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

EU CLEARS SONY-BMG MERGER
No ‘Smoking Gun’ On Price Collusion Charge

BRUSSELS—European competition commissioner Mario Monti is to recommend that Sony Music and BMG be granted regulatory approval for their merger, officials said late June 17.
The decision came after Monti—the European Union’s (Continued on page 91)

Europe Gets First Taste Of iTunes
But Few Indies Join The Party

LONDON—By adding the United Kingdom, Germany and France to its roster June 14, Apple Computer’s iTunes Music Store is now available in markets representing more than 60% of the world’s recorded-music sales.
And that’s good news for a music industry still fighting Internet piracy. However, the new launches have gone largely without content from the indie labels, which are deadlocked in their negotiations (Continued on page 91)

BEBEL GILBERTO’S HIGHLY ANTICIPATED SELF-TITLED RELEASE.

#1 debut on Billboard Top World Music Chart
#5 debut on Billboard Top Heatseekers Chart
#154 debut on The Billboard 200 Chart
#71 debut on Top 200 Canadian Album Chart

20 date US Tour
coming in August

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VOTED BMI SONGWRITERS AS "THE BEST OF THE BEST." CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF YOU...

VIRTUALLY INDISPENSABLE

BMI.COM
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"The minute the gatekeepers told us 'no' was the minute we started to have a good time."

- Ron Shapiro

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Quote of the Week

"The minute the gatekeepers told us 'no' was the minute we started to have a good time."

- Ron Shapiro

Artists & Company Index (Significant Mentions in the News)
We mourn the death of our friend and client

RAY CHARLES

His absence will be felt by many, but his legacy will live on.
PDs Not Moved By Spins

BY BRIAN GARRITY

NEW YORK—Leading radio programmers, aware of record company "spin buys" at smaller radio stations, say these promotional programs have no affect on their own stations' spins.

Labels have been turning to spin programs to boost the chart positions of select singles through sponsored overnight airplay (Billboard, June 19).

But large-market radio veterans like Oedipus, Infinity's VP of alternative programming and former PD of modern WBCN Boston, say that airplay by the key stations in major markets ultimately impacts spins—not spins at smaller stations.

"If KROQ [Los Angeles] spins a song, it's important. I don't care if they spin it in overnights; they reach a lot of people," Oedipus says. "I want to know which stations that reach the most people are spinning [a] record."

As Billboard reported last issue, a number of labels are purchasing advertising in fringe listening times at small to medium-sized radio chains and (Continued on page 92)

Shapiro Hangs Out Management Shingle

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

After more than 15 years at major labels—most recently as co-president of Atlantic Records—Ron Shapiro has set up his own management and consulting business.

Shapiro left Atlantic in early March as part of the restructuring at Warner Music Group. He had worked at the label since 1993.

In an exclusive interview with Billboard, Shapiro says he felt he could never replicate the positive experience he'd had at Atlantic, so he decided to step away from label life.

"When I walked out of 1290 [Sixth Ave.] for the last time, I thought, 'I've had the greatest experience in the world. I'd gone from publicity to president. How am I going to do that somewhere else?'"

He decided the answer was that he could not. So he opted to write his own job description. The one unifier was that every project had to include an element of artist development.

One of the first calls he received after leaving Atlantic was from Universal Music Group Nashville co-chairman Luke Lewis, who approached him about managing up-and-coming Mercury Nashville artist Julie Roberts.

"He felt she was an extraordinary talent but wasn't the stereotypical country artist out of the gate, and he felt I had the reputation of taking some artists to radio before radio was ready and them standing and hitting it," Shapiro says.

"So this got me into the management side, and I get to really nurture an artist. At

(Continued on page 92)

IFPI: Sony-BMG Would Be No. 1

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

LONDON—Universal Music maintained its status as the world's market leader in 2003, but a combined Sony/BMG would have challenged its dominance.

The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry released market share figures that show that Sony/BMG and Sony had an aggregate share of 25.1% in 2003. Universal posted a 23.5% share, down from 25.4% in 2002.

The Sony-BMG merger plan cleared a major hurdle June 17 when European competition commission-er Mario Monti gave his approval of the deal (see story, page 1).

BMG was among the companies posting a share gain in 2003, increasing to 11.9% from 9.6% in 2002. Also gaining marketshare in 2003 were EMI at 13.4%, compared with 12.2% in 2002, and Warner Music, at 12.7% against 11.8% in 2002.

Sony's global share went down from 13.8% in 2002 to 13.2%.

EMI moves up one rank and becomes the world's second-largest record company in terms of market share. EMI is followed by Sony, Warner and BMG.

"BMG had a fantastic year, thanks to good repertoire," an industry analyst says. "In the past few years, the changes we've seen reflect the hits and repertoire success. There has not been much activity on the acquisition side."

