard.biz.

WMG Drops Catalog Prices

1,776 Titles Affected; Many Cut To $6.71 Wholesale

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—In a move merchandise

ers praised, the new ownership of

the Warner Music Group is putting its

stamp on the marketplace by lowering

the cost on 1,776 titles, the largest
devalua
tion in WEAs 33-year history.

“Anything that the industry does to lower [retail prices for] the consumers who shop in the store is extremely positive,” Trans World Entertainment music divisional merchandise

manager Jerry Kamiler says. The

WEA price cut “reinforces what the [Uni-

versal Music Group] started in the fall with Juneteenth.”

George Balicky, VP at Galaxy Music

Distributors in Pittsburgh, says, “If there is price protection, we always praise price changes when they are going down.”

Price protection occurs when sup-

pliers agree to cover the devaluation so that accounts do not have to take a hit on inventory. In this case, WEA will issue a credit by rebilling affected titles at the new lower price for purchases made of those albums within the past 90 days. WME executives were unavailable to comment.

About 1,200 of the devalued titles were reprinted to the company’s Super Value budget line, which carries a $6.71 wholesale cost. Most of these were from WEA’s $11.98 midline, but a few came from the company’s front-line and super midline.

Among the acts with titles being reprinted from the Super Saver midline to budget are 10,000 Maniacs, the B-52s, Bad Company, Jackson Browne, Judy Collins, Doobie Brothers, Foghat, Aretha Franklin, J. Geils Band, Man-

hattan Transfer, Bette Midler, Teddy Pendergrass, Bonnie Raitt, Otis Redding and Rod Stewart.

Another 300 titles will be reprinted from the front-line prices of $17.98 and $18.98 and the Super Sono midline price of $13.98 to the Super Saver midline, which [brings] a $7.85 cost.

That repricing will affect albums by acts including Tori Amos, Built to Spill, Tracy Chapman, Phil Collins, Hootie & the Blowfish, Madonna, Lil’ Kim, Natalie Merchant, Morrissey, the Ramones, Stone Temple Pilots, Neil Young and Emerson, Lake & Palmer, as well as the Jimmy Page/Robert Plant album “Walking Into Clarksdale.”

In addition to the price reduction, the midline, super midline and front-line CDs—including the 200 best-selling catalog titles—will carry a 5% discount with 120 days of extra dating, while the budget line carries a 10% discount and the same amount of extra dating before bills are due.

Normally, payments are due in 60 days, so the extra dating gives accounts nearly six months before payments are due.

Other price cuts saw front-line titles dropped to the Super Sonic line and a number of double- and triple-album sets reduced as well.

“They really strengthened their Super Sonic line too, which brings a retailer’s cost down to $9.17. This is critical and allows us to get pricing to hit the consumer’s sweet spot,” Kamiler says.

In other changes, WME reduced its early-payment discount from 2% to 1.5% and introduced a handling fee of 19 cents per unit for all returns.

Coxson Dodd Dies

His Label Captured Jamaica’s Best

BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—Producer/label oper-

ator Clement “Coxson” Dodd, one of the

great architects of reggae music, died of a heart attack May 4 at his stu-

dio in Kingston, Jamaica. He was 72.

A jazz fan, Dodd was originally a DJ who operated one of Kingston’s first important sound systems, Cox-

son Dehavilland. He began recording R&B-styled material by homegrown talent in 1959 and worked with virtually every

important Jamaican performer of the ‘60s and ‘70s.

Working with producer Lee Perry, he began documenting the pre-reggae ska sound on his Studio One label in 1963. In the early ‘60s, the Skatalites, ska’s first major instrumental group, were his house band.

Singers Delroy Wilson, Ken Booth, Owen Gray and keyboardist Jackie Mittoo were other important perform-

ers in Dodd’s stable.

Dodd’s biggest early discovery was the Wailers. The trio of Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston recorded such early “rude boy” ska hits as “Summer Down” at Dodd’s Brentford Road studio.

As ska evolved into rocksteady, Dodd recorded major dance hits by Alton Ellis, Slim Smith, Marcia Griffiths and vocal trio the Heptones. As the roots reggae sound developed in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, these artists were joined at Studio One by Horace Andy, Dennis Brown, Burning Spear, John Holt and the Wailing Souls.

During the ‘70s and ‘80s, Dodd released his studio’s sparse rhythm tracks in a series of instrumental albums that helped define Jamaican dub. He also cut early dancehall reggae hits by Willie Williams, the Lone Ranger and Mitchy Slick.

In the mid-‘80s, Dodd moved to Brooklyn, N.Y., where he ran a record store, Coxson’s Music City. Rounder’s reggae imprint Heartbeat Records has extensively reissued his classic Studio One recordings.

Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston recorded such early “rude boy” ska hits as “Summer Down” at Dodd’s Brentford Road studio.

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CLEMENT "COXSON" DODD

BMI Boosts Its Data

Society Adds Real-Time Radio Airplay Info

From BDS, MediaBase

BY BRIAN GARRITY

NEW YORK—BMI has cut deals with Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems and MediaBase that will add more comprehensive airplay data for hundreds of radio stations to its existing nationwide sample of radio airplay on 10,000-plus stations.

BMI says the new “census” data—which will supplement its exist-

ing radio sample data—will not change the overall number of radio performances counted for a song.

Instead, the information will allow BMI to better track where and when the airplay took place.

“It gives us more granular infor-

mation,” BMI COO John Cody says

(Continued on page 84)
Bullish On Latin Music

W

hen it comes to the Latin market, there are numbers, and then there are numbers. Take the case of Latin music. Last year, shipments slid to 38.6 million from 41.1 million in 2002, a decline of 6%, according to the Recording Industry Assn. of America. Sadly, the numbers have been declining for four straight years. The only saving grace is the shortfall no longer hits double digits. Shipments in 2002, you might recall, declined 15.6% from 48.7 million the year before.

Looking at those numbers, it is hard to be optimistic. But now check these numbers. The nation’s 40 million Latinos represent about 14% of the population—making them the largest minority group in the United States. Their aggregate disposable income is nearly $70 billion per year.

What’s more, Latinos are also the fastest-growing segment of the population. Their numbers rose 60% from 1990 to 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And they grew by almost 10% again during the past two years.

Compare this to the general population, which grew by a mere 2.3%, and you understand why advertisers are suddenly discovering this market. By 2050, Latinos are expected to comprise 25% of the U.S. population. This burgeoning market will become a powerhouse.

Ad revenue for the top 58 Latin magazines in the United States grew to more than $145 million last year, according to Billboard’s 2002 year end Report.

There’s always a bottom line, and here it is: We’re bullish on the Latin market.

Folio magazine and the Hispanic Magazine Monitor, which track the industry, that is an increase of more than 20% over the previous year.

We’re happy to report that Billboard’s Latin coverage and our signature four-day conference and Latin Music Awards TV show have put us right in the sweet spot of this growing market for more than 15 years. That spells commitment.

This year a record number of sponsors signed up for the Latin event, and despite the tour sales figures, the conference demonstrated that there was every reason to be optimistic.

The mood, typical of other Billboard events this year, was decisively upbeat compared to 2003. New stars emerged, such as Juanes and Akon, while established acts like Ricky Martin and Gloria Estefan demonstrated their staying power.

Piracy, of course, continues to be a major problem, especially in Latin American countries. So far, the main threat is physical piracy, although digital piracy is a growing concern.

The good news is that the RIAA dedicated $2.5 million last spring to fight piracy mainly in the United States and Puerto Rico. Two million illegal copies of Latin product were seized in 2003, a 40% increase over seizures in 2002. And those numbers are likely to continue rising.

Like any numbers game, there’s always a bottom line, and here it is: We’re bullish on the Latin market.
Phish Puts Mind To Studio Work

After 11 studio albums, jam band Phish may finally be finding its sea legs when it comes to making records. Or so says drummer Jon Fishman. "I think it's something we're getting good at. We were great at the stage part but pretty lousy in the studio. For so many years we were always disheartened by the studio results. But I think we're getting into the realm where we can start making some pretty amazing albums."

Elektra/Atlantic releases "Undermind," the band's first studio project since 2002's "Round Room," June 15. The album fulfills Phish's contract promotion ideas. None of us were very comfortable sitting in Tower Records signing autographs or playing three minutes on the air."

He feels the plans for this album suit the band. He is particularly excited about concerts set for June 17-18 at KeySpan Park in Brooklyn, N.Y. One of the shows will be beamed into movie theaters. Phish has never been about radio hits, but Fishman thinks the time may have come with first single "The Connection."

"I will be surprised if it doesn't catch fire," he says. "I don't think it will be a boom bang hit like something from [OutKast's] 'Speakerboxxx,' but I could really see it striking a chord." The song goes to radio May 24.

DURANNIES REJOICE: Duran Duran has signed with Epic Records. The worldwide deal is for at least one album and one DVD, according to sources. Wendy Laister manages the band, which now consists of the five original members. Epic declined to comment.

Billboard.biz on April 28 broke the news that the band was in final negotiations with Epic. Sources say the deal is done.


CH-CH-CHANGES: Lee Stimmel is the new senior VP of marketing for Epic Records. He is former VP of marketing and product development for Atlantic Records. (Continued on page 13)
Gospel Music Week 2004 was a memorable one for Jeremy Camp. The BEC Recordings artist netted his first Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards, taking home two accolades. The best new artist award seemed a fitting choice to the packed crowd at Nashville’s Municipal Auditorium. But attendees appeared surprised when the newcomer beat out such established artists as Steven Curtis Chapman and Mark Schultz for the male vocalist honor. Camp’s awards also marked the first time an artist on BEC Recordings took home a Dove. He says winning the awards indicates he has the respect of his peers. “It’s like them expressing that they like what you have to say as an artist and that your ministry is relevant in the music industry.”

When the Christian industry begins to take notice of a new talent, that artist’s exposure grows rapidly. Such is the case with Camp.

The Indiana native’s tunes are featured on seven compilation albums. “I Still Believe” is on “Wow 2004,” “Enough” is included on “Wow Worship” and “Empty Me” is on Fervent Records’ “Absolute Worship.”

“We are always doing a lot of little side things,” Camp says. “I’m getting pushed into every compilation CD that’s out there. It’s pretty exciting. God is smiling down upon what is going on.”

Released in February, Camp’s current disc, “Carried Me: The Worship Project,” has sold more than 124,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard/Top Contemporary Christian Albums chart.

“What has been a huge blessing is fans a day in Camp’s life, “In24” features concert performances as well as behind-the-scenes footage of life on the road. The DVD also previews new songs from the artist’s next album, “Restored,” which is slated for release in November.

TAIT JOINS SANTANA: Michael Tait has been tapped by Carlos Santana to join the legendary artist’s band as a vocalist on Santana’s European summer tour.

Tait rose to prominence in the Christian industry as part of the trio de Talk with Toby McKeehan and Kevin Max. Tait has also recorded two solo albums with his band, Tait, on ForeFront Records.

When not on the road with Santana, Tait plans to continue working with his band, Tait. Tae members include Chad Chapin, Lonnie Chapin and Justin York.

De Talk is on hiatus while the members pursue solo careers. Tait will make his debut with Santana July 2 in France. The tour is slated to hit Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Santana has also asked Tait to sing on his next album.

NEW HAVEN’S COUNTRY COLLECTION: The Carter Family, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, the Statler Brothers, Willie Nelson, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Vince Gill, Ricky Skaggs, the Whites and Alison Krauss are among the acts featured on “The Country Music Hall of Fame Presents Country’s 20 Classic Gospel Songs of the Century.”

Released May 4, the collection is a joint venture between New Haven Records and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. This is the third set in New Haven’s Songs of the Century series, following “Southern Gospel’s Top 20 Songs of the Century” (volumes 1 and 2) and “Gospel’s Top 20 Songs of the Century.”

SIGNINGS: The Florida Boys have signed with Cathedral Records. For more than 50 years, the group has been a fixture on the Southern gospel music scene. The act’s new record, “Something to Remember,” will hit shelves this summer.

Paul Colman, previously of the Colman Trio, has signed with Inpop Records as a solo act.

Camp Comes Up Big at GMA Week; Tait Joins Santana Tour

On The Scene At GMA Week

Christian music artists, managers, agents, publishers and label executives from around the world convened April 24-28 for the Gospel Music Assn.’s annual convention at the Nashville Convention Center. Gospel Music Week 2004 included seminars, showcases, an annual worship service and a staging of “Hero: The Rock Opera.” The GMA’s 35th annual Music Awards were also held April 28 at Nashville’s Municipal Auditorium.

Margaret Becker, Erin O’Donnell and Andrew Peterson were among the Christian singer-songwriters who performed at “Songs & Stories of Faith,” held at Nashville’s Bluebird Cafe. American Songwriter magazine presented the event, and Charlie Peacock hosted. Standing, from left, are Peacock and O’Donnell. Seated, from left, are Becker, Peterson and newcomer Joe Rogness.

EMI Gospel artist Smokie Norful not only won a Dove Award for contemporary gospel album of the year during the GMA’s annual awards show, he also carried home a gold album for his debut, “Limited Edition.” Pictured, from left, are Norful’s son, Tré; EMI Gospel president Ken Pernell; EMI Gospel VP/GM Larry Blackwell; EMI Music North America chairman/CEO David Munns; Norful; EMI Recorded Music COO Ivan Gavin (behind Norful); and EMI Christian Music Group CEO Bill Hearns.

Cullum

Continued from page 11

Cullum quickly set the ground rules, asserting he wasn’t about to play the retro-jazz card of singers like Michael Buble or Burt Bacharach.

He gave a real kick to Porter’s classic “I Get a Kick Out of You,” literally stomping the keys with his feet. He played the outside and inside of the piano box as a funky percussion instrument on the Lerner & Loewe standard “I Could Have Danced All Night.” And he ably delivered his wity original “Twentysomething,” about the possibilities and perils of young adulthood.

“SINTA IN SNEAKERS”

“When I play the Porter number, I treat the piano the way Jimi treated his guitar,” Cullum says. “And ‘Twenty-something’ comes right out of the Bob Dorough/Dave Frishberg school of songwriting. It’s putting a new take on the old. At my 3,000-seat concerts in England, two-thirds of the audience is under 20.”

Dubbed by the British press as “Sinta in sneakers,” Cullum says he never set out to be famous, which is why his overnight success in his homeland took him by surprise.

“At the risk of sounding cliché, the truth was right there,” he says. “Norah Jones was huge in England, and therefore, so was anything that had that kind of piano-singer-jazzy flavor. Of course, people found out with me that I was a live wire and much more spontaneous and jazz-oriented.”

That made for a perfect fit with Verve, which set into motion a lengthy more than 50 years, the group has been a fixture on the Southern gospel music scene. The act’s new record, “Something to Remember,” will hit shelves this summer.

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Cullum

Continued from page 11

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Prosecutors Play Conspiracy Card In Jackson Case

Prosecutors have turned up the heat on pop star Michael Jackson, who faces 10 felony counts, including one for conspiracy.

The conspiracy charge permits prosecutors to introduce hearsay testimony, lawyers say. That makes it easier for the prosecution to gain a conviction than trying him for child molestation, with which Jackson is also charged.

Like any sex crime, child molestation is difficult to prove unless there is such physical evidence as blood or wounds.

But a conspiracy charge opens the field for testimony of all types from many people, which is why there’s talk that prosecutors will question, or have already questioned, Jackson’s aides.

LOWERING THE BOOM: As the industry debates price cutting as a way of bolstering CD sales, some observers say such a tactic is the only way to revive the beleaguered music biz.

The notion of legal download sites replacing the “free” offerings of networks like Kazaa and Grokster is unrealistic, they argue. They say that is because unemployed teens—who possess more time than money—are responsible for most of the illegal downloading that occurs.

“While a few teenagers may stop downloading illegally for fear of being sued, many more enjoy testing the limits,” says Josh Norek, publicist for Latin rock bands Jaguars and La Ley.

Even if legal downloads became popular, they aren’t likely to generate the same level of album sales and music publishing income that artists and labels are used to, says Norek, who is also a student at Southwestern University Law School.

That’s because purchasers of legal downloads tend to be interested in just one song, rather than albums.

Also, in the past, the interests of such retailers as Tower and the record labels were aligned: They both benefited from album sales. But the digital era has changed all that, since neither Apple Computer nor Wal-Mart launched download stores to turn a profit. Instead, lawyers say, Apple uses it to sell iPods, while Wal-Mart uses its service to boost online sales of more expensive goods.

Wal-Mart’s brick-and-mortar stores sell CDs for $9.99 to drive store traffic. Single downloads are priced at 88 cents to drive traffic to its online service. The rebound in album sales in late 2003 and early 2004, which has occurred in tandem with the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s legal losses to Grokster and Verizion, indicates that lower prices—not lawsuits—are what is drawing customers back into stores.

HEAWE-HO: The Supreme Court has tossed out an appeal by two musicians who are seeking royalty payments from rocker Ozzy Osbourne.

The high court dismissed an appeal by composer May 3 by drummer Lee Kerslake and bassist Robert Daisley, who claim they are owed funds from work they did on Osbourne’s albums “Diary of a Madman” and “Blizzard of Ozzy.”

Attorney Nate Krait contends the plaintiffs did not get proper credit or due’s contributions were removed from the two albums because of their “abusive behavior.”

The legal wrangling began in 1997, when Daisley, formerly of Black Sabbath, sued Osbourne for royalties. The Osburnes and several record labels were named as defendants in the suit, which a California judge dismissed.

IN OTHER NEWS: Fulbright & Jaworski in Houston promotes partner Stephen C. Dillard to head its litigation group, which comprises 424 trial lawyers worldwide. Dillard recently helped defend Baylor University in a wrongful death suit brought by the father of former Baylor basketball star Patrick Dennehy Jr. A former teammate allegedly murdered Dennehy in summer 2003.

Loeb & Loeb in New York has named Michael D. Beck co-chairman. Beck, who joins John T. Frankenstein as co-chairman, previously was managing partner of Loeb’s New York office.

Thelen Reid & Priest in New York names William F. Patry a partner with its intellectual-property group. Patry previously was copyright counsel to the House of Representatives’ Committee on the Judiciary, where he drafted amendments to the Copyright Act.

The Beat

Continued from page 11

based in New York, reports to Epic executive VP/GM Steve Barnett.

‘CALIFORNIA DREAMING: To celebrate the release of “California,” its new Columbia Records album, Wilson Phillips will perform a free show May 26 at the Santa Monica Pier. Premiere Radio Network will tape the concert and syndicate it to 136 markets for broadcast the following week.

WORLD SERIES: Judges have picked six finalists for the Independent Music World Series Midwest Showcase, a national unsigned-artist competition. CD/DVD manufacturer Disc Makers is presenting the event in association with “The Billboard Musician’s Guide to Touring & Promotion” and other sponsors.

A&R company TAXI selected 10 semifinalists from more than 1,000 submissions. Billboard editors chose the six finalists from that group.

Full Flava Kings, Nadir, Rebel’s Advocate, Shipwreck Union, the Ettiquette and the Its will compete for more than $35,000 in music gear and prizes May 13 at the Elbo Room in Chicago.

The BMWS Southeast Showcase takes place July 22 at 3rd & Lindsey in Nashville.
Jazz Fest Celebrates South Africa and Its Artists

Celebrating its fifth installment, the North Sea Jazz Festival Cape Town came of age this year when it moved into a new venue and presented its most ambitious programming to date.

The two-day jazz, world and pop extravaganza was held April 10-11 in Cape Town, South Africa. The event not only packed the five venues at the new International Convention Centre but also helped celebrate the country’s 10th anniversary of democracy.

The festival was inaugurated in 2000 under artistic director Rashid Lombard, who sought guidance from and collaborated with Theo van den Hoek, the director of the popular, multisited North Sea Jazz Festival in the Netherlands. (That jazz bash takes place July 9-11 in the Hague.)

What’s striking about the Cape Town fest is that half the lineup features such impressive homegrown talent as trumpeter Feya Faku, smooth jazz guitarist Jonathan Butler, saxophonist McCoy Mrubata, dynamic vocalist Yvonne Chaka Chaka and a reunion of Afro-fusion group Sakhile.

Imports included a host of bands led by saxophonists (Joe Lovano, Lou Donaldson, Sadao Watanabe, René and Jackie McLean, James Moody and Gary Bartz), fusion band Hiroshima, guitarist Al Di Meola, electric bassist Stanley Clarke, R&B singer Angie Stone and thoroughly live-wire Femi Kuti & Positive Force.

Vocalist Cassandra Wilson made her first African continent performance in Cape Town, with two sensual and spirited shows that enthralled the crowds.

Included in her sets was a tune she played on the guitar, reminiscent of her live shows 10 years ago. “I’ve played guitar since I was 12, but I’ve gotten sidetracked from it in recent years,” Wilson told this columnist before her shows. “But Brandon Ross, my musical director, has been encouraging me to play again. I’m realizing now as I live with it more that I have my own level of expertise on guitar.” She is leaning toward recording an entire album of her own compositions this fall.

Wilson said a particular thrill for her was opening Rosie’s Theatre for Miriam Makeba. “This is a dream come true,” she said. “I place Miriam Makeba in the same space as Nina Simone and Abbey Lincoln in terms of depth of message in the music.”

In her second Cape Town festival appearance, the 72-year-old Makeba wowed her fellow countrymen with a trio set featuring American bassist William Slater and accordion/piano player Tony Cedras, a South African native based in New York. The set was a reunion with Slater, who performed with her in a trio documented on the disc “Miriam Makeba: Live at Bern’s Salonger, Stockholm in Sweden—1966.” It was recorded when the singer was living in exile and released as a CD/DVD package last year on Gallo Records.

Makeba left South Africa during the apartheid regime and only returned in 1991 after Nelson Mandela’s release from prison.

“I told the truth,” said Mama Africa, as she’s fondly known throughout the continent. “We didn’t have the good life here, but this country has always had great music. If left alone, we would have competed with any country in the world.”

Heads Up will release Makeba’s new album, “Reflections,” June 22.

Another former expatriate who has settled back in Cape Town is Abdullah Ibrahim.

The 69-year-old pianist made his first festival appearance as a leader. His trio set, with stateside bassist Belden Bullock and drummer George Gray, was a transcendent performance that highlighted the festival.

He delivered journey music that changed shapes and colors. A poem on the piano, Ibrahim chimed chords, sprinkled single-finger notes and drifted into a state of lyrical grace. The audience was hushed in beloved appreciation.

While Ibrahim was prickly during his festival press conference, he also proved to be a wise man speaking parables.

“The circle was broken in South Africa,” he said. “The black eagle has only one wing and is blind in one eye. It can’t fly. We’re working today to get our eagles flying again.”

Ibrahim: Helping the Eagles Fly

M-makeba Back to the Good Life

Grand Cayman, BWI June 17-19, 2004

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"Back off, I'll take you on! Headstrong to take on anyone."

Chances are, you've repeatedly heard Trapt's refrain from "Headstrong," the most-spun song of the past year at mainstream rock and modern rock radio. Its appeal was universal enough to cross over to top 40, where "Headstrong" remains among the format's top recurrents.

While Trapt seems to have appeared out of nowhere, the band actually has been building its success for a long time. "It's been really satisfying, and we feel really proud of the hard work we've put in," Trapt singer/guitarist Chris Brown says. "I always wanted to look back and say that I worked for what we've been given so far. I can really say that we've worked our asses off to get here, so it just feels good."

(Continued on page 16)
Trapt
Continued from page 15

The success of “Headstrong” as a single helped propel Trapt’s self-titled debut album to platinum status.


This new Billboard series has profiled the debut platinum success of Hilary Duff, Clay Aiken, Sean Paul, and Lil Jon & the East Side Boys. The Platinum Stars series also profiles major new releases by established platinum artists, such as Alanis Morissette’s new album, “So-Called Chaos” (Billboard, May 8).

‘THE REAL DEAL’
Trapt formed in Los Gatos, Calif., a suburb of San Jose, in the summer of 1997. The members—who at the time included Brown, Simon Ormandy and Peter Charrell—were just about to enter their junior year of high school. (Drummer Aaron “Monty” Montgomery joined the group in 2001.)

The band released several independent CDs and sold them at shows and record stores in the Bay Area, Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.

Early label interest led the band members to drop out of college and pursue music full time.

“After we put out the five-song EP (‘Glimpse’) and got [exposure] on the Internet, labels started calling us. That was when we realized things were really going to happen,” Brown recalls. “That’s when we had to drop out of school and go after it hard.”