The last significant acquisition was BMG taking over Zomba in November 2002. IFPI's BMG figures include Zomba for 2002 and 2003.

IFPI statistics show that EMI has enjoyed a significant recovery in "(Continued on page 91)

As Echo Fades, Stores Go It Alone

BY SCOTT BANERJEE

YOU could hardly call it a resounding success.

Echo, the would-be digital music consortium of U.S. music retailers, appears ready to bite the dust before selling a single bit.

Industry observers expect an official announcement about Echo's future in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, Echo's key backers—Best Buy, Borders Group, Hattings Entertainment, Tower Records, Trans World Entertainment and Virgin Entertainment—are moving ahead with their own plans at their own pace for the digital space.

The companies formed Echo in January 2003 to assure themselves a place at the digital table at a time when the majors were investing in their own Pressplay and MusicNet services. The retailers feared the majors were trying to cut them out of the digital market. Echo would help defray the costs of technology for the retailers and give them leverage in their licensing dealings with the majors. The original six partners included WhereHouse Enter-tainment, which later was sold to Trans World; Borders joined the consortium two months later.

Dan Hart, CEO of Echo, says the companies' intent was "to work together and pool the collective

(Continued on page 92)
Charting Japan

Billboard Adds SoundScan Data For No. 2 Market

BY STEVE McCLURE

TOKYO—Starting this issue, Billboard will publish SoundScan Japan’s weekly top 10 singles and albums charts in its Hits of the World section. Previously, Billboard used the charts that Dempa compiled.

Since its debut in 1995, SoundScan Japan has been recognized as the most reliable source of music sales data in Japan, the world’s second-biggest music market.

The tie-up with Billboard follows a recent management buyout deal involving Victor Co. of Japan subsidiary Soft Information Planning, which operates SoundScan Japan.

The Victor Co. sold SIP to its managing director Isamu Taniguchi, GM Tadashi Takahashi and former Nielsen SoundScan managers Michael Shallet and Michael Fine.

SoundScan Japan will continue to operate as Nielsen SoundScan’s Japanese licensee. Billboard parent company VNU owns Nielsen SoundScan.

SoundScan Japan collects point-of-sale data from some 2,200 music retailers nationwide and supplies sales information to various companies in the music industry as well as other firms, such as ad agencies, interested in keeping a close watch on sales trends in the Japanese music business.

Internet Radio Wired For Ads

Alliance Aims To Build Spot Sales

BY BRIAN GARRY

NEW YORK—Internet radio is quietly emerging as a mass-market phenomenon that attracts tens of millions of consumers on a weekly basis.

Mainstream radio advertisers and trackers of terrestrial radio airplay are starting to take note.

The four biggest providers of online radio services in the United States—AOL, Microsoft’s MSN, Yahoo and Live365—recently formed an ad hoc alliance to have Internet advertising firm Reaching/Lipset/Research/Radio own all services.

Thirty- and 60-second ads from a range of travel, entertainment, consumer electronics and automotive companies are expected to begin running in between music programming.

Meanwhile, Launch, the music destination on Yahoo, has announced that Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems will begin tracking its audio and video streams starting in July. The deal makes Launch the first Internet media property to be monitored by Nielsen BDS, which Billboard parent VNU owns.

The moves signal the growing reach and influence of Internet radio, executives from the leading online radio services say.

“It absolutely signifies the beginning of this as a real business,” AOL Music VP/GM Evan Harrison says.

Arbitron estimates that more than 38 million Americans now listen to Internet radio in aggregate every month; more than 19 million listen to

(Continued on page 33)

Gold Rush Is On In Mobile-Music Sector

BY JULIANA KORANTANG

LONDON—The international mobile-music market is defying the beat of the new business cycle.

Encouraged by the fast-growing $3 billion worldwide ringtones sector, businesses from cell phone operators to record labels are investing in potentially profitable mobile concepts.

The race to embrace this latest “killer app” was the topic at the Mobile Entertainment Market seminar in London June 2. The Mobile Entertainment Forum presented the conference.

Money-making mobile concepts include:

• The emerging master ringtones. Unlike monophonic and polyphonic ringtones, which are based on reproduced synthesized sounds, master ringtones offer original recordings.

• Ringback tones, which enable callers to hear music while waiting for the phone to be answered.

• Downloadable mobile tracks.

• High-quality mobile videos. Most of these services are possible via standard 2G mobile networks. But more advanced applications are emerging, thanks to third-generation technology that enables operators and handset makers to offer more sophisticated content.

International telecommunications consultancy Analysys Research predicts there will be 240 million 3G subscribers by 2009 in Western Europe. Communication functions aside, the driving force behind the growth of mobile services has been music-related applications. Jonathan Kim, VP of global marketing and business development for content aggregator WiderThan, says: “Music is by far the most popular application for our users.”