Trapt soon caught the attention of executives at Warner Bros. James Dowdall, senior VP of A&R, and Damon Booth, senior director of A&R, reacted strongly to the band’s live presence.

“We saw them in rehearsal and thought that Chris was a complete star,” Dowdall says. “The thing you really need to do with Trapt is buy into what the singer is saying. He’s very much the real deal, and what he’s singing about, he really means it.”

Brown credits new artist Web sites and chat rooms for helping Trapt build its audience and secure its label deal. In fact, manager Drake Sutton-Shearer first heard about the band online.

“The Internet served as a launching pad for Trapt’s music,” Sutton-Shearer says. “Without that as a marketing medium, I would never have found the band.

“Before the band had a record deal or any kind of label interest, Chris used to literally spend hours on end every day e-mailing people that heard his music on the Internet,” he continues. “He was 100% dedicated to getting to know who the fans were. He answered every single e-mail and then maintained a rapport with [each person], which is no small feat.”

That ability to connect with the audience is what drew Sutton-Shearer to Trapt, he says.

“Trapt is a young, motivated, melodic modern rock band [with] a singer who writes about the things that are relative to his life. In turn, his lyrics are relative to many other young people’s lives. There is a direct connection between the band and their fans.”

Trapt’s songs are written by Brown, Charrell and Ormandy, and published by W.B.M. Music/Traptism. The writers are signed to SESAC.

Once Trapt signed to Warner Bros., the label kept the Internet buzz going. The band’s street team grew faster than that of any other Warner Bros. act, says Eric Fritschi, VP of marketing at the label.

Street teams, recruited online from among fans, help with grassroots promotion efforts.

“With mainstream rock bands, you don’t get the stuff that the critical favorites do,” Fritschi says. “We didn’t expect press out of the gates, and there’s not a lot of TV opportunities early on, either. It’s really

[About] radio, video and all the lifestyle marketing you can do.

“We felt that if we went straight to fans, they would really embrace the band,” he adds. “We didn’t want to worry about the gatekeepers that might be hesitant at first.”

Warner Bros.’ new-media department distributed a media player for the band, comprising four songs, video footage and a link to the band’s Web site.

“Kids were listening to all of those songs repeatedly and sending them to friends. So early on, we had hundreds of thousands of people that saw the player, and we wound up reaching over a million people with it,” Fritschi says. “We knew from the response we got, we had something.”

‘WE HAD SOMETHING’
Trapt recorded its debut at Warehouse Studios in Vancouver. Ted Jensen mastered the disc at Sterling Sound in New York.

Warner Bros. used its own site to make “Trapt” and its first single, “Headstrong,” available to Internet consumers ahead of the album’s official release date.

“We were excited that it had the response that it did, considering the interface was a little clunky, having to buy it from our site,” Fritschi says.

By the time the album became available in stores, Trapt had already sold 1,000 copies via online exposure alone.

The band’s touring boosted sales further. Pinnacle Entertainment agent Scott Sokel books Trapt.

“This is a band that didn’t necessarily have anything handed to them,” Bob Goldklang, VP of modern rock promotion at Warner Bros., (Continued on page 17)
told Airplay Monitor in 2003. "If you look at the beginning stages, this was never a $6.99 record at retail, and they never had a tour where they were opening for a big act."

"When we came out with this record, it wasn’t about making a huge impact [in the] first week. We wanted to get the record in the market and grow it," he adds.

**GRADUALLY, RADIO SUCCESS**

Warner Bros. sought playlist adds for "Headstrong" in September 2002. With early support from stations in Cleveland (modern WXTM) and Minneapolis (active rock KXXR), the label had some success stories it could use. Yet the song still built slowly.

While many singles take only a few months to develop, "Headstrong" didn’t peak at No. 1 at rock radio until its seventh month.

Mike Rittberg, VP of rock promotion at Warner Bros., knew "Headstrong" was a competitive song. But he admits, "I don’t think that any of us thought that it was a No. 1 song until February [2003] or so."

After "Headstrong" peaked at rock radio, the label released Trapt's second single, "Still Frame," which gave the band its second No. 1 at active rock. In the meantime, top 40 picked up on "Headstrong," and it eventually peaked on that chart at No. 4 in November 2003.

While they still consider themselves a rock act, Brown and his bandmates do not have any reservations about crossover pop success. "It's an awesome thing when your music can hit people that don't care about a certain genre of music. [They] just want to hear good songs," Brown says. "That [success is] pretty much saying that you wrote a great song and that a lot of people get into the song."

"I don’t think there’s anything wrong with top 40. You definitely want to keep your fan base and your roots in modern and active rock though, because they’ll play [your song] even if it’s not a huge hit. They’ll play [your song] because it’s your sound and it’s the band," he notes.

While many artists rely on image or posturing to get noticed, Trapt has done so with its music alone.

"Some people saw Trapt as another faceless, nameless rock band that would [peak at] mid-chart and go away," Goldklang says. "It has been amazing watching the development of a record that wasn’t on most people's radar grow to the point where everyone had no choice but to add it."

Sutton-Shearer adds, "Trapt is not part of some scene or considered a 'cool' band by critics' standards. They do not subscribe to the [idea] that [they] need to have some kind of definable image for consumers to decide whether or not they want to take them home."
Ladies First Trek Sets Bar For R&B Outings

BY SUSANNE AULT
LOIS ANGELES—Revenue for the Ladies First tour was just about second to none, organizers say. That could open the door further for more urban concert series, they believe.

Overall, urban talent has not had the same recent victories on the road as rock and pop acts. Last year, only one urban outing—50 Cent’s/Jay-Z’s Roc the Mic tour—cracked Billboard’s top 25 grosses. That trek earned $23 million from 64 shows reported (Billboard, Dec. 27, 2003). At press time, Snoop Dogg—as part of the upcoming Projekt Revolution tour—is one of the few major urban acts confirmed for the summer (Billboard, March 27). Still unconfirmed but expected is an arena outing from Usher this year.

Although there were a few soft spots, Ladies First—starring Beyoncé, Alicia Keys and Missy Elliott—earned more than $22 million from only 27 dates. The tour concluded April 21.

“I hope this is the start of many more urban tours that can be successful,” says Jeff Robinson, CEO of Keys’ management company, MBR Entertainment. “You used to be able to get a girl to see the Temptations or Guy or Jodeci or New Edition. You usually had great R&B shows each summer.

BROAD AUDIENCE NEEDED
Organizers agree that future urban tours must carry the same mainstream elements as Ladies First to enjoy similarly healthy grosses.

Also, many venue managers are raving about the wide range of music fans that filled their facilities for the tour.

“The key is to have a broad audience. It’s no longer just R&B or just hip-hop or just pop. These shows are going to many kinds of taste. That’s where we’re headed in music,” says Al Haymon, CEO of Haymon Entertainment, which co-produced Ladies First with Clear Channel Entertainment. All three women can be heard on multiple R&B and top 40 radio formats, as well as on mainstream and urban TV outlets like MTV, VH1 and BET.

Collectively winning 12 Grammy Awards and drawing more than 6.5 million copies of their latest albums, according to Nielsen SoundScan, also boosted their stature.

Production pizzas need to be of central concern as well.

“We really brought on the expertise of the rock industry through Sanctuary to really do the overall production of the tour,” explains Mathew Knowles, president of Music World/Sanctuary Urban Holding Co., and Beyoncé’s father and manager.

One of Knowles’ goals since merging his company Music World with Sanctuary is to better translate urban album sales successes into touring achievements. There are conversations within Music World/Sanctuary about launching its own booking division specifically to advance the urban live scene. Also a boon to any tour are significant sponsorship deals. Knowles notes that funds from Ladies First’s presenting sponsor, Verizon Wireless, and Beyoncé’s own sponsors, Steve Madden and L’Oreal, covered 50% to 75% of Beyoncé’s production expenses.

The artist package of Ladies First allowed organizers to set a higher price structure that would deliver bigger grosses, Knowles and Haymon say. In particular, to Rock the Mic’s $33 ticket average, most Ladies First tickets ranged between $50 and $60.

“This is a unique combination of superstars. People were willing to pay for that,” Haymon says. Although there were a number of sellouts on the tour—including the 12,310-seat Philips Arena in Atlanta March 28 and 12,571-seat Wachovia Center in Philadelphia March 23—some markets were soft.

The American Airlines Center show March 15 in Dallas drew 6,624 people, about half of 12,096 capacity. Also, the 14,122-seat Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis grabbed 6,883 people March 30.

“We thought it would have done better than it did. It’s a fantastic show with four fantastic artists [including opener Tamia] on it,” says Jeff Bowen, VP of scheduling and production services at the Fieldhouse. “We expected a little higher ticket sales.”

A potential reason for slow sales, Bowen notes, is that urban tours are still somewhat of a rarity in Indianapolis.

Knowles believes the American Airlines show underperformed because Beyoncé had already played the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo just two weeks before.

Haymon is nevertheless impressed by the tour’s ticket sales. “Some [dates] didn’t sell out, but overall it has been an enormous success.”

Because of individual work commitments, including Beyoncé’s work on a new Destiny’s Child album, it is doubtful Ladies First will be extended.

USHERING IN USHER
Venue executives are already angling for dates for Usher, who they believe will have the next pop/urban smash tour.

Usher’s trek has yet to be confirmed, but he is expected to play large-sized venues starting in August. Like the talent for Ladies First, Usher has built a hefty fan base. His new album “Confessions” has sold 2.4 million copies.

Regardless of the ticket sales for Ladies First at the Fieldhouse, Bowen is likewise gunning for an Usher date.

“He certainly would have an advantage with his mainstream focus. There is now much more crossover opportunity with [his] style of R&B,” he believes.

Demand Escalates For Elton’s Vegas Run

BY RAY WADDELL
“The Red Piano” is generating plenty of green.

Sir Elton John’s three-year stand at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas is notching sellouts, with 15 dates added to the 2004 run.

First tipped in Billboard (Billboard Bulletin, July 11, 2003), John’s deal at the Colosseum originally dictated 75 shows over three years. Sources say his guarantee for the run exceeds $50 million.

Since it began Feb. 13, the engagement has grossed $14.5 million from 19 sellouts that drew 75,276 people. At John’s current pace of $763,157 per night, the year’s gross will exceed $30 million.

Mark Julian, president of Caesars, while not confirming John’s guarantee, says the pluses to booking him go well beyond turning a profit at the box office.

“It’s about the traffic,” Julian says. “It’s about image-building for the property and [the ancillary transactions] people make at the restaurants, retail, bars and, most importantly, the casinos.”

Julian adds that Caesars has seen a “nice little uptick” in that regard surrounding John’s shows.

“The Red Piano” resumes July 23 and ends Aug. 8; the additional 15 dates run between Oct. 12 and 31. “The shows are being fantastic,” says Howard Rose, John’s longtime agent at the Howard Rose Agency in Beverly Hills. “We added the additional 15 shows because of the overwhelming demand.”

Tickets for “The Red Piano” are priced at $100, $175 and $250. Photographer/director David LaChapelle serves as production designer/director for the John engagement. The shows are produced by Caesars Palace and Concerts West.

Performers who have played the 4,100-seat, $95 million Colosseum include Jerry Seinfeld (who is a recurring booking), Tim McGraw, Mariah Carey and Gloria Estefan.

The venue opened last year to house Celine Dion’s three-year run at Caesars. John’s performances do not alter the schedule for Dion’s “A New Day …” which breaks for 12 weeks each year.

Even with John’s success, the Colosseum remains the house that Celine built. In 2003, Dion grossed $80 million from 146 sellouts at the room, according to Billboard Boxscore. Dion has grossed another $26.8 million from 48 sellouts so far this year. Her grosses to date have well exceeded the total cost of the venue, and she’ll easily top 1 million tickets sold by year’s end.

Meanwhile, John will perform with a full orchestra during a five-night stint at New York’s Radio City Music Hall July 13-18 (Billboardbiz, April 27). Rose says the Radio City and Vegas shows will be the extent of John’s live work in 2004. The artist has a new record due in November and plans to tour in 2005 and above the Vegas run, Rose says.

IEG/BILLBOARD TOUR SPONSORSHIP ROUNTUP

| Sponsor | Tour | Estimated Fee | Sponsorship
|---------|------|---------------|------------------|
| Cineworld Cinema | Aquapalooza on the Beaches concert series, Atlanta | $25,000 | Cineworld Cinema is leveraging its presenting of the iheartradio Friday concert series through two text-message promotions. The "Get It Here First" campaign offers concert schedules, confirmed acts and other exclusive content before public release; the "Live on Stage" campaign centers on an on-site pre-show downloading kiosk where pass holders can download performances and other perks.
| Hershey Foods | Thalia Sodi tour, nine plus stops | $500,000 | Tour is part of a larger multiyear marketing partnership centered on a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign and a new line of co-branded Latin FlavorTwist Hershey products. Hershey will leverage the tie through consumer and retail promotions in the United States as well as Mexico and Puerto Rico.
| Kia Motors America | Sugar Ray tour, April-May, 17 stops | $900,000 | Multi-pronged marketing platform for Kia’s 12-month-old Spectra compact sedan series involves around-site reality TV series filmed during the tour that features eight contestants competing for a chance to land a job as a major music label tour manager through magazine ads as well as sungapromotions.com that includes a sweepstakes, giving away three Spectras. On-site, Kia is displaying vehicles and handing out Kia merchandise to concertgoers.
| Y.E. Stinger | Presenting, Outfest, 2006, July-September, 26 stops | $750,000 | Y.E. Stinger energy drink; leveraging through radio station ticket sweeps and hospitality for the band. Y.E. Stinger also has a partnership with World Wrestling Entertainment.

| Sponsorship | Dealmakers
|-------------|------------------|
| Cineworld Cinema | Lindsay Hallam, senior VP/chief marketing officer, Cineworld; Stacy Schett, director of corporate sponsorships, Mad Booking & Events.
| Hershey Foods | Thomas Hemphill, senior VP/chief marketing officer, Hershey; and Thomas Motella, manager.
| Kia Motors America | Jerme Mood, president, Alliance; and Ben Smith, director of marketing communications, and Wally Anderson, VP of marketing, Kia.
| Y.E. Stinger | Doug Friedman, director of PR and media, NW; Pharmacare; and Caroline Frye, VP of touring and sales, QM/Channel Entertainment.

Compiled by William Chipp, senior editor, IEG Sponsorship Report

www.americanradiohistory.com
First Outing Set For 'Nashville Star'

The William Morris Agency's Nashville office may have a hot property on its hands with the first "Nashville Star" tour. Featuring the four finalists from the popular USA Network TV show, the tour will include about 30 dates, beginning June 18 at the Fraze Pavilion in Kettering, Ohio. 262
Five, owned by Brinson Strickland and Kyle Gustie, is producing the outing.

Brad Cotter won this year's "Nashville Star" title May 1. Matt Lindahl, Lance Miller and George Canyon were the other three finalists (see Nashville Scene, page 32). The Nashville Star Band will provide backup on the tour.

Rob Beckham, responsible agent for the tour at WMA, says producers initially wanted a "Nashville Star" tour last year, but plans could not be finalized in time to take advantage of the show's momentum. "The 'American Idol' tours have shown you have to go out right after," Beckham says. Cotter is back in the studio this week. A single was released May 3. After the Country Music Ass'n. Country Music Festival, the tour will begin.

Beckham hopes radio will be smitten with Cotter's single by then. The tour plays theaters, large clubs, sheds and fairs.

In many markets local radio will be involved in the dates through "Nashville Star, Too" promotions. Local contest winners will vie for a spot in the regional finals for the third installation of the TV show.

The price tag for a date on the "Nashville Star" tour is $25,000. So how did buyers react when Beckham pitched them a package of unknown artists on their first national tour?

"You have to sell the 'Nashville Star' brand to a certain extent," Beckham says. "Most performing arts centers, clubs and fairs out there wouldn't have a chance to buy an 'American Idol' tour date. We know this isn't 'American Idol,' but some buyers are making an investment into the future of this brand.''

The tour will use local sound and lights but will also carry some production elements, including video.

And if the "Nashville Star" finalists, like those from "American Idol," play large venues on their first tour, they will no longer be booked when they're done.

"By the time they're done with this tour, they will have their chops and their entertainer's legs under them," Beckham says. "The concept worked well for 'American Idol.'" The two "Idol" tours, booked by Jeff Frasco at Creative Artists Agency, have grossed nearly $25 million and have drawn 689,331 people to arenas.

The next "Idol" tour, produced by AEG Live, begins July 14 at the Delta Center in Salt Lake City. It includes about 36 markets and ends Sept. 26 at the HP Pavilion in San Jose, Calif.

McKnight MOVES: Brian McKnight has signed with Creative Artists Agency. He had been represented by the William Morris Agency. Up next for McKnight is the release of "Gemini" in August on MoJet. A tour follows in the fall.

Sillas White is McKnight's manager. John Branca is his attorney.

DERBY DEB: For 20 years now, Freedom Hall in Louisville, Ky., has sponsored an annual Kentucky Derby bet to promote the building. Deb Burda, booking director at the arena, orchestrates the pool. This year, five people picked Smarty Jones, which went off at 3 to 1 odds paying $10.20.

This year's winners are Adam Kornfeld, agent at Writers & Artists Group International; Darin Lashinsky, VP at Backstreet; Mary Ann Porcaro, VP of operations for Magic Arts & Entertainment; Scott Pang, agent at International Creative Management; and our own Howard Lander, COO of VNU Business Publications. For the record, I picked Master David, who finished 12th.
**Smokey Gumbo Is Soul Good**

BY GAIL MITCHELL

Smokey Robinson has satisfied his share of musical palates. Now he’s whetting appetites another way.

The Motown legend has launched Smokey Robinson’s Foods. The company introduced its first product, Soul Is in the Bowl Gumbo, to the Chicago market in February. The gumbo is available there through the Jewel-Osco chain, an Albertson’s subsidiary.

“I’ve been a gumbo connoisseur since I was a kid,” Robinson says. “If you’re going to make real good gumbo, it’s an all-day or all-night cook. But this you just have to microwave.”

Located in the frozen food section, Robinson’s gumbo contains chicken sausage and seafood but no red meat. It’s also low in cholesterol and sodium.

The gumbo hits Southern and Western California in May through Safeway and Albertson’s, respectively. Then it’s on to Dallas, where Robinson will open the city’s annual Juneteenth Festival. He plans to go national before the end of the year.

**BENEFITING EDUCATION**

Smokey Robinson’s Foods is a partnership among Robinson, his interior designer wife Frances, Los Angeles club owner/phlan-thropist Gene La Pietra and actor/producer Leon Isaac Kennedy. It was Kennedy who brought Robinson and La Pietra together.

The LA-based company operates with a staff of five, including CEO Jeff Brain, marketing director Geoffrey Garfield and PR consultant Karen Mayo.

A portion of the company’s profits will be used to further education for minority children.

It took 18 months to develop the gumbo’s recipe and packaging, Garfield says. Then it was time to find a distributor.

Like the record industry, “distribution is everything” for food companies, Garfield says. “Their distribution is, can this brand bring people to the market?”

Garfield cites Robinson’s 45-year career and 35-plus demo reach as keys to achieving the company’s goals: succeeding in the ethnic and frozen food fields.

Erin Patton, president of marketing think tank the MarketMind Group, believes Robinson is on the right track.

“Soul music and soul food are inextricably linked. And Smokey Robinson is someone able to navigate this new territory. He has credibility with the mainstream. Plus, he’s tapping into the African-American community with a health-conscious alternative against such concerns as heart disease.”

Robinson’s company enlisted the services of a food marketer and area attorneys for its 24-store test run in Chicago. It sold 50,000 packages of gumbo in one month, according to Garfield.

Regularly priced at $2.89, the gumbo was offered at an introductory price of two for $5. A month after the test, all 204 Jewel-Osco stores in Chicago began to stock the gumbo. Robinson isn’t the first artist to parlay musical popularity into the food arena. Patti LaBelle wrote a cookbook. Ashford & Simpson operate a New York eatery. Isaac Hayes, another cookbook author, runs a Memphis soul food restaurant and markets Memphis Magic meat sauces.

On the country front, there are Jimmy Dean (sausage), George Jones (bacon, bottled water), Tracey Byrd (spices and seasoning) and Dwight Yoakam (seafood).

Before working with Robinson, Mayo was special events director for Gladys Knight. She helped the singer establish a Las Vegas-based bakery.

After leading with gumbo, Robinson plans to offer red beans and rice and jambalaya. Stirring on the back burner are ideas for a health food division, as well as bottled water and co-branding with other celebrity-spawned food items.

As the company ramps up, listen for Robinson-penned jingles in forthcoming radio and TV spots.

Having just participated in the Food Marketing Institute’s annual Chicago conference, Garfield says Smokey Robinson’s Foods is racing to go.

“We’re talking to other supermarket chains and ethnic partners,” he says. “In the food industry, you have to have a quality product and professionalism. We’ve also got one of the best brands in America.”

---

**Day Says Time Is Right For New Album**

It’s been ticking for a year. But the new Time album is definitely on its way.

**Hollywood Records** will release “It’s About Time” June 22. It features live recordings of classic tunes from Time and frontman **Morris Day**’s solo career. A bonus is four new songs penned by Day and three of his veteran Time cohorts—**Jeronimo Jackson**, **Jellybean Johnson** and **Monte Moir**.

As reported here last year (Rhythm & Blues, Billboard, Sept. 27), Los Angeles-based **Whole 9** and **Day** produced the set.

Day describes the new songs as “appropriate to me and the fellows, according to today and the past. We didn’t create a new dance [like “The Bird” this time]. But there is some club/dance material on here.”

That is what the **Prince**-mentored, Minneapolis-bred urban funk act became known for in the ’80s. The original lineup included **Jesse Johnson**, **Jimmy “Jam” Harris** and **Terry Lewis**.

Time’s hits range from the 1982 ditty “777-9311” to ’90s “Jerk-Out.” Day has recorded several solo sets, among them “The Color of Success” and “Daydreaming.” He also delved into acting. He will guest on the May 10 episode of UPN series “Eve.”

Now based in Atlanta, Day reunited with Prince during the Purple One’s recent concert there.

“I called us two days prior,” Day says of the 43-minute set. “People went nuts.”

“I don’t know if I thought much 22 years ago about still being weak now, but I’ll get stronger.”

The singer/songwriter/producer, who is recovering from hip surgery, had to be helped to the podium. Known for his constant touring, Charles hasn’t performed for a year.

Among those participating in the ceremony were Charles’ long-time manager **Joe Adams** and **Clint Eastwood**.

Eastwood, who called Charles “an idol of mine,” worked with the artist for the PBS special “Piano Blues.”

The collection is the inaugural project of a partnership between Concord Records and Starbucks’ Hear Music brand.

**HER FATHER’S DAUGHTER:** Ayanna Gregory is following in her father’s footsteps. Dad is satirist/human rights activist/nutritionist Dick Gregory.

But rather than do comedy, Ayanna opts to reach people through music. Her soulful brand of activism can be heard on her debut CD, “Beautiful Flower.”

The CD is self-titled, in a way, since Ayanna’s name means “beautiful flower” in several African languages.

“A lot of people go out of their way not to put me with my dad,” Ayanna says. “But I don’t mind” (the associa-
tion). What he represents is more than celebrity. He’s been that agent of change, that agitation to help a nation and world better itself. I don’t mind being associated with that.”

While a student at Washington, D.C.’s Howard University, Ayanna sang at marches, rallies and demonstrations against the Persian Gulf War. In 1992 she joined the music group 2000 Black. After spending a year with the spoken word/music ensemble Black Notes, Ayanna began pursuing a solo music career.

Her musical partner/accompagnist is fellow Howard alumnus the **Gimney**. Between Ayanna’s day job as a counselor/teacher and McKinney’s telephone company gig, the pair spent four years recording her debut in a McKinney’s home studio.

“Children have so much to do with why I wanted to pursue music,” Ayanna says. “They have so little positive music to listen to coming through the mainstream. Why should they have to go underground to find artists of substance?”

Ayanna’s single “Far Away” has received airplay on adult R&B KHJ Los Angeles and R&B hip-hop WDLS New York. The album is available through independent label New Moon Recordings at Borders Books & Music and Tower Records.

**MUSICAL NOTES:** Aretha Franklin headlines a two-night engagement Sept. 17-18 at Los Angeles’ Greek Theatre. It’s the first time she’s performed in L.A. in 21 years. A week later (Sept. 24-25), she takes over the House of Blues Las Vegas.