Analysts support his view. U.K.-based Informa Media predicts ringtones will generate more than $4.7 billion globally by 2008. The ARC

(Continued on page 93)
ray charles
1930—2004

In Loving Memory of
“The Genius”

Concord Records
The Billboard Buzz

Ages 13-29

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The Billboard Buzz chart is a gauge of artist popularity through an Internet poll of music fans. Scores are affected by every aspect of an artist's career: Marketing, airplay, retail, print media, touring, TV appearances and rumors all have an impact on the chart's performance. Data is collected with the same strict attention to detail as all other Promosquad research. A list of 250 artists is compiled based on airplay and sales. The artists are rated by thousands of carefully screened music fans. Results are compiled weekly and monthly. The top 25 chart is based on a weighted positive calculation that takes into account each artist's popularity and buzz among the entire music-listening population. Promosquad also maintains detailed format-specific charts (e.g., Top 40 Mainstream, R&B/Hip-Hop, Country, etc.). For more information, contact buzz@promosquad.com.

Piracy Gambit Goes Bust

BY LEILA COBO

CD piracy became tabloid fodder in Brazil after the attorney for an alleged pirate was caught on camera allegedly attempting to bribe a congressman.

The seven-minute tape aired in its entirety June 2 on Brazil's national evening news. It not only exposed the depth and scope of Brazil's piracy problem—the bribe offered was 1.5 million reales ($500,000)—but also uncovered a villain and a hero.

The hero is congressman Luiz Antônio de Medeiros, who chairs Brazil's congressional anti-piracy investigative committee. De Medeiros turned down the bribe and alerted police to the meeting and filmed the transaction with a hidden camera.

"The message is, first, no one is above the law," says Raúl Vazquez, regional director of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry in Latin America. "Second, when (Continued on page 90)

With the Warner Music Group taking control of Maverick Records, look for the label's staff to be reduced by more than half when it moves to Warner Bros. Records' headquarters in Burbank, Calif.

Sources say only about 18 members of the Maverick staff of almost 40 will still have jobs in the new setup. Among those expected to leave are GM Daniel Savage.

As part of a settlement to end the litigation between the two parties, WMG agreed to purchase the Maverick shares held by Madonna and label COO Ronnie Dashney. This purchase gives WMG an even larger majority stake in the label.

Madonna and her partners created Maverick 12 years ago as a 50/50 venture with WMG. They renewed the deal five years ago, changing WMG's stake to 60%. When they sign the new deal, WMG will own more than 75% of the label. As part of that deal, Maverick partner Guy Oseary will sign a new multiyear contract. For more on this story, see the upcoming June 21 issue of Entertainment Law Weekly.

ED CHRISTIAN

Atari, Electronic Arts and Vivendi Universal Games filed suit June 15 against 321 Studios, alleging the company's Games X Copy software violates the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Attorneys filed the suit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York.

321's Games X Copy allows users to make a duplicate of a PC game with a CD or DVD burner. The Entertainment Software Assn., a trade group that represents the videogame makers, says it is seeking a preliminary injunction against 321.

BIL KIPINSKI

The Recording Industry Assn. of America submitted comments to the Federal Communications Commission June 16 supporting digital high-definition (HD) radio but asking for rules to protect music played through digital radio receiver/ recorders from piracy.

The RIAA says it has no problem with consumers copying a tune from HD radio as they would with traditional analog radio—by manually pressing a button and recording a song. But the trade group is concerned that features in second-generation receivers could churn music in a format that users could then distribute from the Internet (Billboard, June 19).

Artists' groups and unions also filed comments underscoring the need for protections. Fair use and public domain groups like Public Information oppose the RIAA's request. They say the FCC does not have the authority to impose content controls.

BILL HOLLAND

Britney Spears has pulled the plug on the summer run of her Onyx Hotel tour. After falling on the set of her video shoot for "Outrageous" in Queens, N.Y., Spears underwent arthroscopic knee surgery. She must remain immobile for six weeks then undergo at least eight weeks of rehabilitation.

The Onyx Hotel tour, produced by Clear Channel Entertainment, was scheduled to begin June 22 at the Meadows Music Theatre in Hartford, Conn., and end Aug. 15 at the Centennial Gardens in Bakersfield, Calif.

Spears has put up some strong numbers in North American and European arenas this year, grossing more than $43 million and drawing more than 600,000 fans to 52 shows.

RAY WADDELL

A federal New York judge ruled June 15 in favor of BMI's challenge that fees Music Choice pays for the use of BMI repertoire should increase from 1.75% of gross revenue to 3.75% during the period of Oct. 1, 1994, to Sept. 30, 2004.

District Court Judge Louis L. Stanton, who presides over the BMI rate court there, ruled in July 2001 to set fees at 1.75% of Music Choice's gross revenue, ignoring the full retail price consumers paid for music services.