**Usher, Alicia Keys, Norah Jones, Eve and Natalie Cole** are just a few of the confirmed acts for Quincy Jones’ Rome event “We are the Future.” The May 16 global concert is a takeoff on Jones’ history-making “We are the World” recording of nearly 20 years ago.

(Continued on page 22)
### Billboard Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

**Week Ending May 15, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLES</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>IMPRINT &amp; DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
<th>WEEKS AT NUMBER</th>
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<td>1. D12</td>
<td>Shady Records/Interscope Records</td>
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<td>2. Usher</td>
<td>LAFace Records</td>
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<td>3. MARIO WAIN</td>
<td>Bad Boy Records/Thumpin Music</td>
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<td>4. PRINCE</td>
<td>Westbound Records</td>
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<td>5. LIL FLIP</td>
<td>Ship-My-Records/Columbia Records</td>
<td>U Gotta Feel Me</td>
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<td>7. GHOSTFACE Killah</td>
<td>Def Jam Recordings</td>
<td>The Pretty Toney Album</td>
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<td>8. BEYONCE</td>
<td>Columbia Records</td>
<td>Dangerously In Love</td>
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<td>9. JAY-Z</td>
<td>Def Jam Recordings</td>
<td>The Black Album</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. TWISTA</td>
<td>Atlantic Records</td>
<td>Live Alone</td>
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<td>11. ALICIA KEYS</td>
<td>Jive Records</td>
<td>The Diary Of Alicia Keys</td>
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<td>12. J-KWON</td>
<td>Hodd Hip Hop</td>
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**Greatest Gainer**

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<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>OUTKAST</td>
<td>Speakerboxxx/The Love Below</td>
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<td>2. BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY</td>
<td>canine records</td>
<td>E. 1999 Eternal</td>
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<td>3. DR. DRE</td>
<td>Aftermath</td>
<td>The Chronic</td>
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<td>4. JT</td>
<td>Konvict Muzik</td>
<td>The Game</td>
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<td>5. Snoop Dogg</td>
<td>Def Jam Recordings</td>
<td>Doggystyle</td>
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<td>6. EMINEM</td>
<td>Aftermath</td>
<td>The Slim Shady LP</td>
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*Note: The information provided is a snapshot of the Billboard charts for the week of May 15, 2004, focusing on R&B and Hip-Hop music.*
**Music R&B/Pop & Hip-Hop**

**Rhythm & Blues**

Continued from page 20

years ago.

Staged at Rome's Circus Maximus, the concert will be telecast and Web-cast. Proceeds benefit various "Future" programs, including child centers in six cities worldwide.

**WINNING TUNES:** The recipients of the 2003 Heineken Music Initiative/ASCAP Foundation R&B Grant have been chosen.

They are Atlanta's Marc Demone Dickerson ("Brand New"), Chicago's Mark Carson and Jawara Harris ("What Should I Do"), Los Angeles' C. Chill and Jay Green ("Livin' on the Line"), Miami's Francisco Corea and Tommy Lee Hopkins Jr. ("Penny"), New York's Shawn Haak and Kenneth Vlape ("I Remember"), Philadelphia's Aziz Collins and Joshua Collins ("Best of Me") and Washington, D.C./Baltimore's Regional Staggers and Juan Brown ("(I Ain't Afraid of Nothin'"").

The winner songwriters(s) will receive $3,000. The grant program is in its second year.

Speaking of songwriting, Atlanta-based Artist Factory has teamed with Script Squad Music Publishing to organize songwriting clinics for aspiring tunemakers and producers (information at artistfactory.com).

Hiram Hicks, who launched Artist Factory last May, is former president of Island's black music division.

Stone Stafford created Script Squad this year and also serves as executive VP of creative affairs for Enlight Entertainment. That company's clients include writer/producers Kevin "She"espere" Briggs (TLC) and Anthony Dent (Destiny's Child).

**ON THE DOTTED LINE:**

Liquid & recording act Silk signs with Oliver & Chesser Artist Management & Entertainment Consultant Group. The company's recent agreement to represent another Liquid & artist, Jesse Powell, has ended according to a press statement, the pact was terminated "due to a conflict with Powell's previous management.

In other Oliver & Chervony activity, president Daryl Oliver has been named president of ULP Music Group. The St. Louis-based company's roster includes Marley Marl, produced the Young Boys.

**HitPredictor**

**NEW RELEASES WITH TOP 10 CALLOUT POTENTIAL**

1. **Kanye West**
   - Jesus Walks

2. **Ludacris**
   - Hell of a Life

3. **Usher**
   - My Way

4. **JAY-Z**
   - 99 Problems

5. **Donell Jones**
   - On My Own

6. **Cee Lo**
   - The One

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American Express was one of the event sponsors. Pictured, from left, are Exim Licensing's Judith Hoffman, American Express' Dominic McKay, Billboard's Gene Smith and American Express' Edgardo Tettamanti and Mauricio González.

Paulina Rubio, center, signs a picture taken with her new camera, a gift from sponsor Polaroid. Pictured with Rubio are Euro RSCG Latino's Amalia Arana, left, and Euro RSCG Magnet Latino's Marce Pérez.

CMX Latin Music Group hosted the awards show after-party at Bongos. Pictured are CMX Change/CMX Latin Music Group's Tony Caravia, left, and Michelle Huérfano.

It was marquee time at "The Music We See" panel. Pictured, from left, are Loiza Films' Franc Reyes, Cris Morena Group's María Cristina Di Giacommi and Surco/Vibra/Seminal Records' Gustavo Santañálla.

Universal Latino artist Alih Ley performs at the confab's 15th anniversary celebration, co-sponsored by Garnier Fructis, MTV Español and VH Uno.

Universal Latino artist Michael Stuart performs at the awards show after-party at Bongos hosted by CMX Latin Music Group.

Dimelo Records artist Mellow Man Ace, center, performed at the conference. He's flanked by brothers Francisco and Sergio Gómez of Univision act Akwid, winner of two awards.

Lunytunes & Noriega collect the awards for tropical album of the year for duo/group and best new artist at the Billboard Bash.

Warner Latina rock act La Ley is pictured with Fructis model Ivonne Vega, second from left, and Dawn Sante, far right, of In association event sponsor Maybelline-Carner.

American Express' Vico C, second from right, is surrounded by, from left, hosts Jorge Bernal, Johanna Gómez and Melanie Byron.

It was marquee time at "The Music We See" panel. Pictured, from left, are Loiza Films' Franc Reyes, Cris Morena Group's María Cristina Di Giacommi and Surco/Vibra/Seminal Records' Gustavo Santañálla.

Universal Latino artist Alih Ley performs at the confab's 15th anniversary celebration, co-sponsored by Garnier Fructis, MTV Español and VH Uno.
Pictured at the annual ASCAP Songwriters panel, from left, are ASCAP’s Jorge Rodríguez, Ana Rosa Santiago and Gabriela Benítez; La Ley singer Beto Cuevas; Máximo Aguirre Music Publishing’s Máximo Aguirre; ASCAP’s Alexandra Lioutikoff; producer Sergio George; Warner/Chappell Music Publishing’s Gustavo Menéndez; and songwriter/producer George Noriega.

Following her Q&A with Billboard’s Leila Cobo, Paulina Rubio received the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s Latin gold and platinum certifications from her record label, Universal Latino. Pictured, from left, are Universal executives Humberto Calderón, John Echevarría and Jesús Lopez; Rubio; Cobo; and Universal’s Walter Kolm.

Pictured at the Download Revolution panel, from left, are moderator Gabriel Abaroa of the Latin Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, emepe3.com’s Andy Kleinman, Universal Music & Video Distribution’s Susan Roberts, Nielsen Entertainment’s Chris Muratore and AOL’s Richard Bull.

Pictured at the “New Sounds of Regional Mexican Music” panel that was sponsored by Dímelo Records, from left, are Mock & Roll Records’ Rogelio Macín, Akwádi’s Francisco and Sergio Gómez, producer Byron Brizuela, producer Omar Valenzuela and Dima Records’ Jeff Young.

Ednita Nazario accepts her award for Latin pop album of the year/female at the Billboard Awards. (Photo: Alberto Tamargo/Telemundo)

Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems sponsored the “Presidents & Artists” panel. Pictured, from left, are moderator Leila Cobo of Billboard, Universal Music Latino’s John Echevarría, artists Vico C and Luis Fonsi, EMI Latin USA’s Jorge Pino and BMG International’s Maarten Steinkamp.


Adweek sponsored “The Art of Endorsement and Branding” panel. Pictured, from left, are moderator Karen Benzea of Brandweek, BMG Entertainment’s Paula Kaminsky, Exim Licensing’s Arturo Vinueza and the William Morris Agency’s Rebecca Drucker.
Muchas Gracias

To all the attendees, sponsors, performers, presenters and panelists for making this year’s conference the best yet!

Heineken Presents

Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards 2004

In Association with Garnier Fructis

Special congratulations to Telemundo on their most spectacular awards show ever!

www.billboardevents.com
## Billboard Hot Latin Tracks

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The House That Frankie Built

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

Scant radio play in the United States? Check. A history of poor record sales in the United States? Check. A sound that has remained a constant in the international club scene for more than 20 years? Check.

Welcome to the real world of house music.

Since day one, international DJ-producer and Grammy Award winner Frankie Knuckles has remained true to house music of a soulful, vocal and musical kind.

“His name is the ‘Godfather of House’ for nothing,” says Ken Smith, co-owner of the Crobar nightclub chain. “Frankie is house music—for yesterday, today and tomorrow.”

He is also a proper artist. His third artist album, “A New Reality,” was released April 20 by Definity Records. The label is distributed by Studio, which travels through the Norweje network.

The full-length—which features vocals by Nichi Richards, Jamie Principle and CeCe Rogers—is classically house.

According to Knuckles, this sound and quality of music has been missing in club music for far too long.

“Now no so many people were saying, ‘House music is dead,’” he says. “Technology threatened to do more of a disservice than service to this side of the industry. [Technology] made it easy for anyone to create tracks in their bedroom. But a track is not enough.

“In order to give this project all the life it deserved, I needed to take it into a full-on production facility like Quad Recording [in New York],” he continues. “Every element of a project like this had to be considered from every angle. The songs and production needed to project a third dimension.”

HOUSE MUSIC RENAISSANCE?

Whether such care leads to healthy sales remains uncertain. But industry observers—pointing to the cultural unrest in the world—believe a house music renaissance may be on the way.

“It’s odd,” Village Voice nightlife columnist Tricia Romano says, “but since the war [in Iraq] began, there really hasn’t been any anglo musical movement. It seems more about preserving the status quo. And in big-city clubs, that means house music.”

Of course, the musical soundtrack in clubland does not necessarily translate into hefty CD sales. Between his past two artist albums, Knuckles scored several No. 1s on the Billboard Hot Dance Club Play chart, including “The Whistle Song,” “Rain Falls” and “Too Many Fish.”

Yet his albums, “Beyond the Mix” (1991) and “Welcome to the Real World” (1996), have not fared as well, selling 8,000 and 13,000 copies, respectively, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Without radio and video play, though, “kids on the street never get to hear all this great house music,” Crobar’s Smith notes. “All they hear is hip-hop and pop. So house music remains underground.”

Indeed, Bradley Roulier, a partner in dance/electronic e-tailer beatport.com, acknowledges that house music titles are not among the Web site’s best sellers. “But they do hold their own,” he says.

Industry veteran Dennis Wheeler, now a marketing consultant to Definity and its parent management/production company Def Mix, is confident “A New Reality” will do more than that.

The label has sent the album’s lead single, “Bac N Da Day,” to club DJs, college and mix-show radio, and satellite (Sirius, XM) and digital (Music Choice) stations.

Album track “What’s Going On?” will be sent to smooth jazz stations in the coming weeks.

An interview with Knuckles recently aired on “No Cover,” the nightly dance music show on Telelunovo’s Mun 2 channel.

Outside of North America, Knuckles and other Def Mix artists—including David Morales, Satoshi Tomie, Bobby D’Ambrosio and Hector Romero—are viewed as pop stars, Wheeler notes. “Which explains why they are often interviewed by MTV Europe.”

Already, Definity has secured distribution deals for the album in numerous countries. They include Italy (Family Affair), Japan (Cicso), Germany (Diocasia), Australia/New Zealand (Stomp), and the United Kingdom (Ama). In the months leading up to summer, the international exposure increases, Wheeler says. He credits this to Def Mix’s annual DJ residency at the Pacha club in Ibiza.

The weekly party features the Def Mix roster and special guest DJs. This year’s scorer, with an “Island of Desire” theme, commences June 19 and ends Sept. 25.

Throughout the summer, Knuckles will maintain his monthly residencies at New York’s Cielo and Chicago’s Hydrate clubs.

Knuckles says these U.S. residencies help people realize that all is not lost where house music is concerned. “The greatest thing about this music is how it endures over time.”

Øye Gives DJ-Mix Series A Flavor Kick

Erlend Øye is not a DJ’s DJ. In fact, he’s not really a DJ. Øye is one-half of Norwegian pop duo Kings of Convenience.

Last year, taking a break from the latest installment in the DJ-Kicks series.

Out May 11 on the influential K7 label (which Studio distributes in the United States), Øye’s DJ-Mix “lays his vocals atop the beats and rhythms of his colorful musical bed.”

“When I first began DJing, I would always look at the mic input of the DJ mixer and think that I should be using it,” Øye says. “But not to announce someone’s birthday—not in a cheesy way like that.”

One night while he was DJing, it hit him. “I always found myself singing [to myself] over instrumental tracks that I was playing in the clubs,” he explains. “I thought to myself, ‘That’s how I can use the mic input.’”

In this way, Øye offers a much-needed element of surprise in the musically safe club environment. “I must put more flavor, more candy into the mix,” Øye notes. Indeed.

Øye’s “DJ-Kicks” is easily the best DJ-mix to come down the pike in eons. He has created a colorful soundscape that draws from house, techno, disco-punk and electro. At the centerpiece is his comforting voice, which graces half of the 18 tracks.

Apop his own “Sheltered Life” (from “Unravel”), Øye delivers a reworded reading of Opus III’s “It’s a Fine Day.” Elsewhere, he offers a Light That Never Goes Out.” Also included are three unreleased Øye songs: “Intergalactic Autobahn,” “A Place in My Heart” and “The Black Keys Work.”

These days, Øye is gearing up for the release of the new KOC album, “Riot on an Empty Street.”

Due June 21 internationally, the Source/Virgin disc will be preceded by the single “Misread.”

At the same time, Øye is maintaining a busy DJ schedule. “I’m out there promoting DJ-Kicks,” he says, “Right now, my life as a DJ could not be more busy.”

DOUBLE DUTCH:

The ninth annual Amsterdam Dance Event and third annual Live Dance Music Conference are scheduled for Oct. 21–23.

The former is Europe’s main dance and electronic music conference. The latter is the ADE’s specialized forum (within a forum) that caters to the live-event industry. Both conferences take place at the Felix Meritis center.

Those who register before May 15 will receive the early bird price of 175 euros ($212) for both events. For more info, visit amsterdam-dance-event.nl.
The success of progressive bluegrass and jam-band acts and the Appalachian folk-based “Cold Mountain” soundtrack has inspired Nashville indie Compendia Records.

The label is pursuing new marketing opportunities with three genre-bending, budget-conscious album projects, all produced by acoustic musician Bill VornDick.

“JamGrass—A Phish Tribute” came out in March. A similar tribute to Dave Matthews Band is tentatively scheduled for July.

In between comes “Return to Cold Mountain.” The May 25 release extends the “Cold Mountain” soundtrack model with vintage songs that fit the film’s Civil War-era, rural Southern setting. These include “Pretty Polly,” “Old Joe Clark” and “Black Mountain Rag.”

All are performed by musicians with a connection to the region. They include banjoist David Holt, singer-songwriter Jim Lauderdale and bluegrass mainstay Ralph Lewis.

“You have to be opportunistic,” says Ric Pepin, Compendia Music Group VP/CMG. He is the A&R force behind the VornDick projects.

There’s been a rebirth of interest in bluegrass-type sounds, and we have to take advantage of economies of scale in marketing.

Pepin points to Compendia’s recent signing of rootsy jam band Leftover Salmon, whose self-titled label debut came out in March.

“Leftover Salmon’s music has a lot of bluegrass elements in it, and we saw an opportunity to derive some sales from the ‘JamGrass’ release by co-marketing with Leftover Salmon,” Pepin says.

The similarly styled releases are being jointly advertised in a print campaign “to sell the cost of the ad and get two sales instead of one,” Pepin says.

Another goal is to “sell product without necessary [having] radio airplay,” as with the Phish tribute.

“There are a lot of rabid fans who will buy anything by or about Phish, which generates automatic bin sharing,” Pepin says.

COTTAGE INDUSTRY

The concept for progressive bluegrass artist tributes is not new. CMH Records, for one, created a veritable cottage industry with its Pickin’ On... series of instrumental treatments. Five of those recent CMH tributes include Trace Adkins and Sheryl Crow.

What is new, according to Pepin, is the Compendia projects’ inclusion of vocals and their emphasis on high-quality recording.

“Bill’s an engineer with his own studio, who gets great players and records that sound really good,” Pepin says. “He produces stuff in tune and on time and on budget.”

For VornDick, a prolific bluegrass engineer for such acts as Alison Krauss and New Grass Revival, the Compendia projects have been “way too much fun.”

“In the case of ‘JamGrass,’” he wanted to get together my ‘freight train’ of drummer Bob Mater and bassist Mark Paim and then get some young, aggressive players—and a vocalist no one’s heard of [Travis Simson of Nashville’s Voltune String Band]—and put an extreme front end to bluegrass that college kids could party to,” VornDick says.

“It’s kind of like the old New Grass stuff, tying rock’n’roll and bluegrass together while choosing songs that people already know. VornDick tested his creation successfully at Vanderbilt University’s radio station, WRUV Nashville.

“I brought the album and some of the musicians over, and they played it and said it was really cool.”

The Phish album is getting airplay during specialty jam-band radio programming. Among those playing it is Scottie Robertson, music director of the three-station Allegheny Mountain Radio community network, based in Dunmore, N. Va.

“With more and more festivals adding bluegrass to the lineups and the increase of young hip players on the circuit like Salmon, the music is just being recognized in the mainstream and the labels are attempting to get a piece,” Robertson says.

“I don’t believe all rock material lends itself to interpretation through bluegrass, but much of the new song presentations have won over a lot of traditional bluegrass listeners and have certainly energized many new players,” Robertson adds.

Guitarist Larry Keel, who appears on “Return to Cold Mountain” along with his vocalist wife, Jenny, lauds VornDick’s idea of “getting bluegrass to a completely different audience.”

“Lots of people who know the Dave Matthews, he adds. “A lot of the real young kids would love bluegrass if they gave it a little chance, because they love jam bands like Leftover Salmon—which is sort of bluegrass.”

Pepin cites the success of young bluegrass act Nickel Creek and its “Smoothie Song” at Triple-A radio, where Compendia will play Phish and Dave Matthews “JamGrass” tracks.

The label also plans a push to public radio and college formats.

Regarding “Return to Cold Mountain,” Pepin believes the original soundtrack stimulated demand for music from the film’s era and location. Additionally, the album’s artists “have a lot of star power.”

He sees great promotional potential, indicating upcoming efforts to secure roots music airplay as well as “lifestyle marketing” to Civil War re-enactment groups, related Web sites and bluegrass festivals.

VornDick adds: “We want to help these artists in the area to get more widely known so that they can go out and play folk festivals and the performing-arts centers throughout North America.”

‘Nashville Star’ Sounds Off About State Of A&R

Brad Cotter is using his win on this season’s “Nashville Star” talent contest as a platform to speak out on behalf of the hundreds of unsigned artists languishing in Nashville.

Until very recently, he was one of them.

But thanks to his May 1 win on the USA Networks series, Cotter has a recording contract with Sony Music Nashville. His first single, “I Meant To,” has already gone to country radio. His first Sony album arrives July 13.

Cotter’s story is remarkably similar to that of last year’s “Nashville Star” winner, Buddy Jewell. Both kicked around Nashville for years trying to get a deal and made their living as demo singers. Both also had promising opportunities that went south.

Cotter, 33, moved to Nashville from Auburn, Ala., nine years ago. Since then, he says every label in town has shot him down five times.

Often, Cotter says, he was told he didn’t have “star quality.” But “Nashville Star” viewers thought differently.

While he claims to have no axe to grind, Cotter says, “I’m just trying to speak up on some of the other artists and musicians in town that don’t get a break.”

Talking about Nashville’s A&R executives, Cotter says, “Some of these people need to do their jobs.”

Cotter was appalled when a “Nashville Star” producer told him that the show had a difficult time prior to the first season finding a label partner who would agree to award a record contract to the winner.

The producer said label reps told him, “If there was any talent in this town, we’d know about it.”

He says this kind of arrogance is a chronic problem on Music Row.

“There are a lot of people in town so scared that they’re going to lose their Mercedes, their parking space and their job that they’re afraid to sign anything,” he says. Consequently, “there’s a lot of horrendous music getting released out of Nashville that gives us all a bad name.

“You have these people that are trying to put as many gold bars in their pocket as they can before they lose their jobs.”

Told that he’s unusually candid for a “new” artist, Cotter replies, “I’m not smart enough to be fake about it. I’ve been wanting to say these things for a long time, because I’ve been really frustrated.”

Cotter’s deal with RCA and Mercury that went nowhere and had a similar dead-end production deal with EMI. He admits that kind of experience “beats you down after nine years of it, but obviously they didn’t beat me all the way down.”

From the moment he won, Cotter’s life has been hectic, and it’s only going to get more so. He has a single to promote, an album to rush-record and a manager to hire. He’ll also embark on a tour with the “Nashville Star” finalists this summer (see story, page 19).

Cotter will work with his songwriter friends Rick Giles and Steve Bogard to produce the album. Sony A&R executives Tracy Gershon and Mark Wright will executive-produce.

ON THE RECORD: RNA Records has parted ways with the group Pinmonkey. Its self-titled album peaked at No. 17 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart in 2002. The group’s most recent single, “Let’s Roll Tonight,” peaked at No. 44 on the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart a few weeks ago.

Manager Nancy Russell, president of Nashville-based firm Force, is no longer representing longtime client Trishar Yearwood.

The Grand Ole Opry has renewed its agreement with CMT Canada to telecast its weekly TV series. In the United States, the show is telecast on Great American Country.
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<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARTINA MCBRIDE</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIM MCGRAW</td>
<td>25</td>
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</table>

**Greatest Gainer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRAD PISLEY</td>
<td>Mud On The Tires</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIERKS BENTLEY</td>
<td>See #1 Care</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEORGE STRAIT</td>
<td>I Do</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN MICHAEL MONTGOMERY</td>
<td>I Love You More Than I Can Say</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLINT BLACK</td>
<td>Up!</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

**Top Country Catalog Albums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOBY KEITH</td>
<td>Greatest Hits Collection</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAD PISLEY</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIERKS BENTLEY</td>
<td>Greatest Hits</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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**Notes**: Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.
### Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Weeks At Number</th>
<th>Imprint &amp; Number/Promotion Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;You'll Think of Me&quot;</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Capitol 002357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;When the Sun Goes Down&quot;</td>
<td>Kenny Chesney &amp; U2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>BNA 001981</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Mayberry&quot;</td>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lyric Street 002</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Redneck Woman&quot;</td>
<td>Gretchen Wilson</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Capitol EMN 002162</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Letters From Home&quot;</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>BNA 001981</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Paint Me a Birmingham&quot;</td>
<td>Tracy Lawrence</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>DreamWorks 03557</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;Desperately&quot;</td>
<td>George Strait</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>MCA NASHVILLE 002162</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;Let's Be Us Again&quot;</td>
<td>Lonestar</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>EMI A &amp; M</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;If You Ever Stop Loving Me&quot;</td>
<td>Montgomery Gentry</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>A&amp;M 002305</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>&quot;What's She Getting for Me&quot;</td>
<td>Brooks &amp; Dunn</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Capitol 002162</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>&quot;Sweet Southern Comfort&quot;</td>
<td>Buddy Jewell</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>&quot;Loo&quot;</td>
<td>David Lee Murphy</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>&quot;Simple Life&quot;</td>
<td>Shania Twain</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Mercury 00357-1</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>&quot;Passenger Seat&quot;</td>
<td>Steve Darcy</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Lyric Street 002</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>&quot;I Can't Sleep&quot;</td>
<td>Clay Walker</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>&quot;Somebody&quot;</td>
<td>Reba McEntire</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>&quot;It Only Hurts When I'm Breathing&quot;</td>
<td>Shania Twain</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Mercury 00357-1</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>&quot;I Got a Feeling&quot;</td>
<td>Billy Currington</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>MCA NASHVILLE 002162</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>&quot;I Want to Live&quot;</td>
<td>Josh Gracin</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Lyric Street 002</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>&quot;Whiskey Lullaby&quot;</td>
<td>Brad Paisley featuring Alison Krauss</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>&quot;Last One Standing&quot;</td>
<td>Emerson Drive</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Lyric Street 002</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>&quot;Toucher Than Nails&quot;</td>
<td>Joe Diffie</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>&quot;She Thinks She Needs Me&quot;</td>
<td>Andy Griggs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Atlantic 001981</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>&quot;The Wrong Girl&quot;</td>
<td>Lee Ann Womack</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>&quot;I Wanna Make You Cry&quot;</td>
<td>Jeff Bates</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>&quot;Me And Emily&quot;</td>
<td>Rachel Proctor</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>&quot;Girls Lie Too&quot;</td>
<td>Terri Clark</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>&quot;How Far&quot;</td>
<td>Martina McBride</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>&quot;If Nobody Believes in You&quot;</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>RCA 002357</td>
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### Billboard Hot Country Album Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Weeks At Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;One Standing&quot;</td>
<td>Steve Borden</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;Wild West Show&quot;</td>
<td>Tracy Lawrence</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Suds in the Bucket&quot;</td>
<td>Sara Evans</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Flies on the Butter (You Can't Go Home Again)&quot;</td>
<td>Wynonna</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Let's Kill Saturday Night&quot;</td>
<td>Lee Brice</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;The Boogie Man&quot;</td>
<td>Black Eyed Peas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>&quot;Honeysuckle Sweet&quot;</td>
<td>Jessi Alexander</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;Sick and Tired&quot;</td>
<td>Cross Canadian Ragweed</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>&quot;Smokin' Grass&quot;</td>
<td>Shenandoah</td>
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**Notes:**
- These charts are electronically monitored and electronically updated to reflect recent sales.
- The charts are compiled from a nationwide sample of more than 2,000 stores.
- All titles listed are current releases as of the date of publication.
- The charts are updated weekly and reflect sales data for the previous seven days.
**ALBUMS**

Edited by Michael Paolletta

**POPP**

"YOUNG HEART ATTACK"

Mouthful of Love

PRODUCERS: Clint Jones, Young Heart Attack XI, Producers/Boys That Group XI

RELEASE DATE: May 4

Young Heart Attack might as well be called That ’70s Band. The group is to late-’70s hard rock what the Darkness is to ’80s hair metal. The only thing more shameless than the openness with which this Austin-based five-piece sings the signature hooks of AC/DC, the Who and the Rolling Stones is the fun listeners will have hearing them do it.

The band’s debut album, consisting in at a lean and mean 34 minutes, is a trashy romp designed to keep the party it overdrive. But just when you think you’ve heard it all before, the dual of screeching frontman/guitarist Chris Hodge and bluesy vocalist Jennifer Stephens puts a new spin on the old formula making each beer-can-crushing rocker a boygirl trade-off. Highlights include a blistering cover of M.C.’s “Baby Love” and the “Won’t Get Fooled Again” inspired “Stairtie.” —BG

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*Power of Soul: A Tribute to Jimi Hendrix*

PRODUCERS: various

Experience Hendrix/Image Entertainment

RELEASE DATE: May 4

Given the seemingly infinite number of posthumous releases, guitar magazine covers and cover versions of his music, Jimi Hendrix clearly remains a force in popular culture. On this, the second officially sanctioned tribute album (Reprise issued “Stone Free: A Tribute to Jimi Hendrix” in 1993), that legacy is unmistakable. While there are a few disappointments in this 17-song collection, most are on the mark. Pedal steel guitarist Robert Randolph makes this collection worth its price with his searing rendition of “Purple Haze.” Others, like Kid六大or’s cover of “Hey Baby,” are excellent, out-of-control solos of which Hendrix would be proud. Similarly, the late Stevie Ray Vaughan’s previously unreleased instrumental medley “Little Wing”/“Third Stone From the Sun” is a dazzling display of guitar virtuosity appropriate to such a tribute. But it’s not all guitar hieroglyphics: A second rendition of “Little Wing,” this one by Chaka Khan, proves her breathtaking vocal prowess and the timeless, boundless nature of Hendrix’s music. —CW

**R&B/HIP-HOP**

"PETEY PAULO"

Still Writing in My Diary: 2nd Entry

PRODUCERS: various

Jive 01241-41824

RELEASE DATE: May 4

With the recent rise of southern hip-hop, North Carolina is still not the first or second place that comes to mind when you think of the genre. Petey Pablo wants to change this with his sophomore set. Serving as the sequel to “Diary of a Sinner: 1st Entry,” “Still Writing in My Diary: 2nd Entry” again offers access to Petey Pablo’s world. The MC teams with Lil Jon on lead single “Freex-a-Leek.” Pablo gets some help from Missy Elliott on the hand-clap-accented “Break Me Off.” Produced by Timbaland, the infectious, sexually charged track needs to be seriously considered as a second single. Pablo also scores when he tries his hand at crunk with the high-octane ”U Don’t Want That” (featuring Lil Jon & the East Side Boys). This diary needs to be read now, not later. —RH

"AUTOMATO"

Autohto that... DFA

Coup de Grace CCG-2

RELEASE DATE: April 27

Hip-hop has many faces. From the shine of bling bling to the grit of the underground, there is something for everyone. Automato showcases its unique singed second Autohto titled debut, which was helmed by über hip-hop producer DFA. The New York-based sextet—keyboardist Alex Franke, drummer Nick Miller, bassist Andrew Raposo, guitarist Morgan Wiley and M.C.s Ben Fries and Jesse Levine—mixes live instrumentation and witty lyricism to craft “Automato.” The result is equal parts school hip-hop—think early-’90s Native Tongues—and experimental electronic music. A prime example is "Walk Into the Light," which in a stream-of-consciousness lyric is placed over a hypnotic musical bed. The appropriately titled "The Single" booms with a chunky bassline courtesy of Rappo, while Fries and Levine trade verses about the virtues of soul music. Other highlights include the ethereal “Hollywood and Vine” and "Gold of Desert Kings." —RH

**DANCE/ELECTRONIC**

"THE REAL TRUE WELD DAY"

I, Lucifer

PRODUCER: the Clerkenwell Kid

Six Degrees 65036 1097

RELEASE DATE: May 11

The Real True Weld makes music that is equal parts electronic and cabaret. In the underground club scene, such tastemaking DJs as Groove Armada, Fatboy Slim and Coldcut have praised the act. With "I, Lucifer," Weld masterminds Stephen Cooks (aka producer the Clerkenwell Kid) has created an unofficial soundtrack to Glen Dun- can’s novel of the same name. While Duncan’s book dealt with the devil’s take on humanity, the storytelling of "I, Lucifer" offers astute and mischievous observations on life and living. Accompanying the def lyrics—bitter sweet one song, melancholic the next—a broad spectrum of retro musical moods and styles. Beautifully fitting into this rich, at times hazy, rhythmic mosaic are Coates’ Serge Gainsbourg influenced vocals. Gems include "Easter Parade," "Bathtime in Clerkenwell" and "(Still) Terminal Ambivalence Over You." Included on this enhanced CD is the animated video for "Bathtime in Clerkenwell." —MP

**COUNTRY**

"CAROLYN DAWN JOHNSON"

Dress Rehearsal

PRODUCERS: Dann Huff, Carolyn Dawn Johnson

Arista 82876

RELEASE DATE: May 4

The real thing from that lady with a calypso number, "Congolese." Cha-chaa, mereigue and bolero follow, then Kiddio lights the fuse on a fine salsa tune, "Conga La Havanera." She delivers over one of her most beautiful vocals on the mazurka "Le Monde Comme un Bébé." Kiddio doesn’t stop until she hits is high note that goes no- the Cuban changui rhythm, plena music, another taste of salsa—"Dijol," and a lively taste of jive with a san- skaumber, "Mutodo Kwanza." From (Continued on next page)

**Contributors:**

Sussanne Ault, Jim Bessman, Keith Caulfield, Leila Cabo, Deborah Evans Price, Brian Garrity, Raushan Hall, Gail Mitchell, Michael Paolletta, Bram Teitelman, Anastasia Tsolioucas, Phillip van Vleck, Ray Waddell,

Christopher Walsh. ESSENTIALS: Reviews deemed by the editors to reflect special interest or major event, chart or film or album of potential. RISSEES: Reissues better albums of special interest, archival and commercial interest and outstanding collections of works by one or more artists. POPs: (New) News releases prioritized to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format. CRITICS’ CHOICES: (*) New releases, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended because of their musical merit. All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Select album review copies and singles review copies for Michael Paolletta (Billboard, 770 Broadway, 6th floor, New York, N.Y. 10036) or to the writers in the appropriate business.
(Continued from page 35)

start to finale, Kidjo's performance is formidable.—PVV

> ELIANE ELIAS

**Singer/Pianist**

**PRODUCERS:** Eliane Elias, Steve Rodby, Marc Johnson

**Bluebird** 82876-58335

**RELEASE DATE:** May 4

The cover photograph of Brazilian singer/pianist Eliane Elias “Dreamer” is a blurry black-and-white photograph with bare tinges of color. That dreamy quality is captured in a CD that mixes Brazilian and American standards, set to full orchestra, and for the first time featuring Elias as a singer on all tracks. It’s a tasteful album, made so by Elias’ seductive, husky vocals, the subtle string orchestration and an overall Brazilian feel. Most impressive is when Elias takes command of her piano, as in the coda to “Baubles, Bangles and Beads,” and when she performs her own material. Notably, the jazz-inflected “Ming Me On” is surprising for a musician who excels in traditional bossa nova. As beautiful as that song is, it’s predictable and overwhelmingly one-dimensional. Everything tends to be in one tempo, one intensity and one emotion. That said, fans in a dreamy state of mind will put it on.—LC

**CLASSICAL**

> EVGENY KISSIN

Schubert, Piano Sonata in B-Flat, D. 960; Schubert-Liszt, Four Songs; Liszt, Mephisto Waltz No. 1

**PRODUCER:** Jay David Saks

**RCA** 82882-58942-0

**RELEASE DATE:** May 4

Evgeny Kissin is, without question, one in a generation—at least when it comes to Romantic repertoire. This disc shows the 33-year-old Russian pianist in his prime. He grasps magnificently with the sprawling Schubert recordings featured on “Reflections.” Kissin is also deviously ambitious in his choice of repertoire. The Mephisto Waltz is just as devilishly as one could ever hope for, and he easily dashes off the jaw-droppingly difficult technical feats that make other artists weep. A must-hear.—AT

**MODERN ROCK**

> DONNA TAYLOR

*Thrills* (3:29)

**PRODUCER:** Tony Hoffer

**WRITERS:** Donna Taylor, Dan Sheehy

**PUBLISHERS:** BMG Special Material

**RELEASE DATE:** April 13

The thing about the blues is that everybody gets a piece of them now and then, even in Scandinavia. Louise Hoffsten, a Swedish singer who is widely celebrated in her own country, proves yet again, with her U.S. debut on Memphis International Records, that the blues know no boundaries. Hoffsten’s nickname-sold only on this set—is concertina, guitar-driven blues. She’s tracked a tantalizingly lyrical rendition of “Guess I’m a Fool” and an equally subtle version of Willie Dixon’s “I Just Wanna Make Love to You.” Hoffsten’s lead guitarist, Staffan Astner, lets his hot R&B tone vibrate on a howling cover of John Lee Hooker’s “It Serves You Right to Suffer.” On a much mellower note, Hoffsten concludes with an excellent take on Lightning Hopkins’ “Daring. Do You Remember Her?” sung to the accompaniment of an acoustic guitar. This stirring American debut album will definitely earn Hoffsten some credibility with U.S. blues fans.—PVV

**SINGLES**

Edited by Michael Paoletta

**R&B/HIP-HOP**

> THE ROOTS

*Don’t Say Nuthin’* (3:38)

**PRODUCER:** Scott Storch

**WRITERS:** T. Trotter, S. Storch

**PUBLISHERS:** TVT Publishing; BMG Publishing

**RELEASE DATE:** May 5

If hip-hop fans have learned any thing from the Roots, it is to expect the unexpected. That said, leave it to the hip-hop band known for its live invariance to see this one first glimpse into its forthcoming full-length, “Tipping Point.” On “Don’t Say Nuthin’,” the group’s MC Black Thought takes center-stage over the sparse Scott Storch-produced track. The result is a song that is more akin to mainstream hip-hop fare than the group’s previous work. This could make for easy entry into the R&B charts for the group, which has only to wholeheartedly embrace the act. Indeed, the group may have finally crafted a song that is for the tastemakers, R&B producers. Of course, the Roots have a healthy, following that will support the album—airplay or not.—PH

**WILSON PHILLIPS**

*Go Your Own Way* (3:40)

**PRODUCERS:** Peter Asher, David Rolfe

**WRITERS:** L. Buckingham

**PUBLISHERS:** Now Sounds Music, ASCAP

**PRODUCER:** Toby Wright

**RELEASE DATE:** May 22

Following the success of “Hey Now” on mainstream rock radio, Tantric is aiming for a broader audience by covering this Fleetwood Mac staple on the track. The song is the second radio single from the group’s sophomore album, “After We Go.” Tendantanker’s ace guitar, which draws quite a bit from the rollicking spirit of the original, is as tuneful as current logic. The influences are on display, and it could be the most unexpected release of the week.—LP

**TANTRIC**

*The Chain* (3:28)

**PRODUCER:** Toby Wright

**PUBLISHERS:** Now Sounds Music, ASCAP

**PRODUCER:** Jake’s Backyard

**RELEASE DATE:** May 15

On this first single the album which is to be released on May 15, the band buckle down to the arena sound. A rock song that has a catchy chorus, the band is on their way to a major breakthrough.—PH

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**COUNTRY**

> SARA EVANS

*Suds in the Bucket* (3:40)

**PRODUCERS:** Sara Evans, Paul Worley

**WRITERS:** B. Montana, Jena

**PUBLISHERS:** Mike Curb Music, Songs of Moraire (BMI); Curb Songs, Moraire Music, ASCAP

**PUBLISHERS:** RCA 82766-69072-2 CD promo

**Culled from Sara Evans’ “Restless” album, this is a lively single that is tailor-made for country programmers in need of uptempo fare. Evans has always been a singer with a dynamic voice, and the song is a good fit for the airwaves.—AT

**THE THRILLS**

*Big Sur* (3:07)

**PRODUCER:** Tony Hoffer

**WRITERS:** Deasy, the Thrills

**PUBLISHERS:** BMG Music Publishing

**RELEASE DATE:** April 20

The track contains elements from “Theme From the Monkees.” And guess what? It works wonderfully, with the various elements melding into one perfectly lush pop song. Following lead single “Santa Cruz” (from the album “So Much for the City”), the Dublin-based Thrills keep their American obsession on “Big Sur.” Here, though, Thrills frontman Conor Deasy pleads with a lover not to return to the

woodsy California region of the song’s title. But Deasy, realizing his partner is not just “monkeying around,” discovers that there may be more to life than the city. With its tuneful quirkiness, it would be tough for anyone to avoid “Big Sur.”—SA
Trio Celebrates 30 Years Of Innovation And Success

BY CHRISTA TITUS

Geddy Lee didn't know it at the time, but on his 21st birthday—July 29, 1974—he and his bandmates hit a career lottery.

That was the day Neil Peart joined Lee and Alex Lifeson in their band Rush. When Peart replaced drummer John Rutsey, he cemented a lineup for the Toronto-based trio that has lasted for 30 years, with Lifeson on guitar and Lee on bass and lead vocals.

(Continued on page 52)
Three Players, Three Decades

Rush Recalls 30 Years Of Sharing ‘The Best Of Times, And The Worst’

BY CHRISTA TITUS

What keeps Rush ticking? Faced with that question, members of the trio offer a simple plan for success. In their eyes, friendship and musicianship are the keys to the group’s longevity and vitality. And they want to be remembered by the emotions they stir in fans and the music they create, not by how many albums they sell.

On the eve of a 30th anniversary tour that opens May 26 outside Nashville, the members of Rush—Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson and Neil Peart—open up in a discussion of their three decades together. Peart, who has not given an interview in several years, responded to questions via e-mail.

From a musical and personal standpoint, what has helped Rush endure for so long?

Geddy Lee: There’s some balance between our personalities that really

‘We agree on what we want to play together 95% of the time.’

—GEDDY LEE

kind of clicked. Even when things are difficult or stressful—and there have been a lot of times when things don’t go exactly right—somehow when we sit down to work together, it’s a nice rapport.

We seem to be able to talk easily, laugh a lot; we’ve always had the same desires in terms of what we’ve wanted to do as musicians.

I think that a common musical vision [helps], even though our tastes are different and we argue from time to time about influences and styles and whatnot. We agree on what we want to play together 95% of the time. That’s a huge advantage in staying together.

Alex Lifeson: Musically, we’ve always stuck to our guns, and we’ve compromised our music very little. We’re lucky in that we’ve had an audience that has grown with us and stayed with us for all these years, so it didn’t matter if we had radio hits or huge sales in the early days.

On the personal side, I think we’re fortunate that we’ve got three guys in this band that love each other very much, who enjoy each other’s company, have a similar sense of humor and vision and a dream that we shared when we were younger.

Would you say that is why Rush

has avoided problems or breakups that egos or even success can create?

Lee: Yeah. After the first seven records, we stopped counting who wrote what, and that took a lot of arguing away. When we first started, if I wrote a song by myself, I wanted the credit for it; as did Alex, Neil, whatever.

And after a while we decided that so much of our songs are indecipherable—human nature to always think what somebody else is doing is more interesting than what you’re doing. I think it’s surprising sometimes and hugely complimentary.

Lifeson: That’s a wonderful feeling. That’s the greatest reward of all. That’s easy to say when you have a good life and lots of success. But honestly, to hear somebody say they were influenced by the way you did

things, the way you write, the way you think; the integrity and respect it really is an amazing feeling.

—ALEX LIFESON

‘To hear somebody say they were influenced by the way you write is really an amazing feeling.’

—NIEL PEART

just amazing, and that’s what they’re promoting.

Before, it was a little tougher. You had to be really good to get anywhere, and you had to be willing to work really hard and tour like crazy and play every shitty gig that came your way to get exposure. I don’t know if that exists to the same degree anymore.

Lee: The whole monopolization of the music industry is sad to me—the fact that one or two companies seem to run the whole damn thing and then buy radio stations. It just becomes again a bunch of consultants telling people what they can listen to and what they can go see.

Your albums have been released in the United States through Atlantic Records for years. What do you think of Atlantic’s merging with Elektra as a result of the Warner Music Group buyout?

Lee: Well, that’s what happens. There’s going to be—what, two, three record companies left in the world? I think it sucks, I don’t think it’s good for anybody except for shareholders. It’s not good for the customers. The Disneyfication of the universe.

The lyrics to “The Spirit of Radio” decry the commercialization of the medium. Did you find it ironic that when it was released, it got the most mainstream airplay of any previous Rush song?

Peart: “The Spirit of Radio” was actually written as a tribute to all that was good about radio, celebrating my appreciation of magical moments I’d had since childhood, of hearing “the right song at the right time” . . . However, the song’s celebration of the ideals of radio necessarily seemed like an attack on the reality—on the formulaic, mercenary programming of most radio stations, with music the last of anyone’s concerns.

And yes, it was really ironic that such a song became popular on radio, though it was a kind of litmus test—some radio guys who “got it” could hear the song and think, “That’s the way it ought to be,” while others—the shallow, swaggering salesmen-of-the-air—could be oblivious to the song’s meaning and proudly applaud themselves, “That’s about me!”

The best book “Rush: Visions: The Official Biography” notes that your 1976 album “Hemispheres” was a transitional one for the band. Why?

Lee: “Hemispheres” represents more of an end of a period, if anything. From my point of view, it was one more stab at this idea of a concept album in the form that we had been doing [them], the long pieces interconnected as a very overt concept.

We’ve continued to do concept records, but they’ve been less overt and more just a kind of overall concept instead of a ramming-it-down-your-throat kind of idea [laughs].

Lifeson: By the time we got to

(Continued on page 55)
After all these years

Even Closer to our Hearts

Congratulations Alex, Neil and Geddy
Ray Danniels & SRO Management Inc.

www.rush.com
www.sro-anthem.com
Audiences ‘Rabid’ For Rush
Trio’s Live Show Highlights Musicianship, Innovation

By Ray Wadell

For this Canadian power trio, touring is indeed a rush—and has been for the past 30 years.

To maintain a fan base for three decades, a rock band certainly must deliver the goods live, and Rush is no exception.

Rush on May 26 will open a 30th anniversary tour at the Starwood Amphitheatre near Nashville. The North American leg of the tour will conclude with an Aug. 22 show in the band’s hometown of Toronto. The band also will play its first shows in Europe since 1992, beginning Sept. 8 at London’s Wembley Arena.

Vinny Cinquemani, president of S.L. Feldman & Associates in Toronto, has booked Rush in Canada for 27 years. “From the very beginning, they have always been extremely passionate and competent musicians,” Cinquemani says.

“In an era of shrinking record sales, there are bands that consistently do business live, and that isn’t an accident,” Cinquemani adds. “With Rush, it’s because their live show is so good. They play their ass off.”

From Alex Lifeson’s innovative guitar runs and Geddy Lee’s fluid basslines and unearthly vocals to Neil Peart’s thundering drums, Rush owns an instantly recognizable sonic presence.

And Rush remains capable of representing the most ambitious of studio material in a live concert format.

“As great as their records are, this is a fantastic live band,” says Jerry Barrad, a Toronto-based promoter with Clear Channel Entertainment (CCE).

“Great production, great lights, great sound, great musicianship, a nice repertoire—that’s why they sell tickets,” Barrad continues. “And they always have their game face on when they show up to play.”

Indeed, Rush never disappoints those in front and behind the stage.

“Their performances are engrossing, and there are only three of them out there,” says Adam Kornfeld, the band’s U.S. booking agent at Writers & Artists Group International.

“Geddy’s basslines are so special and unique, Alex is such a brilliant guitarist, and Neil Peart is without question the greatest drummer that is alive and playing today, in any musical genre,” Kornfeld adds.

After a five-year absence, Rush returned to the road in 2002 with the ambitious and successful Vapor Trails tour.

“It was great to see how warm and receptive the audiences were to seeing them again,” Kornfeld observes. “It was like they never left.”

The Vapor Trails tour grossed more than $27 million, according to Billboard Boxscore, and drew 691,525 fans, finishing 14th among all touring acts for 2002.

“They definitely have their own devoted, rabid core audience, who...” (Continued on page 50)

Congratulations!!
Geddy, Alex & Neil
On Your 30th Anniversary

From Neil Warlock
And Everyone At
The Agency Group

Here’s to the next 30 years
And maybe I’ll get 2 more tours
Of Europe in this time!!

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The notebooks may change... 
but the legend endures.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS TO RUSH 
ON 30 YEARS AS PERFORMERS AND PORTRAYERS.

Best wishes from your Atlantic family!

www.atlanticrecords.com
BY STEVE ADAMS

The allegiance of Rush fans worldwide explains why the group has sold some 10 million albums outside North America, according to its management, about one-quarter of its career total of 35 million units. The act's biggest market beyond the United States and Canada is the United Kingdom, followed by Germany, Brazil and Japan. The band also has a healthy following in northern Europe, particularly Scandinavia (led by Sweden) and Holland, and in South America.

CONSISTENT SALES

Universal Music, which distributes the band's pre-1989 catalog, reports sales of close to 1 million units in Europe during the past 12 months. Yet despite consistently solid sales, the European media barely acknowledges Rush's existence.

The situation is especially apparent in the United Kingdom, where the trio was initially criticized by a punk-friendly music press and has been largely ignored ever since. This is despite top-five album chart placings for the best-selling "Moving Pictures" (1981), as well as the likes of "Signals" (1982) and "Grace Under Pressure" (1984).


"When it's a respected rock group that's been around for 30 years," Noble observes, "[the British press is] not interested."

Noble says Rush has the most dedicated fans he has come across, so campaigns for the DVDs and the tour have been "fan-centric," with the Internet playing a major role.