BMI appealed that decision, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit agreed with BMI. The appellate court sent the case back to Judge Stanton for further proceedings.

BILL HOLLAND

Industry veterans David Sanchez, Elias Pacheco and Denny Marte have partnered to form DEDO's Marketing Group, an urban Hispanic lifestyle marketing company. The New York-based firm's clients include Columbia artist Frankie J, SRC/Universal act Terror Squad and Apple's iTunes Music Store.

DEDOS is also presenting the Latino Kings of Hip-Hop tour. The 20-city trek kicks off July 28 in Washington, D.C. Confirmed artists include Fat Joe (Terror Squad/Atlantic), Baby Bash (Universal), Tony Sunshine (Jive), Don Omar (VI Music) and Frankie J. Apple's iTunes Music Store is a tour sponsor.

MICHAEL PAOLETTA

For the latest breaking news, go to billboard.biz.
YOU WILL BE TRULY MISSED,

BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN.

YAMAHA

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www.americanradiohistory.com
Spin Buys Just Another Label Tactic

In reference to your article “Spin Buys New York Debate” (Billboard, June 19), there has been no debate, but it is obvious from this article you are trying to start one.

Your sources say they are concerned that our advertising program is manipulating the chart. If that is true, then why isn’t everyone up in arms over other record company practices as well?

Don’t flyways, free concerts, CD giveaways, free sports and concert tickets and local and independent promotion manipulate the charts as well.

Most of the things that go on in those areas are typically undisclosed. If there were really so many “sources,” why did not even one have the guts to go on the record?

The real story should be about the illegal practices to manipulate the charts, the legal tactics.

Ray Charles

Opinion

Ray Charles Transformed The Keys With His Gospel-Inflected Pop

This appreciation was written by Bill Holland, a veteran songwriting-pianist player and Billboard Washington, D.C., bureau chief. For additional Ray Charles tributes, see Ray & Blues by Gail Mitchell (page 19) and Studio Monitor by Christopher Walsh (page 70).

There are few piano players in rock, pop, blues or jazz who were not influenced and transformed by the artistry of Ray Charles.

I am referring not only to recording artists, but to the hundreds of thousands of weekend musicians who play clubs, bars, hotels and events around the globe.

Charles hit the scene 50 years ago. He died June 10 at the age of 73 (Billboard, June 19).

More than just a piano stylist, Charles was among the most influential improvisational singers in American popular music. Like Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday before him, he forever changed how pop music was sung.

Like his elders, Charles achieved this level of influence by taking songs for a joy ride, seducing the stiff tablature notes to loosen up a little (or a lot), maybe gliding over a few bars instead or zooming up and down the staff. It was an exercise in fun, and it made songs somehow more real.

Early on, he patterned himself on the equally innimatable Nat “King” Cole. Later he gravitated to the smooth cafe-blues style of Charles Brown. Then he took them to church.

Charles crafted a style that fused the feel and musical architecture of black gospel music (including a slow 6/8 waltz “feel,” hard bop jazz and urban blues. He concocted a potent cocktail and quickly won over a huge and enthusiastic worldwide audience.

What many forget is that in the mid-‘50s, Brother Ray’s new churchified style created a tempest. Sam Cooke and others had hinted at it, but Charles all but pounded the pavement. No one before had dared to adorn pop tunes with the raiment of black gospel so unabashedly. His fervid performances crumpled the wall separating secular and religious expression. Generations of performers joyfully flocked to his tent.

Without Charles as their lodestone, younger singers and keyboard players of the post-Woodstock era would have had a harder time pointing. Just look at what Chuck Berry or B.B. King were to the rock guitarists of the period.

The guideposts remained even as the generational pages turned.

You can hear Charles’ vocal delivery and his piano dishes whenever you turn up in popular music. He’s there at a Diana Krall concert or on an R. Kelly or Michael McDonald radio hit today. And, as we all know, the key to hit songs is what a song is consciously quoted; other times, it’s become just the way it’s done.

Ray Charles’ time for big hits had come and gone by the 1970s, but his influence has lingered, stubbornly refusing to diminish. It will forever be a distinct part of the patina that is American music.
Tour Support Slows, But Still A Big Factor

BY RAY WADDELL

Record labels have historically invested significant financial resources toward new acts' touring efforts, whether it be $20,000 for a regional van trek or $200,000 for a national bus outing.

But in today's world of shrinking revenue and tight budgets, tour support funds—though almost always recoupable—are becoming harder to come by.

"There's not as much money at any level, whether it's signing bonuses, recording albums, tour support or anything else," says Tim DuBois, senior partner of Universal South.

"But even in today's tight-budgeted world, record labels aren't going to harm a deal for lack of money," DuBois adds. "If we think something will work, we'll find the money."

But that may not happen without an artist manager's urging.