Shows at London's Wembley Arena and Birmingham's NEC sold out immediately, with the remainder likely to sell out signs long before the band opens its European tour in London Sept. 8.

"The success of the U.K. tour is not down to media support at all," he says. "The dates are selling out through word-of-mouth and the loyalty of the fans, many of whom will attend more than one show."

Neil Warnock, chairman of the Agency Group in London, echoes Noble's views. The Agency Group has booked all of Rush's tours outside of North America, from its first tentative steps into Europe in 1977 to its largest shows to date in Brazil in 2002.

TICKETS MOVE FAST

"Rush has an amazingly dedicated fan base who are very sharp at getting hold of information, so the marketing almost takes care of itself," Warnock says. "Tickets sell fast because of a loyalty factor that goes back for years."

Jacob Harregaard, international marketing director of Warner Music International, also praises the dedication of Rush's fan base. WMI has released Rush's albums since it... (Continued on page 56)
Geddy, Neil and Alex:

From first to last (Rush in Rio DVD - 4X Platinum!!!!), your peak has most definitely not passed.

Three extraordinary individuals.

Together, a fiercely creative and inspiring musical force that forever will stand the test of time.

Thank you and congratulations on an incomparable 30 year career.

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Geddy, Alex, Neil & The Entire SRO Gang —

Change of Venue 10 days before we shoot
+ Travel 6,000 miles to a new venue
+ Put our lives on the line with a crazy Brazilian Partner
  + No soundcheck
  + A TV Truck made from a dumpster

= One amazing DVD and a JUNO Award!!!

It has been a pleasure and honor to work with our heroes!!

May your success continue for another 30 years!

Your Friends At
Coming Home Studios
Rush: Career Milestones

- When Neil Peart replaced drummer John Rutsey in 1974, he had three weeks to prepare for his first Rush gig. It was at the Civic Center Arena in Pittsburgh, opening for Uriah Heep and Manfred Mann in front of an audience of 11,000.

- The 1976 album "2112" was Rush's commercial and artistic breakthrough in the United States. The sci-fi concept record brought the band mainstream attention and became its first million-selling set. It also contained Rush's best-recognized logo: a nude man holding up his hands to ward off a huge star.

- "Moving Pictures," released in 1981, remains Rush's best-selling album in the United States. The Recording Industry Assn. of America has certified it four-times platinum. (In Canada, it is certified for sales of 400,000 copies.) Rush's best-selling title in Canada is the "Rush in Rio" DVD, which the Canadian Recording Industry Assn. has certified eight-times platinum (800,000 copies).

- When Rush was starting out, the band opened for such rock icons as Kiss, Aerosmith, Ted Nugent and ZZ Top.

- In 1981, Rush was the only group to receive platinum certification from the RIAA for three albums in the same year: "2112," live set "All the World's a Stage" and "Moving Pictures." Billboard also named the band the top-grossing act in arenas for the year.

- Rush has sold more than 35 million records worldwide and played more than 500 shows in a dozen countries to 6 million-plus fans.

- Rush has received multiple honors in its Canadian homeland. The honors include the Howard Moon Award from SOCAN, the Toronto Arts Award from the Arts Foundation of Toronto and the Officers of the Order of Canada, which is the equivalent of a British knighthood.

- Rush is fourth in the list of acts with the most consecutive gold albums, at 23, according to the RIAA.

- Rush's two Grammy Award nominations have been for instrumentals: the songs "YYZ" from "Moving Pictures" and "Where's My Thing?" from 1991's "Roll the Bones."

- Beginning with its Counterparts tour in 1996, Rush has toured without an opening act. Called An Evening With Rush, the band's traditional three-hour show spans music from its entire career.

Source: SRO Management

30 YEARS... and still in the LIMELIGHT!

Congratulations.
We wish you continued success and happiness,

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Friends, Fans On What Rush Means To Them

“There are only a handful of artists who have been able to create their own musical universe—combining a signature sound and vision with career longevity and the grass-roots support of truly passionate fans. Rush stands tall among this elite group. “Rush came to Atlantic 15 years after they released their first album—already far more than a lifetime for most bands. And yet they have now spent 15 years, half of their career, with us—an era during which they have made some of the most impressive, and I would predict long-lasting, music of their many years together.

“Three decades on, Geddy, Alex and Neil continue to evolve as musicians and composers, remaining a trio of undiminished musicality and boundless creativity. Atlantic Records is honored and proud to be associated with one of the most exceptional musical outfits in the history of rock.”

Ahmet Ertegun, founder chairman, the Atlantic Group

“Of all the bands I’ve worked with, not only have all four of us become very close friends, I’ve never had the privilege of working with three better individuals in my life. One of the reasons why I stayed in the music business throughout those hard times at the beginning is because of them, and they made life very pleasurable for both me and my family. We’ve all still friends. You can’t say that about very many people after all these years.”

Val Azzoli, former Atlantic Group Co-CEO

“I knew they couldn’t be stopped on that record [“2112”] when [WLS-AM Chicago was] taking calls from listeners. Some kid gets on the phone and goes [adopting a drugged voice], ‘Play “2112,” man, by Rush.’ And this is to a top 40 station. And I’m going, ‘My God, the people are so desperate for it, [since] there’s no airplay to speak of, the people are calling fucking WLS.’ I knew that this was something the fans wanted so bad it couldn’t really be stopped.”

Cliff Burnstein, co-owner of Q-Prime Management

“I never thought we’d see 30 years of Rush still playing and being hugely successful when we were doing this 30 years ago. It’s remarkable. It makes me feel good that I made a good decision to stay with them. I thought they were fabulous. I can remember when I first started working with them, people frowning at me like, ‘What are you, nuts?’ And I always thought Rush just were the cat’s whiskers, right from the beginning.”

Terry Brown, producer

“You continued success can be measured in the way you treat each other and those close to you. I could not be prouder of all of you.”

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

Ray Danniel, manager, SRO Management

“The myth is, if you’re not a bastard then you’re not going to get ahead in broadcasting. It’s not true. The nice guys sometimes do win, and Rush are nice people. I am thrilled beyond words that their career has lasted as long as it has and that they continue to be a group that fans can respect and admire, and I’m talking a second generation of fans now. “Every week I hear, ‘I used to listen to Rush, and now my kids are listening to them.’ It’s a thrill for me to know that I got something started back in 1974 that has not only endured but has made a positive impact on an awful lot of people’s lives.”

Donna Halper, founder of radio consultancy Donna Halper & Associates

“I first heard Rush in 1981-1982, at about the time of ‘Moving Pictures,’ and that pretty much turned my world completely upside down. I became obsessed with them at that point, and Neil Peart became my biggest drum hero. . . . It was Neil’s drumming that immediately struck me, but also it was Geddy’s bass playing, it was top-notch. It was three virtuosos. “Thank you for 30 years of musical inspiration and musical excellence that has inspired us from the beginning to this very day. Love, Mike Portnoy and Dream Theater.”

Mike Portnoy, Dream Theater

“Geddy and Alex and Neil, thank you guys so much for the positive difference you have made in so many lives, for the spirits you have lifted by your collective time together musically. I can’t wait to see the 30th-anniversary tour, and I thank you for these 30 years and the integrity that’s been a continued part of your work. Cheers and love.”

Pierre Robert, DJ, WMMR Philadelphia

“For myself and for Queen’sryche, I’d definitely like to say hats off to Rush for what they’ve done. Their perseverance and their continued efforts to push themselves, challenge the music world—I think it’s a pretty amazing thing. “They’ve been a huge influence on me and many people. I hope there’s more to come, and I hope other people, if their careers take off, carry the Rush philosophy even farther and keep pushing the envelope to inspire every generation to come. Music is important, and 30 years of making music together is a pretty cool thing. Congratulations.”

Scott Rockenfeld, Queen’sryche
We are honored to work with a band as timeless and talented as Rush. For three decades you've combined mystic rhythms with extraordinary strings and insightful lyrics to bring a new sonic chemistry to Rock and Roll. Congratulations on 30 years in the Limelight.
were thrilled to see them back out on the road again," says Arthur Fogel, president of CCE’s touring division, promoter of the bulk of dates on Vapor Trails.

"That’s a great tribute to any act, 30 years down the road," Fogel adds. "And they’ve lasted three decades with credibility intact."

Riley O’Connor, senior VP of House of Blues Canada, has promoted Rush for more than 25 years.

"And over the course of that 25 years, Rush has remained a relevant band of our times, no matter what year they decide to tour," O’Connor points out. "They are one of the most consistent live shows that has ever toured."

Cinquemani notes, "Rush at this point can do business everywhere, but they are icons in Canada."

The current U.S. tour works primarily with CCE, under CCE Touring president Fogel with Toronto-based VP Barrad. According to Barrad, ticket sales are "vibrant." Likewise, O’Connor expects sellouts for his shows in Montreal and Toronto.

Cinquemani adds that Rush manager Ray Danniels of SRO Management is very involved in planning the tours. "The work ethic and professionalism is second to none," Cinquemani says of the Rush camp. "We evaluate every single aspect of where the band is playing, when and what the ticket price is."

Following the North American tour Rush heads to Europe for another 15 shows, beginning Sept. 8-9 at Wembley Arena in London.

The dates are promoted by Kennedy Street, at are U.K. concerts at the MEN Arena in Manchester Sept. 12 and at the NEC Arena in Birmingham Sept. 11 and 15. European dates begin Sept. 17 at Arena Oberhausen in Germany.

Rush is booked in Europe by Neil Warnock at the Agency Group in London. Clearly the Rush audience is an international one, long ago exceeding the borders of Canada and North America, no small source of pride to those of Canadian heritage.

"As a fellow Canadian, I’m very proud to be associated with Rush, who have had such a longstanding global success over so many years," Barrad says.

"Rush’s track record speaks for itself, 30 years deep," Fogel adds. "They are a great live act, always devoted to their fans, a great bunch of people, talented musicians and, of course, my fellow Canadians."

(Tour plans are proceeding despite charges pending in Florida against guitarist Alex Lifeson following a hotel incident on New Year’s Eve. Lifeson faces two counts of battery on a law enforcement officer after a scuffle with Collier County sheriff’s deputies at the Naples Ritz-Carlton. A tentative trial date is set for May 17, according to press reports. Band manager Danniels says, "We’re confident that this will be resolved favorably for Alex.")

NEIL PEART ~ Lyrically challenging one’s heart and soul to see...as if with eyes. "The Professor". Rock ‘N” Roll’s most musical drummer.

GEDDY LEE ~ Passion personified. Commanding your ears to hear...with that unmistakable voice and bass guitar mastery that could only come from Geddy Lee.

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Congratulations on 30 incredible years!

Clair Brothers Audio, Nashville
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30 years and we still get a rush.

Congratulations from your friends at Clear Channel Entertainment, Touring.
Rush
Continued from page 37

"It’s beyond being brothers, it’s beyond being a family, it’s beyond a marriage," Lifeson says of Rush's personal chemistry. "It’s like a whole different kind of relationship that we have. It’s so unique that it really clicked with us. We’ve seen so many other bands disintegrate because of ego problems [and] that sort of thing. That never existed with us."

That is true probably because the members of Rush never wanted to be pop stars. Since its self-titled debut in 1974, the trio’s main goals have been to create its own sound and explore new musical terrain.

After three decades and several notable transformations, Rush's latest studio album, 2002's "Vapor Trails," shows the group still holding to that aesthetic.

"Every time we went into the studio, it was always the feeling that we were pushing the envelope a little bit further," recalls Terry Brown, co-producer of 10 Rush albums. "I always felt that we explored as much of their capability as possible."

Rush will mark the 30th anniversary of its long-standing lineup with an international tour that opens May 26 at the Starwood Amphitheatre outside Nashville. The North Amer-

Geddy, Alex & Neil...

In your own words...

"... More than just survival/More than just a flash/
More than just a dotted line/More than just a dash..."

(Power Windows, "Marathon")

Congratulations on your first three decades of creating rock history.

Jeff Spinks & KSK Koster, Spinks & Koster, Chartered | Accountants

THE WORLD'S YOUR STAGE
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Congrats Alex, Geddy and Neil
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ican leg of the tour will conclude with a hometown show in Toronto Aug. 22 before the band heads to Europe.

Rush's tenacity through the years has resulted in 17 studio albums, five live albums—including "Rush in Rio," released as a CD and DVD late last year—and five archive collections.

The band has received numerous accolades, including recognition from the Recording Industry Assn. of America as the best-selling Canadian band in the United States, for shipments that exceed 25 million copies. Its Canadian achievements include 42 Juno Award nominations, six wins and induction in the Juno Hall of Fame.

HISTORY OF GROWTH

The complexity of Rush's songs led some critics in the '70s and '80s to accuse the band of being pretentious. But the innovation that sustains its career commands deep respect from fellow musicians. For some, the members of Rush have been personal mentors.

Drummer Mike Portnoy of the band Dream Theater recalls, "My nickname in [school] was 'Mike Peartnoy.' Even in my high-school yearbook, it said, 'future plans: to become the next Neil Peart.'"

When Portnoy, Jon Myung and John Petrucci formed Dream Theater while attending Berklee College of Music, their devotion to Rush was a bonding thread.

Rush has godfathered many other acts, progressive (Queensryche, Fates Warning, Tool) and alternative (Primus, Smashing Pumpkins, Soundgarden, No Doubt).

Rush formed in 1968, cutting its teeth primarily on music by British groups, especially Cream, the Who and Led Zeppelin. Rush's first gigs were at youth clubs and teen dances. When it started playing bars, the band stood out because it insisted on playing its original material along with cover tunes.

Now, the students have become the masters, and they advocate continual experimentation, writing intelligent lyrics and striving for lifelong improvement as performers.

The dramatic shifts in Rush's albums chart its growth. Its commercial breakthrough, "2112" (1976), was a sci-fi concept piece. "Permanent Waves" (1980) and "Moving Pictures" (1981) featured shorter arena-rock compositions. "Grace Under Pressure" (1984) began an era where keyboards and other synth elements enhanced Rush's sound. "Roll the Bones" (1991) and "Counterparts" (1993) were contemporary returns to form, with Lifeson's guitar work more at the fore.

"The thing that they're best at is making complexity accessible," veteran music writer J.D. Considine says. "They pack an awful lot into a song and yet still give it a simple, straightforward appeal, which is a very difficult thing to pull off. Only..."
RUSH

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Rush

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a handful of bands have been good [at that]—Van Halen, the Police, Cream, Zeppelin.

And few accomplish what Rush does onstage. A band that built its following with hard touring, Rush is most alive in front of an audience. Its stage productions, while entertaining, never overshadow its performance. The onstage grandeur belies the group’s small size.

"Three guys making that much music is phenomenal," says Pierre Robert, longtime DJ of heritage WMMR Philadelphia. "The sound on the records is very full, but when you see it in concert, it lifts to another level."

Queensrÿche drummer Scott Rockenfeld concurs. "Being a player, I appreciate [that] they can play what they do on a record as a three-piece. They really pull it off well live, which can really be a difficult task with the world we live in of overdubs and putting all sorts of instruments on [a record] that don’t really exist in the band."

Although Rush has considered hiring additional musicians for its live shows through the years, it never does. Instead, the band works with triggers and sequencers.

Lee, who has triple duties onstage, as vocalist, bassist and keyboard player, believes Rush’s audience appreciates this approach. "I think our fans love that there’s nobody else out there," Lee says. "I think they like to look at us as the world’s smallest orchestra. It’s nice to try to live up to that."

CAREER ADVISORS

Putting on a great show isn’t all that Rush can do. Cliff Burnstein, co-owner of artist management company Q Prime, was the executive at Mercury Records who heard Rush’s debut album and helped negotiate the band’s first U.S. record deal in 1974. In his opinion, the threesome offers a lesson in longevity.

"Rush are very uniquely defined musically and in the marketplace," he says. "They wouldn’t have a 30-year career if that weren’t the case. They might have sold more records in a shorter time span, but they wouldn’t be around today and be able to make money on the road like they do and still have a fan base.

"Being original, staying original, not overexposing yourself to the media, not jumping on every trend that comes down—these are the kind of things I think that if you want to have a 30-year career, you should learn from Rush," Burnstein adds.

Rush remains uninterested in such popular branding techniques as launching its own clothing line. The band’s manager, Ray Danniels of SRO Management, says the members don’t enjoy making videos either, even though video collection “Chronicles” hit U.S. platinum.

Its concert videos “Exit…Stage Left,” “A Show of Hands” and “Rush in Rio” have also been successful, especially “Rio.” Documenting the band’s first concerts in Brazil, it debuted at No. 1 last November on the Billboard Top Music Video chart and is certified three-times platinum. It also won the 2004 Juno Award for music video of the year.

Rush also maintains a relaxed attitude toward radio airplay.

"To be honest, we never really cared about radio," Lifeson admits. "We realized it was important and we’re thankful for whatever support that we did get, but we weren’t really a radio kind of band."

Indeed, of the eight songs Rush has charted on The Billboard Hot 100, 1982’s “New World Man” is the band’s only American top 40 hit.

The trio’s radio mainstay is the album rock format, where it has charted 19 top 10 hits. That is where fans hear such classic tunes as "Closer to the Heart," "Fly by Night" and "Dream Machine."
Rush

Continued from page 54

tant Early Warning," along with newer compositions like "Bravado" and "Animate."
WMMR's Robert says an old favorite, 1981's "Tom Sawyer," is still one of the station's biggest Rush requests. "Rush is a unique sound and some would say an acquired taste," Robert observes. "There are fewer stations for a band like Rush to find a home on. Stations that have been around like WMMR has been for 36 years, we're one of them, and I'm proud that we are."
Danniels notes that in the 1970s, the concert circuit fueled Rush's popularity. The growing touring industry spawned more venues, and he took advantage of that development.
Rush performed nearly 200 shows in some years and always included key tastemaker markets. Danniels ignored the Canadian border, reasoning that if Rush had to travel hundreds of miles to a gig, it might as well play in heavily populated U.S. cities.
"I had them touring with anyone and everyone I could get to keep [Rush] out there long enough for something to happen," he recalls.

LOYALTY MEANS LONGEVITY

Longstanding partnerships are another source of support. Anthem (formerly Moon Records), an arm of SRO Management, formed so Rush could find a distribution deal, and it remains the band's home label. In the United States, Rush has been signed to Atlantic Records since the late 80s (and to just one other label, Mercury, before that). Danniels has been the band's primary manager for its entire career, joined in the early years by former partner Vic Wilson. And some members of the road crew have been aboard since Rush was a bar band.
"These guys are incredibly loyal, and they're just men of amazing integrity," Danniels says. "I don't know many other examples of people like that."
Radio consultant Donna Halper has been close with Rush since giving the band its first U.S. airplay, when she was music director of WMMS Cleveland in the '70s. She says the members' dedication was evident from day one. And when the band went on indefinite hiatus in 1997 after Peart lost his daughter and then his wife a year later, she knew Lee and Lifeson would not continue Rush's work without him.
"I know other bands where a member got sick, couldn't play, died, whatever, and within a week the band had a replacement and they were back on the road," she says. "Geddy and Alex said they would not tour without Neil, even if it took [years]. They said, 'No. We'll do solo projects, but there is no Rush without Neil.'"
Rush returned in 2002 with "Vapor Trails." Fans welcomed them back with a No. 6 debut on The Billboard 200.
Lee hopes the band will work on another album next year, but right now, it is focusing on the 30th anniversary tour. According to Danniels, the outing will mark Rush's first concerts in Prague, Italy and several territories that were formerly behind the Iron Curtain.
As the tour approaches, Lee reflects on the start of the band's career in the United States, when it first signed with Mercury. At the time, a 30-year run was unthinkable.
"You think [the deal] is the beginning of something, but you don't know what that means, and you don't know how long it will last," he says.
"I remember the first tour we did—that very first tour with Neil. We would all keep the keys to our hotel rooms from all these various Holiday Inns around the United States, because we thought, 'Well, you may never get to these places again,' and you wanted proof you were there."

Research assistance by Christopher Peary in Marlton, N.J., and Larry LeBlanc in Toronto.
International Fans

Continued from page 42

switched U.S. labels from Mercury (PolyGram) to Atlantic in 1989. European sales have been solid, if not outstanding, ever since.

"Rush is a difficult band to market but has a very loyal fan base," Harregaard says. He notes that European sales during the past 15 years have averaged 250,000 units per album, with "Presto" (1989) leading the way at close to 300,000 units.

"The band's European status is atypical for this type of act—sales find a level and stay there because the fans stay loyal," Harregaard adds.

That support, he says, "creates great opportunities to work the catalog and do something special for the fans, though it must be high quality to reflect the nature of the act."

WMI is considering a new best-of package featuring post-1990 material and is also looking at repackaging the Rush catalog, including upgraded vinyl replicas. That strategy worked well in a recent campaign for Led Zeppelin.

"The focus is very much on celebrating the band's career, but most of the activity is U.S.-led," Harregaard states. "The U.S. has been very much the key market in later years."

INFREQUENT VISITOR
That last comment is of little surprise, given the lack of media support the band receives across the Atlantic. However, another factor is that Rush has only played European dates twice since 1983.

Warnock, a self-confessed fan of the band, is as frustrated as any other follower by its lack of live appearances.

"It's been a long time between drinks," he says with a laugh. "I'd love them to have played every couple of years, but they tour in a way that feels right for them and I respect that."

"Having said that, I do all I can to encourage them to tour and let them know where they can go. For instance, if they wanted to go back to Japan, I'm sure they could do very well."

(The only time the band played shows there was in 1984.)

Warnock, who encouraged Rush's management to book the band's first dates outside of North America in 1977, says the success of its first South American shows in 2002 "proved to them that they had fans down there" and could encourage the trio to play other new venues in future. This year's European tour includes debut appearances in the Czech Republic and Italy.

"The band has always been very particular about production," Warnock notes. "On the early tours they brought everything with them, including the PA and lights. One of the reasons they haven't toured more is the sheer cost of bringing their shows to Europe, because they want to ensure the fans see the same show as in the U.S. and Canada."

"That remains true today, but production elements in Europe have caught up with the U.S., so they don't bring as much gear with them. Even so, it's a very unique production with several hundred tons of equipment."

Judging from the brisk ticket sales for the 30th Anniversary tour—the band's first European dates in 12 years look certain to sell out—fans abroad have been waiting eagerly for Rush's return to the international stage.
Three Players
Continued from page 38

“Hemispheres,” we just felt that we had played that out. We had gone through that whole sword-and-sorcery thing, science-fiction sort of thing, and I think we just felt like we needed to go into kind of a new direction. We needed to shorten the songs a little bit and carry a little more punch.

With the 1980 album “Permanent Waves,” there were still a number of long songs, but there were quite a few shorter songs, and we condensed them more. We were more economical with them, and that sort of set the tone at least for the next 10 years.

What Rush tour or album or song are you particularly proud of?
Lifeson: On the last tour, it was a very emotional thing. I don’t know how many times I looked out at the audience and people were crying. They were so happy that we were there, and I’ll never forget that.

Particularly the first gig that we did in Hartford [Conn.]. There was a high level of anxiety before we went on, and so much stuff was going through our heads, having been out of the picture for so many years and everything that happened to Neil and making the record, how emotional that was, and to be there and see people in the audience crying. I can remember getting choked up a few times during the show.

I think we just left something with our fans that night, and just about every night on that tour, that will last for all of us for the rest of our lives and particularly for them.

Pearl: I am most proud that for 30 years the three of us have remained the best of friends and have always done the best work we could, in the studio or onstage.

“As a band, we have never compromised or accepted any limitations other than our own.”
—NEIL PEART

We are not alike, really, as people. But we are like-minded as musicians, and we share values like pursuing “goodness” in all we do. As a band, we have never compromised or accepted any limitations other than our own.

The three of us have shared the best of times, and the worst, and I feel very fortunate to have spent such a large part of my life working with two such talented, dedicated, funny, big-hearted, supportive, stimulating and entertaining guys. They make me work harder at my job, they make me feel better about my life, and most of all, they make me laugh.

How would you like Rush to be remembered?
Lee: Gee, I don’t know. A band of good players that did some wacky material. Just a band that worked hard at trying to create their own piece of music.

Lifeson: I think the way I saw it in our fans’ eyes, how they remember us, and that was there before we did that [most recent] tour. I’m sure that with so many of our fans, they’ll grow into their 60s and 70s being Rush fans. That’s amazing.

There’s something about a Rush fan that sets them apart from anybody else. It’s really their dedication and their understanding. When I read the mail that Rush fans write generally and the kind of dialogue they have with other Rush fans, it’s very impressive. We have a real thinking audience and really have a lot of respect for them. That’s what it has always been with us. It has always been about the relationship.

Rush’s Top Albums
The Billboard 200

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Debut Date</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Counterparts”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nov. 6, 1993</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Moving Pictures”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>March 7, 1981</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Roll the Bones”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 21, 1991</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Permanent Waves”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb. 2, 1980</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Test for Echo”</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 1996</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>“Grace Under Pressure”</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>May 5, 1984</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>“Exit … Stage Left”</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nov. 14, 1981</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>“Power Windows”</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nov. 9, 1985</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Signals”</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oct. 2, 1982</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>“Hold Your Fire”</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sept. 26, 1987</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compiled by Keith Caulfield

Titles on this chart are ordered by peak position on Billboard 200. If more than one title peaked at the same position, ties were broken by the number of weeks spent at the peak. If ties still remained, they were broken by the number of weeks on the chart, and then in the top ten, and in the top 40, depending on where the title peaked.

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THREE DECADES.
THREE CHEERS.

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Games: As Sales Rise, Edge Must Remain

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

The videogame business is feeling bullish. Gaming executives will gather for E3, the Electronic Entertainment Expo, May 11-14 at the Los Angeles Convention Center, amid promising developments for their industry:

- Videogames for console players, portable players and personal computers continue to expand their reach into traditional music and video retail chains, as well as mass-market and specialty outlets.
- Convergence between music and gaming continues to increase as they draw overlapping audiences.
- Sales of game software are up 7% from 2002, hitting 239 million copies last year.

Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Assn.—whose members represent more than 90% of U.S. game-industry sales—identifies one major challenge ahead.

"The game industry," he says, "needs to keep its innovative edge and continue to advance the art form, despite escalating development costs that put enormous pressure on publishers and developers to stick with what has worked in the past."

The three dominant game companies continue to battle for consumer allegiance. They are Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) with its PlayStation 2 (PS2), Microsoft with XBox and Nintendo of America (NOA) with its GameCube (GC) and portable Game Boy Advance (GBA).

The result is creative product development and marketing. "Innovation is the key to driving this industry toward new levels of creativity as we head into the next phase in hardware and software development," SCEA executive VP Andrew House says.

SALES PRETTY STEADY

Game-industry retail sales and rentals totaled $11.9 billion in 2003, down 4% from the previous year. Combined console and portable hardware, software and accessories topped $12.2 billion, according to the NPD Group, which tracks point-of-sale data for the industry.

The decline also reflects a 1% drop (to $719 million) in game-rental revenue compared with 2002, according to (Continued on page 60)

Whether for consoles, portables or PCs, innovation and artistry are essential to keep the game business winning.

Music, Videogames Continue To Merge

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

Music and gaming continue to converge, given the common audience drawn to these areas of entertainment. An increasing number of veteran acts and new artists and songwriters are creating original music or licensing existing songs for games. Music publishers are actively promoting their catalogs to game developers.

GAMING BOOSTS SALES

Game manufacturers have confirmed numerous music deals for their 2004 releases. They are creating these ventures with good reason: Research by Electronic Arts shows a clear link between an artist having a musical presence on videogames and sales of their CDs.

The Def Jam label and EA reteamed for "Def Jam Vendetta II," which will be released in autumn for the PlayStation 2, Game Cube and Xbox platforms.

The first "Def Jam Vendetta" videogame, released only for PS2 and GC, sold more than 1 million units worldwide, according to the manufacturer. The game featured a wealth of music tracks from hip-hop artists.

"-Def Jam Vendetta II" will have tracks from more than 35 artists. They include Busta Rhymes, Carmen Electra, Lil Kim, Snoop Dogg, Method Man, Redman and Ludacris.

"This partnership with EA gave us the opportunity to create multi-tiered campaigns for our artists, introducing them to a new audience," says Kevin Liles, president/CEO of Def Jam.

To underscore EAs commitment to the music industry, in 2002 the company created a dedicated music and marketing department under Steve Schrapp, worldwide executive for music (see The Last Word, page 86).

In March, EA released two titles with noteworthy music content, "MVP Baseball 2004," for all console platforms and PC, features 13 tracks from such up-and-coming rock acts as Stellastarr and the Von Bondies. "Battlefield: Vietnam," a PC game, features 16 songs from such acts as Jefferson Airplane, the Kinks and Deep Purple.

Ubisoft, another leading game developer, commissioned Real World's Peter Gabriel to write and perform an original song for long awaited "Myst 4," and award-winning composer Jack Wall wrote an original score for the release.

The PS2 version of the Sony game "MLB 2005" includes 28 songs licensed from such acts as Jane's Addiction, Nickelback, Black Eyed Peas and Bootsy Collins.

TOUR SPONSORS

Last year, Sony sponsored seven music tours in such varied musical genres as electronic, metal, hip-hop and alternative. The events brought the PS2 experience to more than 1 million people across the country.

Konami in June will release "Karaoke Revolution Vol. 2," designed to turn a PS2 console into a karaoke machine, with 35 licensed songs. Konami's "DDR (Dance Dance Revolution) Extreme" will ship in fall for PS2, showcasing more than 100 minutes of licensed and original dance music.

Nintendo of America made its first (Continued on page 78)
The Sad Truth Behind HMV's Decision To Quit U.S. Market

HMV has finally admitted something the entire industry could see four years ago: It is pulling out of the U.S. market.

The chain issued a press release April 29 stating it would close its three remaining U.S. stores by year's end. I guess that "year's end" bit applies to the Fifth Avenue store in Manhattan. Sources say the other two stores—located in New York's Harlem and Southpark, Ohio—are holding going-out-of-business sales and likely will close by mid-May.

It has been a long time since HMV was a factor in the U.S. marketplace. The sad thing is that the company could have been a contender.

I remember when the chain dropped anchor in the States; it certainly talked like it was going to make a difference.

A longtime New York-based distribution executive recalls HMV's U.S. launch in November 1996. "At the time, they really came into town to quell the States because the chain never altered its look or operating model, and it underwent too many personnel changes.

Another longtime distribution executive agrees on HMV's bravado. When the chain came to the States, it had the attitude that it was going to be "the biggest" in retailing. He says, "They were going to do it their way."

He recalls Peter Luckhurst, who assumed leadership of HMV North America from Tony Hirsch, assembling a staff that tried to turn the chain around, allowing it to get a foothold in the States.

I agree that Luckhurst assembled a fine staff that improved the stores, operations and marketing. But no one who ran the show, the company never understood the U.S. real estate market.

That's why its first two U.S. locations closed several years ago. They never turned a profit, despite being among the country's highest-volume music specialty stores, each generating upwards of $20 million per year.

Whatever Luckhurst learned about real estate from the disastrous debut of HMV's first two stores, it was not enough to matter in the end.

The chain conceded as much in its recent press release. HMV said it is exiting the U.S. market "because of our high occupancy costs, which made our store portfolio loss-making."

Another factor in HMV's departure: Labels forgot that the best way to conduct a healthy business is to ensure a solid account base.

HMV is not the first music specialty retailer to diversify from the U.S. market. Remember W.H. Smith, Blockbuster, Tony Alvarez, Harmony House, Record Express and Manifest Discs & Tapes? They all got out while the going was good.

That brings us to the final reason for HMV's U.S. failure. The surviving music specialty retailers saw labels abandoning them and realized they had to diversify beyond music. That was something HMV resisted doing—until it was too late.

Games

Continued from page 59

HVE/Rentnik, which tracks retail transactions for the Video Software Dealers Assn.

However, game-software sales rose to a record $7 billion, a 1.5% increase compared with 2002.

First-quarter 2004 sales at retail for the combined video, portable and computer game industry topped $2.1 billion, about 4.4% below January-March 2003 figures of $2.2 billion, according to the NPD Group. Software alone saw 45.7 million copies sold, down less than 1%, with retail dollars surpassing $1.3 billion, a 1.8% decline.

Lacking blockbuster titles, portable and PC games had lower numbers.

"The sales results for the first quarter exemplify the next-generation console's coming of age," NPD senior games analyst Richard Ow notes.

Sony leads the three dominant game companies. Its PS2 is the most prevalent system in U.S. homes given its one-year-plus intro-

duction jump. U.S. unit sales of PS2 consoles recently passed 25 million, according to House.

But Microsoft's Xbox and Nintendo's GC are seeking to close the gap with price cuts on players and creative software development and marketing.

Microsoft announced in March a $30 price cut on Xbox, which now retails for $149.99.

"At a lower mass-market price point, we're opening up our system to an even broader audience," says Mitch Koch, corporate VP of Microsoft worldwide retail sales.

NPD is also taking steps to increase the number of GC and GBA players.

The company dropped the GC price 33% to $99.99 before the 2003 holiday season. It also introduced the GBA SP, priced at $99.99, as a step up from the less expensive GBA. The GBA SP has sold approximately 6.5 million units in North America since its introduction in March 2003.
Fitness Titles: DVD Finally Overtakes VHS

BY JILL KIPNIS

LOS ANGELES—VHS consumers may want to stock up on the latest fitness titles now.

Some video distributors predict that fitness videos will no longer be sold on the VHS format after next winter. Others say they will drastically cut back their VHS offerings.

“The first quarter of next year will be the last of VHS sales for the fitness category,” says Dan Gurlitz, VP of video for Koch Entertainment Distribution (RED).

Alan Ferguson, Sony Wonder VP of sales and distribution, believes that 80% of fitness video sales will be on DVD by next winter.

Though executives in the fitness video business might not agree on an exact time line for VHS’ demise, they do agree that demand for VHS fitness tapes is dying fast.

“Last year, my VHS business was 70%. This year, it is 50%,” says Bill Sondheim, president of GoodTimes Home Entertainment. “We have noticed a particular shift over the last four months since the holiday season.”

Indeed, according to Nielsen VideoScan, DVD represented 51% of sales for the top 30 fitness titles by mid-March. Nielsen VideoScan also reports that overall DVD sales have eclipsed those of VHS for fitness titles.

The number of copies sold for individual VHS and DVD titles remains similar, however.

GoodTimes’ Billy Blanks title “Tae-Bo Cardio” sold 33,300 VHS copies and 20,200 DVD copies through mid-March, according to Nielsen VideoScan. Anchor Bay Home Entertainment’s “Plates for Dummies” moved 21,400 VHS copies and 17,000 DVD copies during that same period.

WHY SWITCH NOW?

Fitness, along with kids’ titles, is one of the last genres to appeal to consumers on DVD (Billboard, March 20).

With VCRs present in more than 90% of U.S. households, according to the Consumer Electronics Assn., retailers continue to stock fitness titles on tape.

“Consumers are still interested in fitness on VHS, and it continues to do quite well for us,” says Stefan Pepe, DVD/video store group merchandising manager for Seattle-based amazon.com.

DVD players are becoming more affordable, accelerating consumers’ conversion to the format, according to distributors.

With DVD players retailing for as low as $30, “we are really seeing the switch to DVD [software] for this category,” says Lee Eiland, brand manager of home video marketing, for Lions Gate Home Entertainment.

Nonetheless, many people retain VCRs for exercise rooms, Pepe says.

“Fitness has lagged behind other categories because people have put the DVD in the den and kept the VCR in the bedroom or where they exercise,” Eiland says. “But DVD players are starting to replace those VCRs.”

Gurlitz is not sure he believes this theory. The reason for consumers’ reluctance to buy fitness on DVD is “the big wild-card question that I’ve been wrestling with for two years,” he says.

“I have also heard theories that the female buyer, which is probably the heavier buyer for fitness, was slower to migrate to [retail] DVD,” Gurlitz continues. “The cinematic experience of a fitness tape is also less pertinent. People may be less concerned with the quality of a fitness tape.”

The set will contain a preview of “Episode III-The Return of Darth Vader,” with more interviews from Lucas and a close look at the new Vader costume.

Additionally, the set will preview the “Star Wars: Episode III” videogame, available in spring 2005 for PlayStation 2 and Xbox consoles.

DEF FILMMAKERS ON DVD: The last frontier for urban media is film, says Will Griffin, president/COO of Simmons Latham Media Group (SLMG).

“Our company is now on a mission to bring urban film to the level of urban music and fashion,” he says.


Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons and TV producer Stan Lathan co-founded SLMG with Griffin. The company will support the project, “Paul McCartney: The Music and Animation Collection” (April 13, $29.99), from Buena Vista.

The DVD includes three animated sales books, written and produced with director Geoff Dunbar during the past 20 years. Extras include an interview with McCartney and making-of segments.

“Rupert and the Frog Song,” inspired by U.K. comic strip character Rupert the Bear, received the British Academy Award for best animated short film in 1984. It features the song “We All Stand Together,” which has never been commercially released in the United States.

The title song from “Tropic Island Hum,” about a squirrel that is a one-legged frog rescue from hunters, and the orchestral suite from “Tuesday,” based on the book by David Wiessner, also debut with this collection.

Each film uses hand-drawn animation, a process that Dunbar calls “more expressive” than modern computer animation.

“When you look at this collection, it shows the work of many people working for many months to create a look that is not readily available today,” he says.

Warner Home Video (WHV) and Lifetime Entertainment Services have signed an exclusive home entertainment distribution deal.

The multiyear agreement covers home video distribution for Lifetime’s catalog of original movies, as well as future original movies and select specials and series Lifetime develops or acquires.

Christine Martinez, WHV VP of nontheatrical franchise marketing, says Lifetime’s female-oriented programming will fill a void in WHV’s lineup of brands, which include male-oriented programs from the NBA and NHL, as well as the children’s brand Leapfrog.

“It makes sense to leverage properties from the industry leader in women’s programming,” the notes. “Of the last couple of years, there has been a transition where the female is now becoming more in charge of the DVD purchases.”

The first titles distributed under the agreement will include Lifetime original movies “Homeless to Harvard” and “Obsessed.” Release dates have yet to be announced, though Lifetime senior VP of brand extensions Todd Unger says they are expected by year’s end.

Unger believes that demand for TV product on DVD will translate into interest for TV movies.

“Lifetime viewers are requesting that [these movies] be available on DVD,” he says. “We are optimistic that these titles can do very well.”

PACKED ‘STAR WARS’: Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment’s four-disc “Star Wars Trilogy” DVD set ($69.98, Sept. 21)—expected to be a fourth-quarter best-seller (Billboard, May 8)—will include four hours of extra features.

The set’s fourth disc will contain the documentary “Empire of Dreams: The Story of the Star Wars Trilogy.”

Clocking in at 2 hours, it features new interviews with “Star Wars” creators George Lucas and more than 40 members of the cast and crew from episodes IV through VI, as well as behind-the-scenes footage.

Other documentary features include “The Birth of the Lightsaber,” “The Characters of Star Wars” and “The Force Is With Them: The Legacy of Star Wars.”

The set will contain a preview of “Episode III—The Return of Darth Vader,” with more interviews from Lucas and a close look at the new Vader costume.

Additionally, the set will preview the “Star Wars: Episode III” videogame, available in spring 2005 for PlayStation 2 and Xbox consoles.

ANIMATED MCCARTNEY: Three original Paul McCartney songs make their U.S. debut on his new DVD title with screenings in 10 cities May 3-19.

SLMG has also purchased sponsorships of hip-hop movie shows in 13 markets and will work with allhiphop.com for online promotions.

SLMG plans to release at least a dozen DVD projects per year, primarily feature films and documentaries.

*Billboard* May 15, 2004
Eurovision 2004 Sets Record

BY FRED BRONSON

ISTANBUL, Turkey—The world knows that Europe expanded May 1. But May 12, it is going to get even bigger.

Just 11 days after the European Union brought 10 new member states into the fold, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) will welcome a record 36 nations to its 49th annual Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) in Istanbul.

Last year's contest involved 26 countries in an event that attracted 100 million viewers through the EBU.

Only 20 of the 25 EU members will take part in this year's ESC. EBU members provide the other 16 participants, including such non-EU countries as Russia, Norway and Turkey. First-time entrants for 2004 include Albania, Belarus and Serbia-Montenegro.

Public and music industry perception of the contest varies wildly from nation to nation. But most never participants see it as vital international exposure for their country and its artists.

Ukraine, an ESC newcomer in 2003, returns this year with the strongly tipped "Wild Dances" by Ruslana. Vasyl Yablonski is a member of Ukraine's ESC delegation and senior account manager for CFC Consulting, which helped organize the Ukrainian national Eurovision heats. He believes a top five finish for "Wild Dances" would strongly impact his country.

"This would mean recognition of Ukrainian music on a European level, which has never happened before," Yablonski says. "With Ukraine aspiring to enter the European political, economic and cultural community, this contest is of vital importance."

MIXED OPINIONS

A new format debuts with ESC 2004, as 22 countries compete in the May 12 semifinal round for 10 places. The chosen 10 will join 14 pre-qualified countries in the May 15 final.

The pre-qualified finalists are last year's 10 highest-scoring countries, plus the "big four": the United Kingdom, Spain, France and Germany. The big four are always included because they contribute the largest share of the ESC budget.

Yablonski says the Ukraine public is "very enthusiastic" about ESC. But with so many involved countries, there are almost as many views of the contest.

"The U.K. music industry doesn't take Eurovision seriously and hasn't for many years," says music publisher Mike Connaris, managing director of London-based Macso Music Production.

The U.K.'s last-place finish in 2003 led its music industry to call for a worthier entry this year. Vocalist James Fox emerged from the televised national finals in March with this year's U.K. entry, "Hold On to Our Love." "U.K. winners from the '60s and '70s like 'Puppet on a String' [performed by Sandie Shaw] and 'Save Your Kisses for Me' [Brotherhood of Man] are synonymous with Eurovision in [the industry's] eyes," Connaris says. "Those weren't cool, even though they were great successes. It's hard for the U.K. industry to believe something 'cool' can win Eurovision.

Connaris composed this year's Cyprus entry, "Stronger Every Minute" by Lias Andreas. He suggests that the British public is gaining to warming to ESC, though, thanks to "improvements in song quality, song production and stage presentation."

The mixed U.K. views are a marked contrast to the outlook in Sweden. The annual heats for its national entry cover six "Melodifestival" telecasts, and more than a dozen songs from this year's show have appeared on the Swedish chart. "Creative input from Swedish TV" (Continued on page 66)

The whole world is embracing Michael Bublé. His albums are selling in the Far East, Europe, South Africa and Australia.

Bublé Swings, Hits Int'l Market

Roadwork Pays Off For Warner Artist

BY LARRY LeBLANC

TORONTO—Canadian crooner Michael Bublé is intent on becoming a worldwide phenomenon through an aggressive global marketing campaign.

"We broke Michael internationally before he had a store in America," says Steve Margo, senior VP of international operations at Warner Bros. Records in Los Angeles. "He is now competing with some of the biggest pop acts in the world."

Bublé's self-titled debut album arrived in most markets in February 2003 on 143 Records/Reprise. It has shipped 2.3 million copies worldwide, according to Margo.

The singer has yet to break to the same degree in the United States, where his album has shipped 760,000 copies. But his Vancouver-based manager, Bruce Allen, won't be satisfied until he captures the American market. "I want to get to 1 million units," he says.

143 Records founder and chairman David Foster, who discovered and produced Bublé, disagrees. "I'm thrilled with the 700,000 unit figure. In a declining marketplace, with an out-of-the-box project, any record company would be pleased with even 200,000 units."

SHOWCASE CAMPAIGN

In fact, Warner's early expectation was that Bublé's album would sell 5,000 to 100,000 units worldwide.

To bolster the album in the States, Bublé kicked off a two-week U.S. tour May 1. Then he is off to Europe in late May for concerts and promotion in Italy and Spain.

(Continued on page 66)
### Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>&quot;Yeah! I'm Mad Only In the Other Room&quot;</td>
<td>Drake ft. Lil Wayne</td>
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<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>&quot;Sorcerer&quot;</td>
<td>Black Eyed Peas</td>
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<td>#3</td>
<td>&quot;Back to Black&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Feel&quot;</td>
<td>The Weeknd</td>
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<td>&quot;Take Me to Church&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;To Whose It Says To Me&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Left Outside Alone&quot;</td>
<td>Beppe Grillo</td>
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<td>&quot;Guardiarmi Nell'Occhio&quot;</td>
<td>Gruppo di Prodotto</td>
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<td>&quot;Turn Me On&quot;</td>
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<td>C. A. Paya</td>
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<td>&quot;All the Things She Said&quot;</td>
<td>The Police</td>
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<td>&quot;I Want It All&quot;</td>
<td>Guns N' Roses</td>
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<td>#4</td>
<td>&quot;La Mente Del Monstruo&quot;</td>
<td>Óscar lvarez</td>
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<td>&quot;La Chispa De Luna&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Left Out of My Life&quot;</td>
<td>Blue October</td>
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<td>&quot;The Search&quot;</td>
<td>Parkway Drive</td>
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<td>&quot;The Sun&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Tell Me&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;F**k It (I Don't Want You Back)&quot;</td>
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<td>#2</td>
<td>&quot;Yeah! I'm Mad Only In the Other Room&quot;</td>
<td>Drake ft. Lil Wayne</td>
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**Hits of the World is compiled by Billboard/London.**
Aussie Government May Review Rights Cap

BY CHRISTIE ELIZER

SYDNEY—Australian labels are stepping up their efforts to get higher performing-rights payments from commercial radio stations Down Under.

The Australian Record Industry Assn. has been talking with the Australian government's Department of Communication, Information, Technology and the Arts about raising the fees commercials pay for performing-right in sound recordings.

ARIA wants the government to review the 1968 Copyright Act, which capped such fees.

Since then, the performing-right rates have been set at 0.4% of 1% of advertising revenue. In other developed markets, the figure varies from 2% to 4% of advertising revenue, according to ARIA.

"No other copyright legislation in the world has such a cap," ARIA CEO Stephen Peach says. "Nor is there a cap that applies to anything in Australia other than recordings alone.

ARIA estimates commercial radio pays between $2.5 million Australian ($1.8 million) and $2.8 million Australian ($2 million) annually to ARIA's licensing arm, the Phonographic Performance Co. of Australia. Labels would like to see that figure raised to $16 million Australian ($11.5 million) annually.

The Australian government introduced the performing right in sound recordings in 1968 without consulting the record industry. The radio industry convinced legislators that a fee cap was necessary for its economic survival.

Public broadcaster ABC has its own licensing agreement, which differs from the commercial sector's.

ARIA insists that commercial radio's development since 1968 has radically changed the industry landscape. "Whatever special circumstances existed then don't [exist] now," Peach says.

Label executives point to the large amounts of cash commercial operators pay to obtain Australian licenses as proof that the radio industry is thriving. U.K.-owned EMG Radio alone has spent $481 million Australian ($351 million) on licenses since 2001. Additionally, Australian radio's metropolis advertising revenue rose to $118.4 million Australian ($86.4 million) in first-quarter 2004, up 16.3% from the same period in 2003, according to financial services company PricewaterhouseCoopers.

HELEN TANDER

MIXED RECEPTION

This is ARIA's third effort since 1994 to boost the fee cap.

"The government has now delivered a concerted push yet," Peach says, adding that the government is "receptive" to ARIA's argument that the cap is unfair to artists and labels.

"The less receptive is Commercial Radio Australia (CRA), which represents 260 of the country's 263 commercial radio stations.

"You simply cannot compare the impact of different regulatory regimes in different territories," CRA CEO Joan Warner says. "We doubt the government will be fooled. [They will] see there is no reason to have a review, much less to lift the cap."

"What really annoys the radio industry is that record companies continually discount the huge impact radio has on CD purchases," she adds. "They get billions of dollars of free air time, and yet they spend very little of their promotional money on radio."

Label marketing sources claim radio gets 9% of the record industry's annual advertising spend.

Kalnins, director of the state-funded Latvian Institute.

Kalnins was Latvia's ambassador to the United States between 1993 and 2000, and he is also a songwriter. The Latvian Institute provides the global community information about Latvian culture and history.

Latvia first entered Eurovision in 2000, and "when our top band, Brainstorm, took third place, we were hooked," Kalnins says. "It provided a big boost to the Latvian pop music industry. Suddenly everyone wanted to be in it."

Latvia won the 2002 contest with "I Wanna" by Marie N. "The only thing that surpassed winning was hosting the contest in Riga in 2003," Kalnins says.

Winning and hosting Eurovision raised Latvia's visibility in Europe, according to Kalnins. He believes that "in a small way" Latvia's candidates for NATO and the EU. The country joined both these organizations.