"Your support is still there, but I'm seeing it laid out contractually less and less," says Jamie Cheek, business manager with Nashville-based accounting firm Flood, Dunnstead, McCreary & McCarthy.

Cheek adds that budgets are now closely monitored. He says a group he works with that is signed to a major originally thought it would receive $75,000 for one month of touring on a bus. Later, the label came back with another offer: $30,000 and a van.

"That's a sign of the financial times in the label business," he says. "On the other hand, I had a rock band moving 20,000 units a week that was just approved for $200,000 for four months of touring for two months on a bus."

Some managers say that even if the dollar amount is diminishing, a lack of tour support would be a deal-breaker.

"If I was to sign a new artist to a major, I would absolutely ask for [tour support], and it would have to be part of the Cross Canadian Ragweed has seen sales spikes in markets it has played.

IT'S ALL MARKETING

Label executives are quick to point out that there is more to tour support than just money. Maximizing an artist's presence at retail and radio when in a market is often part of the deal.

In an effort to make every dollar count, in the wake of the recent Elektra/Atlantic merger, the new Atlantic label has created a field and tour marketing division. The department—essentially a restructured tour marketing division—has "far greater scope and responsibility," according to Chris Webby, VP of the new division.

Webby says the division encompasses tour, college, and lifestyle marketing; promotional touring; and street teams.

"In restructuring the vision of our new label, we realized we wanted to be much more of a company of road warriors," Webby says. "We want to make sure it fits into everyone's overall vision to develop artists through touring."

DuBois says that at Universal South, marketing funds can be used wherever appropriate.

"I have a saying that you can only spend a dollar once, and if a tour situation makes sense, it's not like we won't hesitate to pull [money] from somewhere else," he says.

Tour expenses go well beyond transportation; a crew must be hired and sometimes musicians as well. (Continued on page 17)
Brandy
Continued from page 11

Vibe editor in chief Mimi Valdes contends Brandy won’t have trouble fitting in. “The cover isn’t a marketing gimmick but more about a young woman who’s evolving... Even when she started as a teen, it wasn’t about any gimmick or novelty. It was always about the music.”

Musically, Brandy’s evolution is reflected in her choice of producers. Missy Elliott’s main man Timbaland assumed the production reins from longtime Brandy collaborator Rodney Jerkins. Other contributors include Kanye West and Organized Noise. “I really didn’t want to concentrate on being so technical this time,” Brandy says. “I just wanted to sing my heart out and connect with people. “With this album I explore my versatility. New Timbaland would bring that edge, that nastiness that I never had before. I wasn’t old enough or mature enough before to get into people’s hearts. Now I am.”

The first single is the West-produced “Talk About Our Love.” It is gaining chart momentum, thanks to several dance remixes by One Rascal and other producers. Atlantic is distributing double 12-inch promo and retail versions.

This issue, “Talk About Our Love” is No. 16 with a bullet on the Billboard Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart. It is No. 30 with a bullet on The Billboard Hot 100 singles chart.

Still, an R&B buyer for a major national chain says “Ardiosiac” faces stiff competition from highly anticipated June releases by G-Unit member Lloyd Banks (Billboard, June 19) and Jadakiss. “I’m not hearing a lot of people clamoring for Brandy’s album,” the buyer says. “Maybe a month ago when there weren’t that many new releases coming, it would have been a different story.”

COMMITTED TO MUSIC

Brandy was 15 when her first Atlantic album came out in 1994. The self-titled set sold 2.1 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Sophomore album “Never Say Never” (1998) stands at 4.5 million units, followed by “Full Moon” a 1.1 million.

“Ardiosiac” finds Brandy focusing 100% on her musical career. Between 1996 and 2001, she split her time between music and TV’s “Moesha.”

“This will be the first time we have had Brandy’s undivided attention,” Atlantic co-chairman Craig Kallman says.

The singer has already traveled to Europe in advance of this album’s late-June release there. She will return overseas in early July following an extensive U.S. promotion tour.

For the past month Brandy has visited retail and radio on a cross-country sweep covering 12 major markets. In addition to serving as a presenter at the BET Awards on the album’s street date, she has upcoming appearances on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” “Total Request Live,” “Today,” “The View” and MTV’s “Beach House.”

Brandy is also the artist for the month for AOL (June) and launch.com (July).

“We have Brandy scheduled on (promotional) lockdown from now to December,” Atlantic product manager Jol Brown says.

Brandy hopes people will accept her musical transition. “I’m not trying to be edgy, sassy, romantic, vulnerable or whatever emotions come across,” she says. “I really am all that.”

TO OUR READERS

The Beat is taking a break this week. The column will return next issue.
UMG Sues Insurance Firms In Wake Of TVT Suit

This week's column was written by Billboard senior writer Chris Morris.