"This year we also qualified for the [UEFA Euro 2004] football championships in Portugal," Kalnins says. "What could be more European than being in NATO, the EU, the football championships and Eurovision?"

Kalnins has made [ESC] a big TV happening here in the last few years," says Gazeil Records chairman Dag Hagedaev, chair of Sweden's International Federation of the Phonographic Industry affiliate.

The large number of hit singles from Melodyfestival means "[ESC] is now getting big attention from local record companies and publishers," Hagedaev says.

Presenter Jostein Pedersen handles the Norwegian ESC broadcast on domestic channel NRK. He says the Norwegian public shares Sweden's enthusiasm for Eurovision.

"In Sweden," he says, "the competition aspect is emphasized, and the [public] is not pleased with a top 10 placing, which in Norway is regarded as almost as good as victory. But the Norwegian record business doesn't believe in ESC."

LATVIAN EXPERIENCE

Winning the contest definitely matters to a competing country, says Ojars Kalnins, director of the state-funded Latvian Institute.

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Cox Cops Fourth Straight SESAC Award

BY JIM BESSMAN

NEW YORK—Bryan-Michael Cox made it four in a row at SESAC’s eighth annual New York Music Awards, held here May 6 at Studio 450. Cox, the R&B songwriter who has current chart hits with Usher, Jagged Edge and Monica, nailed his fourth straight songwriter of the year trophy. Fittingly, Cox’s publishing affiliates—Babyboy’s Little Publishing, Noontime South and W.B.M. Music—were named SESAC’s 2003 publishers of the year.

Song of the year went to “Headstrong,” the multi-format hit from Trapt’s self-titled debut album. It was written by the band’s Chris Brown, Simon Ormandy and Peter Charell. Cox and the members of Trapt were among more than 60 award recipients in pop, R&B, rock, gospel and adult contemporary. More than 250 songwriters, publishers and industry professionals attended the high-tech, video-based presentation.

Following is the full list of award recipients, by genre:

POp

“With You,” by Billy Mann. Published by Turtle Victory and Sony/ATV Sounds.


Rock

“Headstrong,” by Chris Brown, Simon Ormandy and Peter Charell. Published by W.B.M.


“In This Diary,” by Kris Roe. Published by End Is Forever Music.

“The Saddest Song,” by Kris Roe. Published by End Is Forever Music.

“What It Is To Burn,” by Nate Barcalow, Alex Pappas, Alex Linares, Randy Strohmeyer and Derek Doherty. Published by Show Me Con science Music, Ice Me Music. I’m Not Dis appointed Had No Expectations Music, R2K Music and Shout’s a Strapping Young Lad Music.


R&B/HIP-HOP

“Put That Woman First,” by Balance Muhammed. Published by Jajque Joints and Universal-PolyGram International Tunes.


“Fabulous,” by Balance Muhammed. Published by Jajque Joints and Universal-PolyGram International Tunes.

“4 Eva,” by Balance Muhammed. Published by Jajque Joints and Universal-PolyGram International Tunes.


“Roll With M.V.P.,” by Maximino Perez. Published by Right One Music.

“Pass the Dutty,” by Errol W. McCalla Jr. Published by E.W.M. Publishing and Foray Music.

“My Baby,” by Shad Gregory Moss. Published by Shago Music.


“Family Affair,” by Bruce Miller. Published by CWAB and Universal Tunes.

“Dirty,” by Bale’wa Muhammed. Published by Jajque Joints and Universal-PolyGram International Tunes.

Boy Meets Duck On Cartoon Network

It seems only fitting for Brian Wilson to become a cartoon character. Sure enough, an animated representation of the legendary Beach Boy will star in a mid-summer episode of the Cartoon Network’s hit series “Duck Dodgers.” Sensing a need, Spirit Music president Mark Fried, who administers Wilson’s New Executive Music (BMI) publishing, joined forces with Warner Brothers Film Music exec. Suzi Civita to find a high-profile toon project to feature his esteemed client’s music and likeness. The pair approached the “Duck Dodgers” directors, who turned out to be huge Wilson fans desirous of creating an episode around him.

Written within weeks was a script featuring Wilson playing himself as a spiritual adviser to Dodgers. “He said that reading his lines and getting into his role was the best time he had in years,” Fried says.

So energized was Wilson, in fact, that he wrote and produced a new song, “Believe in Yourself,” which will be featured several times in the episode.

Fried adds that Wilson is in the midst of a particularly prolific period. Earlier this year, he debuted a symphonic version of the classic Beach Boys’ “Smile” album sessions to sell-out crowds in England. He releases “Gettin’ in Over My Head”—his first CD of new material in six years—June 22, a month after receiving BMI’s prestigious Icon Award at the society’s annual Pop Awards dinner.

DENVER’S ART AND SOUL: Cherry Lane Music has issued “Poems, Prayers and Promises: The Art and Soul of John Denver.”

The book features 23 of the late singer-songwriter’s best-loved songs, including “Leaving on a Jet Plane,” “Rocky Mountain High” and “Sunshine on My Shoulders,” all arranged in varied notation formats with complete lyrics.

An accompanying CD contains previously unreleased versions of “Calypso,” “Mother Nature’s Son” and “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” which were taped at an acoustic performance by Denver in 1987.

The songbook and CD also showcase Denver’s never-before-published nature and travel photography, concert memorabilia and comments from people who knew him, including Cherry Lane founder Milton Okun (Denver’s original publisher and producer), Olivia Newton-John and fellow folk singer/songwriter Tom Paxton.

The $19.95 title is the second release in Cherry Lane’s Art and Soul series, following “Time and Love: The Art and Soul of Laura Nyro,” who was another Okun discovery.

“Both books in this series have been real labors of love, and we hope John and Laura’s devotees will come to regard our folios as more than just songbooks,” Cherry Lane president Peter Primont says.

AMERICAN SONGWRITER’S SALE: A Mobile, Ala.-based investment group has purchased American Songwriter magazine.

According to new associate publisher Robert Clement, the Nashville-based publication will stay bimonthly while undergoing cosmetic changes.

“The July/August issue marks the magazine’s 50th anniversary and will incorporate a graphic redesign, heightened editorial diversification and expanded newstand distribution,” Clement says. Former publisher Jim Sharp will become a print media consultant while participating at songwriter events around the country.

FAMOUS STRIKES MIDNIGHT: Songwriter/producer Charlie Midnight has signed an exclusive worldwide publishing deal with Famous Music Publishing.

Midnight’s varied credits in film, TV and recordings include James Brown’s Grammy Award-winning “Living in America” and most recently Hilary Duff’s hit “So Yesterday.” His songs have also been cut by Billy Joel, Christina Aguilera, Joni Mitchell, Seal and Britney Spears. Additionally, Midnight’s work has appeared in such films and soundtracks as “The Bodyguard” and “Rocky IV.”

For years we’ve gotten requests for a Steve Miller songbook, because he has written so many great guitar-driven tunes,” the company’s VP of pop and standard publications Jeff Schrodel says. “We worked directly with Steve on the transcriptions, so players can be sure they are absolutely accurate.”

A MILLER FIRST: Music print publisher Hal Leonard Corp. this month issues the first Steve Miller songbook, “Young Hearts: Complete Greatest Hits.” Part of the company’s popular Guitar Recorded Versions series, the $19.95 title offers guitarists note-for-note transcriptions with tablature for 22 top Miller tunes including “Abracadabra” and “The Joker.”

Miller, incidentally, hails from Milwaukee—also home of Hal Leonard.
BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

NEW YORK—To see and hear the documentary film "Tom Dowd and the Language of Music" is to experi-
ence the history of American music.

Perhaps more than anyone else, Dowd, who died Oct. 27, 2002, at age 77, is responsible for the rec-
cordings that define 20th-century America. From Manhattan to Mem-
phis to MM, Muscle Shoals and Miami, Dowd recorded and pro-
duced a staggering catalog of R&B, jazz, pop and rock.

The documentary, produced by Ahmet Ertegun, is due out Aug. 24 on DVD on the heels of a lim-
ited theatrical run.

Director Mark Moorman enjoyed ample participation from Dowd, along with current and former Atlantic Records executives Ahmet Ertegun, Jerry Wexler and Arif Mardin.

But it is the music and those who made it that animate this tribute to an extraordinary man.

Participants include Eric Clapton, Ray Charles, Les Paul and members of the Allman Brothers Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

"Tom Dowd and the Language of Music" features the producer/engineer in familiar settings, including the Atlantic Records office/studio at 234 W. 56th St. in Manhattan, where jazz and R&B legends recorded seminal works after office hours.

Dowd also recounts his involvement with the Manhattan Project while he was studying physics at Columbia University.

The discussion, and in particular the accompanying historical footage of atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll, is chilling. Nonetheless, the Manhattan Project and its aftermath are as defining a component of Dowd’s era as his subsequent work.

Among the most moving moments of the film are studio and stage footage of Booker T. & the MGs, the racially integrated house band of Memphis’ Stax Records.

Atlantic had formed an alliance with Stax to produce and distribute the hit-
er’s prodigious output. Along with his leadership at many Stax sessions, Dowd’s technical prowess greatly improved Stax’s recordings.

In the film, the humble Dowd explains the state of recording tech-
ology at the outset of his career.

"At that time," he recalls, "it was a different art form with regard to the musician, the concept of recording and the limitations of the equipment that you had to capture the performance with.”

Despite those limitations, Dowd made recordings that decades later are still revered. Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Charles Mingus and Aretha Franklin are a few of the artists within his storied discography.

Toward the end of his career, Dowd embraced the latest technology. In the film, he notes the transformation in recording brought by the digital audio workstation. At Miami’s Criteria Stu-
dios, Dowd worked with contemporary artists and technology well into his eighth decade.

It was there that Dowd recorded Derek & the Dominos’ "Layla," starring Duane Allman.

Giving a rare peek into the creative process, the film shows Dowd playing individual tracks from "Layla," revealing Clapton and Allman’s climactic duet unadorned by the rhythm section and percussion overdubs. As he moves faders on the console, it is clear that time did not diminish Dowd’s enthusiasm.
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Continued from page 59

significant foray into music licensing with the holiday release of "1080: Avalanche." The GameCube title features Wind-up Records acts Cauterize, Finger Eleven, BoySetsFire and Seether contributing songs.

"We'll continue to look at game properties that lend themselves to adding music by popular bands," says Perrin Kaplan, VP of marketing for Nintendo.

Nintendo also has teamed with Evanescence, a top act on the Wind-Up roster, to create the Nintendo Fusion tour. It is set to play for a total of 90,000 fans in small venues in 25 markets.

Microsoft and Xbox are heavily committed to the music industry, according to Microsoft marketing director Bill Nielsen.

"From the start we had N*E*R*D tracks on the first 'NFL Fever' to launch Xbox, as well as build-in 5.1 Dolby (surround sound) any music sounds great. Many artists are big fans, and we have consoles on over 100 tour buses," he says.
D12 Rules With ‘World’

For this week anyway, the new D12 album is appropriately titled. With Eminem and company leading five-week chart champion Usher by more than a 2-to-1 margin, we are indeed living in a “D12 World.”

The new D12 bows with 544,500 copies sold, making it a cinch for No. 1 on The Billboard 200 and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, despite Usher’s “Confessions” winning the big chart’s Greatest Gainer prize.

While shy of the 1 million-plus frame that began Usher’s reign, it is the largest sales frame for a rap title since February 2003, when 50 Cent’s “Get Rich or Die Tryin’” rang 822,000 in its second chart week.

Of course, D12’s project smelled successful from the onset. When the album version of lead track “My Band” jumped to No. 1 on Hot Digital Tracks six weeks ago, that frame’s 16,500 downloads was the largest one-week sum of any title in that chart’s young history (Singles Minded, Billboard, April 10).

In that same week, the “salsa mix” of “My Band” registered almost 4,000 transactions, making it the first song to total more than 20,000 paid downloads in one week since Nielsen SoundScan began tracking the category in the middle of last year.

The group’s pedigree was already proven when its first album led The Billboard 200 for two weeks, with an opener of 372,000 copies.

Lynn’s ‘Rose’ Blooms Big

She was a 25-year-old Kentucky woman when she made her debut on a billboard chart. The date was June 13, 1960, and Loreta Lynn’s “Honky Tonk Girl” was a new entry on the country singles chart. Now it’s 43 years and 11 months later, and as one of country music’s most honored veterans, Lynn rewrites her chart career with her highest-ranking album of all time on The Billboard 200.

“Van Lear Rose” (Interscope), produced by Jack White of the White Stripes, bows at No. 24. Just considering Lynn’s solo albums, her highest position until this issue was the No. 80 peak of her second chart entry, “Don’t Come Home a Drunkin’,” in 1967. Four years later, an LP of duets with Conway Twitty, “We Only Make Believe,” went to No. 78.

Lynn’s most recent album to chart was “Honky Tonk Angels,” recorded with Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette. That CD peaked at No. 42 in 1995.

Lynn made her debut on The Billboard 200 in March 1967 with “You Ain’t Woman Enough.” Her country album chart career started three years earlier with the January 1964 debut of “Loretta Lynn Sings.”

She has had No. 1 albums on the country tally. Her most recent album to appear on the list was “Still Country,” which reached No. 37 in 2000. “Van Lear Rose” impressively opens at No. 2 on Top Country Albums, Lynn’s highest mark on this survey since “I Remember Patsy” spent two weeks in the runner-up spot in 1977.
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The Billboard 200 A-7 (Listed by Artists)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The PUNISHER: THE ALBUM</td>
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<td>13 Going On 30</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>KILL BILL VOL. 1</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>KILL BILL VOL. 2</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>THE OC: MIX</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>THE CHEETAH GIRLS (EP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>LOVE ACTUALLY</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>ELLA ENCHANTED</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>THE FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS</td>
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### Billboard Top Jazz Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist/Song</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Last Week</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DINA KRA</td>
<td>BLUE NOTE</td>
<td>The Girl In The Other Room</td>
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<tr>
<td>HARRISON, J.</td>
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<td>HARRISON, J.</td>
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### Billboard Top Classical Crossover

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<tr>
<td>HAYLEY WESTENRA</td>
<td>REA</td>
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<td>BELA FLECK/EDGAR PETER</td>
<td>RCA VICTOR</td>
<td>Magic For Two</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANNO PREBER</td>
<td>RCA VICTOR</td>
<td>The Opera Band</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOSH GROBAN</td>
<td>RCA VICTOR</td>
<td>In The Name of Love</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>YO-YO MA</td>
<td>RCA VICTOR</td>
<td>Ojos De Brasil</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SARA BRIGHTMAN</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>YO-YO MA</td>
<td>RCA VICTOR</td>
<td>Ojos De Brasil</td>
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<td>SISSEL</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>My Heart</td>
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<td>THE IRISH TENORS</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Heritage</td>
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<td>ANDRE RIEU</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>At The Movies</td>
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<td>CHARLOTTE CHURCH</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Prelude: The Best Of Charlotte Church</td>
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<td>BOND</td>
<td>BMG</td>
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### Billboard Top New Age Albums

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<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Pure Moods: Celestial Celebration</td>
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<td>YANNI</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Ultimate Yanni</td>
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<tr>
<td>MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER/C.W. MCCALL</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>America’s Spirit</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>YANNI</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
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<td>MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER</td>
<td>BMG</td>
<td>Unplugged</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>BMG</td>
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<td>DELERIUM</td>
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<td>GOVI</td>
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<td>Saffron &amp; Silk</td>
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<td>STEVEN ANDERSON</td>
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<td>ARMARE</td>
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<td>BMG</td>
<td>Wellness Music: Spiritual Healing</td>
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“Yeah!” by Usher featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris holds on to the No. 1 spot on The Billboard Hot 100 for a 12th and probably final week. The track loses 12 million listener impressions and ends the week with an audience total of 145.9 million.

Competition to be the successor to the Hot 100 throne is fierce, as “I Don’t Wanna Know” by Mario Winans featuring Enya & P. Diddy (2-2) and Usher’s “Burn” (3-3) are well within striking distance.

“Know” inches up by 2.6 million listener impressions to 139.2 million, while “Burn” shows a hotter touch, gaining 12.6 million impressions for a listener total of 132.5 million.

The dark horse contender is Beyoncé’s “Naughty Girl,” which earns the Greatest Gainer/Airplay award for a third consecutive week (and for the fifth time in seven weeks) with a jump of 13.9 million listener impressions. The song that broke the airplay barrier by “Naughty” one month ago was Usher’s “Burn,” which has shown nearly equal growth to “Naughty” since then.

On the Mainstream Top 40 chart, “Burn” climbs 12-10, while former No. 1 “Yeah!” holds at No. 2. It is the time in his career that Usher has had two songs in the top 10 of the top 40 chart in the same week.

He’s doing even better on the Hot 100, Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and Rhythmic Airplay charts. “Confessions Part II” is standing just outside the top 10 on each list, giving him three songs in the top 20.

**CHECKING ACCOUNT:** The Beastie Boys return to the Modern Rock chart after a hiatus of more than four years, as “Ch-Check It Out” debuts at No. 14. It is the highest debut for the group since their career-surpassing hit “Hey Ladies,” which entered at No. 18 in August 1989.

“Ch-Check” is also the second-highest debut of the 2004 calendar year, trailing the No. 10 entry of Incubus’ “Megalomania” in the unpublished week of Jan. 3.

“Ch-Check” also makes a strong entry on Hot Digital Tracks with the explicit version debuting at No. 7.

The clean version comes in at No. 25. The two edits sell more than 10,000 downloads; if combined, the total would rank the song at No. 2. Billboard and Nielsen SoundScan have to have technology in place that will eliminate multiple title listings on Hot Digital Tracks. We will then be able to incorporate Digital Track sales data into the Hot 100 equation.

Epic has pushed the release of Wilson’s debut album, “Here for the Party,” up to May 11. The label seems to have gauged the consumer’s anticipation correctly, as “Redneck” debuts on Hot Digital Tracks at No. 24 with 3,000 paid downloads. It becomes the first entry by a country female artist to grace that chart.

Concurrently with at least six plays for the first time at 23 monitored stations, Clark’s “Girls Lie Too” turns in Most Airplay Adds and rises 21-28. With only four weeks on the chart, Clark’s single is the youngest title inside the top 30.

**ON THE MAKE:** ATL earns its first Billboard No. 1, as “Make It Up With Love” leaps 57 positions to the top of Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales.

The title bowed on the chart last issue as a result of street-date violations. Its first week in stores propels it to the top of the list with the largest position increase the chart has seen since Janet Jackson’s “Someone to Call My Lover” went from a street-date violation of No. 65 to No. 1 in the Sept. 1, 2001, issue.

In its 12th week on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart, “Make It” earns Greatest Gainer/Sales honors and rebounds 68-45, despite an 18% drop in airplay.

The four-member group was formed in the "American Idol" mold, with a series of competitions held in Atlanta (hence the quartet’s name) by Noontime CEO Ryan Glover in conjunction with R&B/hip-hop station WYVE.

Additional reporting by Anthony Colombo in New York.
Disney Rallies Its Divisions For TV Soundtracks

It's no secret that film soundtracks make up the lion's share of soundtrack sales. And TV soundtracks, if they chart at all, often disappear quickly from the Billboard Top Soundtracks chart. But Walt Disney Records' soundtracks to its Disney Channel programs are an exception. In the past 18 months, several of these releases have led the field of TV soundtracks on the Billboard list. The soundtracks to "The Cheetah Girls" and "Lizzie McGuire" are platinum (for 1 million copies shipped), according to the Recording Industry Association of America's Nielsen SoundScan sales for "Lizzie McGuire" stand at 936,000, while "The Cheetah Girls" has sold 996,000 copies. Other Disney TV soundtrack hits within the past year include "Queen of the Damned," "Perfect," and "Disney's Kim Possible.

So what's the secret to Disney's success? Instead of relying on top 40 radio and MTV, Disney has turned to its own resources to create hit records. "We tried to create something new on that overused word 'synergy,'" Walt Disney Records senior VP of A&R Jay Landers says. "With 'Queen of the Damned,' we applied the 'Perfect' model and 'Disney's Kim Possible.' It's been a consistent approach to marketing to a tween (8- to 12-year-old) audience. This is an audience that is very active in music purchasing, and they have more expendable income than previous tween generations."

The benefits for the shows and stars can extend beyond TV soundtracks. Hilary Duff has parlayed her "Lizzie McGuire" fame into a thriving career in music and movies. Disney is aiming for the same type of crossover success with Raven, star of its TV movie "The Cheetah Girls" and its series "That's So Raven," which also airs on Disney-owned ABC. The label will release the series' soundtrack May 18, which also has Duff on its roster.

Raven's first album for the label is due later this year. She describes it as R&B music with some alternative and pop. Raven also has a comedy pilot in the works for ABC.

Meanwhile, Walt Disney Records is gearing up for more potential soundtrack hits from Disney Channel shows. This summer, the network premieres the TV movie "Stuck in the Suburbs," about two small-town girls who discover that one of their favorite pop heartthroblos has a secret identity. Walt Disney Records will release the movie's soundtrack this summer, as well as "Zenon: Z3," the third installment in the "Zenon" soundtrack series.

IN BRIEF: VH1 will air its Hip-Hop Honors Oct. 8. The event celebrates hip-hop pioneers and hit artists. The event's location and performers will be announced later.

Andrew W.K. teams with MTV2 for a weekly series, "Your Friend, Andrew W.K." The show premieres at 9 p.m. ET May 22. The artist will serve as a VJ and answer viewers' mail.
Crow
Continued from page 3

“We’re still playing catch up, and we’re trying to re-educate people that it’s nothing less than shoplifting when you go and illegally download a song,” said Crow, who first spoke out against piracy on Capitol Hill in May 2000.

MILE-HIGH CLUB
Starting with an early-morning news conference in United Airlines’ Red Carpet Club at Chicago’s O’Hare airport, Crow, Sony and United served up a message that would be repeated throughout the day: Stop pirating copyrighted music; Connect is open for business.

“What better way to symbolically take downloads to new heights than to do a concert in the sky?” asked Jay Samit, GM for Sony Connect and architect of the event.

Last July, Sanit was tapped to unite Sony’s electronics and content divisions for Connect. Sony’s new subsidiary also can serve as an online label for artists who own their master recordings.

About 30 reporters ambled aboard the plane with a crew of company representatives, a production unit and a small Crow fan club.

Before takeoff, Crow cracked up the crowd when she said, “This does give a new meaning to the term ‘mile-high club.’”

The singer/songwriter has embraced the digital age. She calls creating playlists “a fun experience that’s kind of like being a teenager spinning 45s.”

The inside of the Boeing 777 suggested the flight would be more than the typical L.A. milk run. A full production staff transformed the rear cabin into a live performance studio. Once the plane was in the air, Crow and guitarist Tim Smith launched their seven-song set with “A Change Would Do You Good” and left the crowd elated with “Every Day Is a Winding Road.”

Sony is a late entrant in the legal download space. The company hoped to make a splash with Connect by leveraging Crow’s star power.

It also tried to differentiate Connect in a crowded marketplace, unveiling a line of portable music devices and announcing a partnership with United Airlines. The airline’s Mileage Plus frequent fliers will be able to redeem miles for music through Connect.

The typical Mileage Plus member is a man, age 35 to 50, with children, home PCs and “more than enough miles to redeem free travel,” said Martin White, senior VP of marketing with United Airlines.

“Kids drive parents to do a lot of new things like this. Even though I may be sitting on top of all those Mileage Plus miles, my kids can enjoy them, too,” White said.

Mileage Plus members redeemed 117 million miles last year; the amount of unredeemed miles are “substantial,” White said.

“To lure people from pirate sites, we needed to present them an alternative that didn’t cost them their cash,” Samit said. “Frequent-flier miles are another currency—and you’ll see us use a number of differentiating currencies.”

GADGETS GALORE
Sony also announced “The Intel 2 for 1 Hour,” a promotion that allows PC users with certain Intel processors a free album with the purchase of another album through Connect.

To gain market share in the electronics space, Sony is counting on four new portable music devices, retail priced from $60 to $300. They will hit stores in June.

Sony has sold more than 2.5 million devices compatible with the Connect store. The company projects sales will hit 7 million by year’s end.

The gadgets were on display during an outdoor party at Sony’s Santa Monica, Calif., headquarters, where Crow wrapped up the evening with a four-song set.

Fifteen highlights were broadcast across the country on CBS, CNBC, CNN and E!

Game Ads
Continued from page 3

watchdog group in Portland, Ore., “It’s embedded advertising, and at some point there’s going to be a backlash,” he asserts.