Some court cases set off a domino effect of other legal actions. So it is with the ongoing legal tussle between Universal Music Group and TVT Records.

UMG has filed suit against three insurance companies, alleging the firms breached contracts indemnifying UMG against certain damages incurred in a suit brought by TVT.

UMG's action, filed June 1 in California Superior Court in Los Angeles (case No. BC316357), names as defendants three subsidiaries of New York-based American International Group: American Home Assurance, National Union Fire Insurance Co. of Pittsburgh and AIG Europe S.A.

According to the suit, UMG had policies with the AIG companies from 2001 through 2003. The music company claims it held three $2 million liability policies with American Home, a $50 million National/AIG Europe umbrella policy and a $10 million "entertainment errors and omission" policy with National.

These policies were to cover payments in legal cases, including those involving "property damage" and "media liability."

The policies named parent Vivendi Universal as the insured. They also insured certain unnamed UMG officers, directors and employees.

In August 2002, TVT sued UMG's Island Def Jam Music Group and its then-chairman Lyor Cohen. The suit claimed IDJMG and Cohen had wrongfully blocked TVT's release of an album featuring rapper Ja Rule and producer Irv Gotti.

UMG's action claims AIG was advised of the suit in October 2002. It alleges that a Nov. 14, 2002, letter from American denied coverage to UMG, and that National Union and AIG Europe failed to acknowledge coverage.

In March 2003, a jury returned a verdict in TVT's favor. That verdict is under appeal.

In May 2003, the jury awarded $24 million in compensatory damages to TVT. The court later reduced punitive awards, from $56 million to $3 million for Cohen and from $52 million to $24 million for IDJMG. That reduction is the subject of pending motions filed by TVT's attorneys (Billboard, April 3).

UMG claims that following the September 2003 entry of a final judgment in the TVT case, it was "unable to negotiate fair and reasonable terms with AIG to post a bond" and deposited more than $12 million with the court.

The suit alleges that on March 11, AIG stated that National Union refused to reimburse UMG for the costs of the defense in the TVT lawsuit and refused to indemnify the company.

AIG companies "have not paid any portion of the fees and costs that Island Def Jam and Mr. Cohen have incurred in the defense of the TVT lawsuit," according to UMG's action.

UMG seeks general and punitive damages to be determined, attorneys' fees and expenses and declarations that it has a right to indemnification under the disputed policies.

An AIG spokesman says the company does not comment on legal matters.

COURT WIN FOR MANSON: Marilyn Manson (real name Brian Warner) and bandmate Madonna Wayne Gacy (Stephen Bier) have resolved a key issue in a federal copyright-infringement suit filed in April against former band member Scott Putesky.

According to Putesky's attorney, Richard Wolfe, Putesky and the label Empire Musicworks have agreed to remove artwork and images on the album "Lunch Boxes & Choklit Cows" that are similar to copyrighted art by Manson. The set is a collection of tracks cut by Manson's early band the Spooky Kids.

Retailers will be able to sell off copies of the album bearing the artwork in question; the label will change the artwork on future pressings. It will also delete footage featuring an animated rendering of the art from the limited-edition DVD that accompanies some copies of the album.

Other issues in the action remain undecided.

Jeffrey Light of Myman Abell Fineman Greenspan & Light, one of Manson's attorneys, says that contrary to a press release issued by a public relations firm on behalf of Putesky and Empire, the suit has not been settled, and the plaintiffs will seek compensatory and punitive damages and attorneys' fees.

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Selah’s Members Will Be All Over The Place This Summer

The summer of 2004 looks to be a memorable one for Selah.

The Curb Records trio's new album, “Hiding Place,” arrived May 25, debuting at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Christian Albums chart. It sold more than 19,000 units the first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Each member will release a solo album Aug. 10. The sets will showcase the individual talents and distinct musical personalities that blend to make Selah so unique.

“Hiding Place” is Selah's fourth album. The trio once again combines hymns, worship songs and newer material. Selah’s innovation has earned numerous accolades, including five Gospel Music Assn. Dove Awards.

“Each album kind of had its own theme, and this one seems to be about refuge,” Selah's Allan Hall says. “It's all talking about leaning on God.”

The group's Nicol Sponberg adds, “One of the things we started out doing in the beginning was trying to bring comfort and encouragement to people who are hurting. That's been a theme through the record too.”

On “Hiding Place,” Hall, Sponberg and her brother, Todd Smith, serve up such classics as “There Is Power in the Blood” and “I Need Thee Every Hour,” alongside André Crouch gem “Through It All” and Celtic-flavored “You Raise Me Up” (previously recorded by Josh Groban). “You Raise Me Up” is No. 1 on the Hot Christian Adult Contemporary chart and No. 2 on Hot Christian Singles & Tracks.