With Stocks, executive VP of sales, marketing and distribution for Atari, acknowledges that consumers could “ recoil” from such advertising.

But Dave Anderson, VP of marketing with Activision, says gamers like the ads.

“Our consumers actually demand it when appropriate, because it adds authenticity and realism” to a game, he says.

BANGING ON DOORS
Like it or not, advertisers have discovered that videogames are a cool way to get their products in front of impressionable kids.

From banner advertising and branding to product placement and even integrated storylines, the trend is growing rapidly, and gamemakers seem only too happy to oblige.

Santa Monica, Calif.-based videogame publisher Activision is leading the movement.

The wheels have started to turn with advertisers and media buyers,” Anderson says. “Now the Fortune 500 companies are banging on the door.”

The company is working closely with Motorola, Puma, Nestlé, McDonald’s, Nokia, Sprite, Coca-Cola, Taco Bell, Nike and Sean John, among others.

New York-based Atari also has opened its games to such advertisers as SoBe, Samsung, Nokia and Powerade. Redwood City, Calif.-based Electronic Arts, the industry’s leading game maker, works with Colgate-Palmolive, Honda, SevenUp, AutoZone, Radio Shack, Procter & Gamble and McDonald’s.

Activision, which has numerous six-figure deals with companies, estimates advertisers spent $10 million on in-game product placement in 2003.

Atari thinks that number could grow to $100 million in the next 12 months.

While that is a drop in the bucket compared with the billions of dollars spent on TV advertising, consumer-gaming are crying foul.

Susan Linn, a Harvard psycholo-

gist and author of “Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood,” says 90% of youth marketers advertise to kids in ways children don’t notice.

“Advertisers have found that product placement is particularly efective because it’s sticky,” she says. “Most people aren’t aware when they’re affected by ads,” says Dr. Douglas A. Gentile, director of research at the National Institute on Media and the Family. The organization studies the effect of the media on children and families.

Advertisers package ads as entertainment because they rely on consumers not to notice the ads influence, Gentile says.

DECKED OUT
Indeed, videogames are proving to be a nirvana for advertisers.

Activision and Atari say in-game advertising allows brands to reach the elusive 13- to 24-year-old male audience.

According to Jupiter Research, 95% of teenage boys play videogames. And 45% of all videogame players are under age 18, according to a Wall Street Journal survey.

Videogaming has skyrocketed into an $11 billion business. Game software and console sales far outpace box-office receipts, according to the Entertainment Software Assn.

To deliver his not-so-subtle message, Nick wears a sweatshirt emblazoned with the Puma logo while he toils the heist of a Puma-branded delivery truck parked outside Puma’s flagship store on Santa Monica’s Third Street Promenade.

In Activision’s “Street Hoops,” gamers outfit their players in a Footaction store with such brands as And1, Nike, Sean John and Fila.

In “Driv3r,” a videogame set to debut this June, players operate Hawk’s cell phones.

And in “Tony Hawk’s Underground,” players perform stunts in front of a virtual McDonald’s outlet. In fact, the game is so rife with product placement advertising it won the “most despicable” product placement award last year from gamespot.com, a top gaming Web site.

“The Hawk’s Underground” takes product placement to a whole new level by adding even more sponsors and effectively using one of the game’s hidden characters and levels as one big ad,” she said.

APPALLING USE
In a sign that the trend is here to stay, Nielsen Interactive Entertainment, a Billboard sister company, will soon unveil a standardized measure of in-game advertising’s effectiveness.

The new metric works much like Nielsen’s ratings for TV and in-theater advertising, says Michael Dowling, VP of Nielsen Interactive Entertainment.

“The generation that is probably the most receptive to advertising is the youth generation; they don’t despise commercial messaging,” Dowling says.

But consumer groups think otherwise.

“It’s appalling for advertisers to use videogames to market to children, especially since so many videogames are aimed toward younger users,” says Susan Grant, VP for public policy at the National Consumers League, a nonprofit group representing consumers on marketplace issues.

“Nielsen letting them know how they’re doing only encourages the practice,” Grant adds.

Grant says the NCL pays attention to videogame ads, though it has not taken formal action.

Meanwhile, Nielsen is working with leading game makers to roll out new metrics.

“Unless you have a measurement, you can’t have a commodity. There are forces driving everybody to say, ‘We need this [Nielsen rating],’” says Scott Randall, president of Brandgames, a New York-based company that creates custom videogames featuring integrated branding.

Daniel Acuff, president of Encino, Calif.-based consulting firm Youth Marketing Systems, says gamers are ultimately paying the price for product placement.

“Kids feel entitled, spoiled, and the expectation is that they should have what their friends have rather than [being happy with] who you are,” he says.
MercyMe

Continued from page 3

But it kept getting better.

The group’s third INO Records album, “Undone,” released the week before the awards, was on its way to racking up first-week U.S. sales of 100,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“Undone” entered The Billboard 200 last issue at No. 12, some 25 notches higher than MercyMe’s previous peak on the chart.

The new release also gave the sextet its second No. 1 title on the Top Christian Albums chart. This issue, it holds that position on the Christian chart while falling to No. 35 on The Billboard 200.

The single “Here With Me” has played a large part in the early sales success of “Undone.” The song has crossed the Christian AC station while maintaining its core Christian radio following.

“She’s Gone” is No. 8 in its sixth week on the Hot Adult Contemporary chart and No. 8 on Hot Christian Singles & Tracks in its seventh week. It is No. 24 on the Adult Contemporary chart.

Here With Me” comes on the heels of “Can Only Imagine,” a multi-format hit last year that struck a nerve with a post-Sept. 11, 2001, America.

“It was a poignant song with a great message at a time when the country needed to hear a message like that,” top 40 WRWR (the River) Nashville PD Rich Davis says.

“Can Only Imagine” propelled the group’s INO debut album, “Almost There,” to a No. 3 Billboard 200 chart position.

In recording the album, the band “did everything backward,” Millard says. “We went in and recorded all the music without lyrics. The music was written and I had a canvas and these parameters to write within.”

Was Millard tempted while writing to put less focus on Christian material to appeal to the mainstream audience? “Mainstream radio was definitely in the back of my mind the entire time I was writing, maybe different than what most people would think,” Millard admits.

“I realized in writing that [Christians] have their own language at times, phrases like ‘the blood of the lamb.’ Some people who don’t go to church may not understand, so I tried to be clearer in things we were talking about.”

“It’s all still focused on God,” Millard says. “I was just trying to tap into things that people deal with on an everyday basis.”

Millard says the group’s experiences colored the album.

While making “Undone,” he and other band members lost a total of eight friends from the events of Sept. 11. “There’s a lot of personal stuff on there about things we’ve gone through and how Christ has been the solution,” he says.

CURB-SIDE SERVICE

Moseley credits Curb with playing a major role in MercyMe’s success. “We have personally benefited from any audits of the labels during the period of the probe. Thousands of heritage artists are also on the list.

One of the biggest beneficiaries is the estate of R&B crooner Teddy Pendergrass. His MCG and hits ‘It’s All in the Game’ spent 19 weeks on The Billboard Hot 100 in 1988, settling at No. 1 for six weeks.

Universal Music Group, which now owns the MGM catalog, will pay Edwards’ estate about $229,000.

Officials from the major artist unions, advocacy groups andPerformance Rights Organization will appear on the May 3 settlement announcement.

Among those, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, Recording Artists’ Coalition and American Federation of Musicians support a related California bill authored by Democratic senator Kevin Murray.

S.B. 1034 would create a fiduciary responsibility between labels and artists. It has passed the California Senate and is pending in the Assembly.

“APTRA looks forward to working directly with the California Music Publishers Association and other artist groups to implement this settlement and to continue to pursue more comprehensive reform in the recording industry,” APTRA national director Greg Hessinger says.

“We’ll be working toward finding these artists or their heirs and lobbying for laws that will hold the labels accountable as fiduciaries,” RAC counsel Jay Boswell says.

Murray believes the settlement underscores labels’ new attitude toward resolving decades of royalty issues. “They want to get this out of their system,” he says, “so that artists and the companies can get on with the problem of piracy.”

Under the terms of the settlement, the companies agreed to list names of artists and writers who are owed royalty payments on Web sites; post advertisements in leading music industry publications explaining unclaimed-royalty problems; and set up a fund for new artists and groups to locate artists who are owed royalty payments; and share artists’ contact information with other record companies.

In addition, each company agreed to require regular meetings among the heads of its royalty, accounting and legal departments to review the status of royalty accounts and improve royalty payment procedures.


Additional reporting by Brian Garrity in New York.

McCoy

Continued from page 8

ments on this point, he notes that Revonah did not pay McCoy for his recording services.

The suit asks that Copper Creek be enjoined from releasing any materials from the two recordings. It also asks that the master tapes be impounded or destroyed.

McCoy tells Billboard this is the first time he has ever sued anyone and that he is so reluctantly. He adds that he filed the suit on behalf of other bluegrass artists who have been handed some bad business deals in their careers.

“Somebody probably needs to step up and give a little direction, and I’m financially able to do that right now,” says McCoy, who started his own label, McCoy Music, last year. “Some of these small independent labels have been these musicians and singers and bands out of money through the years.”

Strickland says the suit is necessary to send a message. Since the Del McCoury Band has exploded in popularity in recent years, he says, other people with old recordings are “tied up” and watching the outcome of this case.

He calls the Copper Creek executives “poachers.” McCoy agrees, calling them “pretty brazen.”

Copper Creek’s Reid declined to speak on the record, citing the advice of his attorneys. However, he issued the following statement to Billboard:

“The facts will show that we have done nothing wrong, and it will be demonstrated that we have clear title to the masters in question.”

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That situation changed with the runaway success of Glow by J.Lo, which debuted in 2002. Lopez’s Sweetface Fashion launched her fragrance products with Lancaster Group Worldwide. Her fragrances are mainly available at specialty stores and department stores including Macy’s.

“Jennifer Lopez has been wildly successful because she’s a crossover star and she’s ubiquitous,” Didi Gluck, beauty director at Marie Claire magazine, observes. “A star like Jennifer Lopez doesn’t come along every day,” adds Catherine Walsh, senior VP of cosmetics and American licenses at Lancaster Group Worldwide. “People buy these fragrances because they like the celebrity’s personality and lifestyle, and the fragrance helps them get a piece of that.”

According to Information Resources, which tracks retail sales of consumer goods at mass merchants, drug stores and supermarkets, U.S. sales of Glow by J.Lo jumped more than 4,000% to those outlets in 2002.

Including sales of products sold separately and in gift packs, Glow by J.Lo earned more than $1.7 million in revenue in 2002.

Information Resources does not track sales at department stores, where the majority of Lopez’s fragrance products are sold. Those sales figures were unavailable.

Dion launched her perfume line — consisting of eau de toilette, body lotion and shower gel — last year. Celine Dion Parfums is available at mass merchants, drug stores and such department stores as Sears, JCPenney, Ulta and Kohl’s.

Dion’s line raked in sales of $11.7 million in 2003, including $3.3 million from gift packs, according to Information Resources.

Those sales made Celine Dion Parfums the ninth-best-selling women’s fragrance of 2003 at U.S. retailers tracked by Information Resources. It was the only debut fragrance line to make the top 10.

Celine Dion Parfum Notes, an extension to the original line, launched in 2003.

Dion, who teamed with Coty for her fragrance venture, tells Billboard: “For years we were approached by a number of different fragrance and beauty companies, but it just didn’t feel natural. When we were approached by Coty, we really liked the way they understood who I was as a woman, as well as a performer, and how I was perceived in the market.”

The success of Dion’s fragrance line, retail priced at $12.50-$44 per item, has resulted largely from a carefully timed marketing campaign.

Celine Dion Parfums launched March 25, 2003, the same day Dion opened her multiyear concert run in Las Vegas. That week, Epic Records/Sony Music released her album “A New Day Has Come.” Perfume strip samples were included in a promotion with radio station listeners. Coty co-sponsors Dion’s Las Vegas production at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace. Additionally, Dion’s perfume products are sold at the venue.

The Beauty VP of marketing and business development Marsha Brooks says an entertainer’s scheduling flexibility and commitment are crucial to the success of her fragrance line. “The recording industry typically produces a product a few months ahead of time. The lead times in the beauty industry are usually a good 12 months.”

Dion says her success at launching Dion’s and Lopez’s products, the stars entered the fragrance market at a risky time. Though fragrances remain the biggest category in the beauty industry, their sales have declined recently, according to NPD Beauty, a division of research firm NPD Group.

Of the three main beauty categories — skin care, makeup and fragrance — only fragrances had a sales decrease in 2003, dipping 2% compared with the previous year, to $2.8 billion.

During the same period, skin-care product sales jumped to $2 billion, up 8% from 2002, and makeup hit $2.6 billion, up 4%.

Not surprisingly, Lopez, Spears and Simpson are among the celebrities extending their beauty brands to skin care and/or makeup.

**THE SCENT OF MUSIC**

Why are fragrance companies flocking to music stars more than actresses or other celebrities?

“The beauty and the music industries are both used to dealing with consumers who are very fickle,” notes Michael Solomon, human sciences professor of consumer behavior at Auburn University in Auburn, Ala.

Both industries understand the value of “striking while the iron is hot,” Solomon says, thereby making them a good fit. “It’s all a matter of timing,” Marie Claire’s Goodenotes. “These companies want celebrities whose star is on the rise.”

Distribution is also a key factor. In that respect, Simpson’s product line, Desert, could be a wild card because of its selective retail launch.

Simpson — with help from her modeling agency, Wilhelmina Artist Management—partnered with Dlish Fragrances to launch their fragrance line to retailers.

**BEYONCE VS. BRITNEY**

Beyoncé still controls the fragrance market.

Beyoncé has teamed with Tommy Hilfiger Toiletries, a division of Estée Lauder, to launch a new fragrance this fall. Also due by year’s end is Spears’ lineup of fragrance, skincare and cosmetics products, a partnership with Elizabeth Arden.

Los Angeles-based Brand Sense Marketing was a key player in the Spears deal. Industry experts predict Beyoncé’s line will be the bigger hit.

“Beyoncé has more going on with her latest fashion coup, fashionfinds.com’s Bandini,” says. “She’s a fashion role model. She made a name for herself as a spokesperson for L’Oréal. Her look is a perfect match. Beyoncé doesn’t have the satiety to pull of being a fashion icon, like Madonna has. The feeling among a lot of young people is that Beyoncé is the real deal.”

Elisabeth Arden president Paul West says Spears’ high profile, along with her company’s track record (including the success of Elizabeth Taylor’s White Diamonds fragrance line) will make the Spears fragrance a hit.

“We have a long-term plan and vision. Britney did a lot of homework for this fragrance. Her beauty products will be completely relevant to those consumers.”

Whatever the odds, Dion says there is still hope for others who want to start their own beauty lines. “Make sure you believe in the company and the individuals 100%, because you’ll be working with them for a long time. You also have to balance your own desires with their expertise. There’s always a give-and-take.”

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**FOR THE RECORD**

The name of the Hopeless, a new band signed to Island Records, was misspelled in the May 1 issue.
Conference Reflections

BY LEILA COBO

A week after Billboard’s Latin Music Conference, here are some of the events and comments that stuck in our minds:

Alejandro Fernández performed at this year’s Billboard Latin Music Awards. He also received Telemundo’s Star Award in recognition of his longevity and contributions to music.

Fernández stars in the film “Zapata,” which premiered last week in Mexico. The movie, directed by Alfonso Arau (“Like Water for Chocolate”), will be released in the United States this fall. That will coincide with Fernández’s new studio album and U.S. tour.

Paula Rubio’s album will be like a foray into films. For now, she told Billboard, she would be happy with a cameo. Favorite directors include Quentin Tarantino and fellow Mexican Alejandro González Iñárritu (“21 Grams”).

If asked if she knew Tarantino personally, Rubio said she met briefly at the premiere of “Kill Bill 2.” “He told me hi and ‘adiós’,” Rubio said.

In other film news, producer/composer Gustavo Santaolalla will score director Ang Lee’s upcoming film, “Breakback Mountain.” It is “absolutely non-Latin,” says Santaolalla, who just scored “21 Grams.” The topic? Two cowboys in the 1960s who develop a gay relationship.

Those who attended “The Music We See” panel had only praise for Latin’s ability to bring their identity into films and film music. The consensus? Latinos are so much a part of the U.S. cultural fabric, it’s impossible to separate them.

“I don’t make movies for Latinos,” director/composer Franc Reyes said. “I make movies with Latinos.” Urban/regional duo Akwil is reaching deep into its cultural roots for the follow-up to its smash debut “Proyecto Akwil” (BMG). The duo’s upcoming set, “KOMP 104.9 Radio Compa,” bows June 15. The album recreates a radio station environment, hence the title.

However, the video for first single “Jamás Imagínate” is loosely based on children’s TV comedy show “El Chavo del Ocho.” The series aired throughout Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the 1990s, Akwil brothers Francisco and Sergio González grew up watching reruns in the United States. “Everybody [around us] watched it,” Francisco said. “That’s where our influences came from. It was our ‘Barney,’ our ‘Sesame Street.’”

RATINGS RISE

Ratings for the Billboard Latin Music Awards rose almost a full point compared with 2003, according to Nielsen Media Research. The 2004 Billboard Latin Music Awards, which aired live April 29 on the Telemundo Network, garnered an 8.2 rating, up from 7.3 last year. An estimated 1.5 million viewers tuned in. Ratings for the more widely distributed Unvision Network were higher, averaging 17.8.

The telecast boosted David Bisbal’s chart standing. Bisbal closed the show to a standing ovation. He also received the Telemundo Viewer’s Award, the result of fans’ online voting. His album “Bulería” jumped 29-18 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart.

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The Labels Have Seen EA Games Break New Bands

BY SCOTT BANERJEE

SAN FRANCISCO—Before Steve Schnur arrived at Electronic Arts from Capitol Records three years ago, videogame soundtracks might as well have been in Morse.

As worldwide director of music and audio at Redwood City, Calif.-based EA, the world’s leading videogame maker, Schnur has helped make music a central element in the gaming experience.

At the same time, he has recast the dynamic between the music and videogames industries, ushering in a new category of global music licensing, co-marketing and distribution.

Shortly after arriving at EA, Schnur established EA Trax as the umbrella for its game soundtracks, which feature new artists, original music and exclusive remixes.

Drawing on his major-label A&R background, Schnur scoured the globe for independent acts to be included in EA’s “FIFA Soccer 2004.” Last year, EA Trax earned the first platinum videogame soundtrack certification from the Recording Industry Assn. of America for its “NBA Live 2003” CD, which was packaged with the game.

EA’s current “SSX3” has a CD/DVD soundtrack, released in conjunction with Astralwerks. It contains music by the Chemical Brothers, Basement Jaxx, N*E*R*D and other top acts.

“Steve Schnur is a savvy music guy who knows what music will enhance a particular gaming experience,” says Paul Orescan, VP/marketing director at Geffen Records. “He’s been a partner with Geffen in helping break songs and bands to this very active [gaming] audience.”

Key EA games this year include “James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing,” “MVP Baseball 2004” and “Madden NFL 2004.”

Q: How have EA’s label relationships changed since you began in 2002?

A: Our first discussions were based on “what if.” What if we could break bands? What if we could be a part of your weekly internal discussions where you used to talk about the MTV plan, the radio plan, the tour plan, the press plan? Would we ever get to the point where the labels would talk about the EA plan? I can tell you we’re there. The labels vie for a spot in EA games. They know the reach, they’ve realized it, they’ve seen it break new bands and they’ve seen accomplished bands break new songs.

Yellowcard, Blink-182, Twista, Fabolous, Good Charlotte. All of these acts were affected quite significantly by their presence in an EA game.

Q: Are there cases of the tail wagging the dog when it comes to placing music in videogames?

A: It’s grown to that. Initially, it was just getting a song from the tail into the major videogames. Then it became [about getting] the single from the future album into the videogame. Now it’s become, “Do we do the single or put an original composition in that?” That’s what the artist wants to do. The Blink single (“Feeling This”) launched in “Madden 2004” three months before it went to radio. It charted before it went to radio, because major alternative stations across the country were playing it from the game.

By the time it got to radio . . . Geffen was in a very confident position that they had a song that was not only a hit, [they] had a song that was going to garner requests. To date it is the most successfully researched record that Blink has put out.

Q: What music genres stand to gain the most in game soundtracks?

A: Hip-hop and rock. It falls in line with the most popular forms of music that are selling right now.

Techno used to be the videogame music by default because it “worked well with game play.” A lot of internal audio guys would make it, but it was substandard to some of the major techno artists out there.

When we involve techno music now, it’s usually in line with the marketplace: [Paul] Oakenfold, Crystal Method, Fat Boy Slim, Chemical Brothers.

Q: What are the differences between working with a major and an independent label?

A: We started off primarily working with all our relationships with the majors. Unfortunately, the majors are finding themselves in quite a bind right now. We continue to work with them.

However, the level of quality coming from the independents is pretty spectacular, particularly on an international basis—what will end up as a quarter of the music you’ll hear in “FIFA” this year.

The indies really understand their consumers play videogames. I’ve seen it grow in three short years to where they are a significant part of our relationship structure.

Q: Your EA Trax label has begun selling original songs and remixes from EA games. Will you sell soundtrack songs through digital stores like iTunes?

A: Yes, I totally see that. I always get asked if we’re going to go in the soundtrack/record business, and I always say no. Not based on the old model . . . To expect the consumer to go out and buy an additional piece of product would be naive.

Our job is to drive the consumer to discover a great new band and have them go out and buy that artist’s album. It’s up to the record company and the distribution company to go out and connect the dots.

However, digital distribution is an entirely different deal. Legal digital distribution, I believe, at this point has created a new business model to push the vision forward. To get [fans] to hear a song on “Madden” and then have them purchase the song on iTunes, particularly if it’s a unique piece of content written for the game, is something that is expected to happen.

Q: How do you see the piracy threat in your industry?

A: The videogame industry is consumer-driven; it listens to consumers. If the consumer moves from one console to another, we move accordingly. With that said, technology continues to lead the way. While piracy and illegal downloading is an issue, by the time that catches up, we are onto new technologies and platforms.

Q: As consumers build their digital living rooms, which platforms do you see at the most integrated hubs?

A: [PlayStation 2] certainly leads the way on a worldwide basis. I have yet to see what PS3 looks like, but I assume Sony will continue to lead the way. Xbox continues to move in leaps and bounds. If we remain the new form of MTV, then hopefully PS3 or Xbox2 will become the next Wal-Mart in terms of purchasing music into your games.

Right now the PC is the best place to integrate everything, but certainly PS3 and Xbox2 will lead the way.

Q: How will Sony’s anticipated PlayStation Portable affect the market?

A: PSP is encouraging. Not only does it look fantastic, but it also has the ability to hold quite a lot of music as opposed to . . . Game Boy Advance.

Q: What else are you excited about?

A: In “MVP Baseball” we decided to reach back and find one compelling title from the past that wasn’t necessarily that familiar and put it against the other new songs. We put [in] a Hoodoo Gurus track, “Bittersweet.” It’s songs like that that are rediscovered . . . We did the same thing with “FIFA” last year. We threw in the Stone Roses and a Jam track.

We’re going to explore that relationship even deeper with “Madden” and every other EA sports title thereafter. There’s going to be a couple of the greatest, coolest, “Oh, my God, I haven’t heard that in so long” songs.
CONGRATULATIONS

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100 Years / Five For Fighting / AWARE/COLUMBIA
I Don't Wanna Know / Mario Winans Feat. P. Diddy / BAD BOY/UMRG
The Reason / Hoobastank / ISLAND
Figured You Out / Nickelback / ROADRUNNER
American Soldier / Toby Keith / DREAMWORKS
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Come Clean / Hilary Duff / BUENA VISTA/HOLLYWOOD
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Away From The Sun / 3 Doors Down / UNIVERSAL
Simple Life / Carolyn Dawn Johnson / ARISTA
Paint Me A Birmingham / Tracy Lawrence / DREAMWORKS
Game Over / Lil Flip / COLUMBIA
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Hey Mama / Black Eyed Peas / A&M
Breathe / Melissa Etheridge / ISLAND/IDJMG
Desperately / George Strait / MCA
All Falls Down / Kanye West Feat. Syleena Johnson / ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM/IDJMG
The Hardest Button To Button / White Stripes / V2
Fortune Faded / Red Hot Chili Peppers / WARNER BROS.
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