As always, Selah includes African music on this album, and homages to the cultural influences the siblings absorbed growing up in the Congo, where their parents are missionaries.

Hall says his East Tennessee upbringing greatly influenced his solo disc. “Mine is a lot more rootsy and acoustic,” he says. “It's a lot like Alison Krauss and Nickel Creek but with a little more keyboard. It's not pure bluegrass or pure country, it's kind of its own little thing. There's a couple of hymns on there but also some story songs.”

The August release marks Sponberg's second solo outing. “This one's more European pop,” she says of the Mark Heimermann-produced CD, titled “Resurrection.” “I wrote five of the songs,” Sponberg says. “It kind of captures where I was in my life. You go through periods [when] maybe dreams have died. It’s just like God, when you think something is over, to resurrect it.”

Selah will tour in the fall, and its members plan to play some solo dates next year. But they stress that the group is not breaking up.

“The solo thing isn’t just like a hobby. For all of us, it’s something we’ve wanted to do for so long,” Smith says. “We are still trying to figure out how to balance that. I can see Selah being something we could do for years and years, but there will definitely be times where we’ll take some time off from the group and do solo stuff.”

Hall adds, “The styles that we are all doing don’t really compete with Selah. If I call that a real plus ... Out of the three, I’m probably the closest, but then even mine is a lot more rootsy than Selah would be.”

Memorial Day weekend. The event featured three days of devotions and nightly concerts.

Greater Vision, Babbie Mason and Ken Davis also made appearances. Legacy Five’s Roger Bennett has been battling cancer but surprised fans by performing.

Legacy Five is already planning next year’s homecoming. Tickets for Celebration! 2005 went on sale June 16.

NEWS NOTES: Jay Parrack is leaving Gold City Quartet after 10 years as tenor for the legendary Southern gospel group. Gold City records for Nashville-based Cathedral Records.

Gold City owner/bass singer Tim Riley says Parrack exited the group to spend more time with his family. Parrack will continue to sing with the act until a replacement is found. Gold City is taking applications and has set up an e-mail address (auditions@goldcityqt.com) to field potential candidates.

Look for Kevin Max to play the role of Joseph in the Visalia Theatre Company’s “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.”

Mike Cavale, half of the Hutson-Cavale team, says Max was chosen because “his natural charisma and stage presence is compelling enough, not to mention he’s a great singer.”

The show will run in late August and early September at the Visalia Fox Theatre in Visalia, Calif.
Freeman Finds New Peak; Dylan Jazzes Up The Apollo

When smooth jazz guitarist Russ Freeman and his manager Andy Howard formed Peak Records in 1994, they sought to provide a home for contemporary jazz musicians. A decade later, Peak sports an impressive roster that includes Freeman's smooth jazz pioneers the Rippingtons, the Braxton Brothers and saxophonists Gato Barbieri, Paul Taylor and Eric Marienthal.

"We wanted to combine business acumen with musical artistry," Freeman says. "We felt that having a musician involved with a label was a good thing for nurturing a culture of creativity."

A release on the horizon is vocalist Regina Belle’s “Lazy Afternoon,” produced by George Duke (July 13). After previous distribution deals with GRP and Windham Hill/BMG, Peak has been linked with Concord Records since 2000.

While Peak is celebrating its 10th anniversary, Freeman observes the 10-year reunion of his duo project with David Benoit. The pianist was also a founding member of the Rippingtons and has recently joined the Peak roster. Smooth-toned and melody-driven “The Benoit/Freeman Projekt 2.0” is the long-awaited sequel to 1994’s “The Benoit/Freeman Projekt.” It arrives June 22.

"Ever since we recorded the first album, fans all over the world have been asking for a follow-up," Freeman says. "Our schedules made it impossible until recently." The CD boasts a stripped-down, largely acoustic sound embellished by Benoit's orchestral arrangements. Guests include trumpeter Chris Botti and a surprise appearance by country star Vince Gill, who delivers Al Anderson's "Two Survivors" with a bossa-nova feel.

"We were recording the strings in Nashville so we decided to call Vince," Freeman says. "He was intrigued by trying something different."

Even though Freeman knew Benoit's contract with Verve was up for renewal, he had no ulterior motives in doing the duo project. He says they recorded the album based on their long history of working together.

"Of course, I had my fingers crossed," Freeman says. "Ultimately I came down to Peak being able to offer David support for all his other efforts, including orchestral/classical works and a children's album."

JAZZED UP DYLAN: While in the midst of anxiously counting down the time before its classy state-of-the-art digs open in October on Columbus Circle, Jazz at Lincoln Center headed further uptown to Harlem's hallowed Apollo Theater to present its third annual spring gala.

The benefit concert on June 7 raised funds for the nonprofit group's performance and educational programming. In keeping with past years, JALC produced a peerless show teeming with musical surprises. The 2004 edition showcased an astounding two-song outing by Bob Dylan performing in jazz mode.

The Wynton Marsalis Septet served as the house band for the 90-minute concert. Al Jarreau opened with two servings of effulgent scat; Sammy Cahn's standard "Teach Me Tonight" and a rollicking ride through the Dave Brubeck classic "Take Five."

He was followed by 14-year-old rising-star vocalist Renee Olstead, who exhibited her pitch-perfect Dinah Washington-like voice on "Summertime" and "Sunday Kind of Love."

Then the elder Marsalis sibling, Branford, commanded the stage with his tenor saxophone prowess. He and his trumpeter (Continued on page 16)
Jazz Notes

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brother shared the spotlight for a buoyant jaunt through “Self-Portrait of the Bean,” which featured the pair in jazz playground fashion: scurrying, laughing, echoing and bouncing off each other on their instruments.

With his touring band pianist Larry Goldberg in tow, James Taylor demonstrated his jazz knowledge on two originals. After the lighthearted “Mean Old Man,” he delivered his enduring ’70s hit “Don’t Let Me Be Lonely Tonight,” with a soulful end solo by Marsalis’ alto saxist Wess “Warm Daddy” Anderson.

Dylan’s short set proved to be climactic. After MC Cedric the Entertainer jokingly introduced him (“When you think of jazz and the Apollo Theater, only one person comes to mind: Bob Dylan”), the bard made himself at home in a hip, blues-steeped jazz setting.

With crooking, near-whisper vocals and fine harmonica breaks, he brilliantly reinvented “It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry” and “Don’t Think Twice, It’s All Right” with the house band in jazz synch. Given the performance, it’s not such a stretch imagining Dylan exploring a jazzified zone sometime in the future.

VISIONARIES AT PLAY: Shortly before the JVC Jazz Festival begins to inundate New York with its wide range of music, a crew of alternative jazz artists set up camp for six evenings of flying-without-a-net musical adventures.

Produced by the grass-roots peace-and-justice organization Arts for Art, the Vision Festival celebrated its ninth year with a left-of-center series of concerts and multi-arts events May 25-31 at the Center at St. Patrick’s Old Cathedral.

The festival showcased a who’s who of out-leaning, free-flying improvisers (150 artists in 30 different ensembles, most of whom are generally shut out of mainstream jazz fests). Featured non-conformists included Butch Morris conducting his 15-piece band New York Skyscraper, guitarist James Blood Ulmer and bassist William Parker.

The Revolutionary Ensemble — comprising violinist Leroy Jenkins, drummer Jerome Cooper and bassist Sirone—performed live for the first time in nearly three decades, and the Sun Ra Arkestra commemorated saxophonist Marshall Allen’s 80th birthday.

Fest highlights included two May 26 performances: Equal Interest with Jenkins, pianist Myra Melford and reeds man Joseph Jarman, and bassist Henry Grimes’ trio with pianist Marilyn Crispell and drummer Andrew Cyrille.

THREE DOT LOUNGE: New York-based Latin jazz indie ZOHQ Music has linked with Allegro Music for exclusive distribution in the United States and Canada. Allegro is already working ZOHQ’s back catalog and will begin distributing new releases, including percussionist Bobby Sanabria’s latest, in August…Contemporary jazz saxophonist Grady Nichols has signed with Compendia Music Group. His Compendia Records debut, “Sophistication,” produced by Jeff Lorber, streets July 27…Finally, my apologies. Dan Melnick of Festival Productions points out that Herbie Hancock’s Playboy Jazz Festival appearance was his first. In fact, Hancock has played the fest numerous times.

We salute and remember, with everlasting fondness, our beloved client, Ray Charles, 1930 - 2004. From all your eternal friends at

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Guitars Gear Up For Improved Live Sound

BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

Two audio developers say their newest products can change the sound of live performances. Line 6, a manufacturer of digital modeling guitars and amplifier products, and Bose, which makes high-end audio products, are collaborating on a system designed to improve amplification for performing guitarists.

During a June 9 press conference at the Center Staging rehearsal facility in Burbank, Calif., the two companies discussed ways they will integrate Line 6's Variax modeling guitars and PODxt guitar and bass amplifier and effect modeling with Bose's Cylindrical Radiator loudspeaker.

New PODxt units will feature optimization software and a new setting for plugging directly into a Cylindrical Radiator speaker. For existing PODxt owners, the optimization software will be available in a month via free download through the unit's USB port.

The Guitar Center chain and Bose will sell a package consisting of a Variax electric or acoustic guitar, a PODxt and a Cylindrical Radiator loudspeaker.

"We're very excited to announce the development of what we feel is a revolutionary approach to solving the problems of live sound amplification for guitarists," Line 6 co-founder and VP of product development Marcus Ryle tells Billboard. "We believe that it's a very significant achievement that will change the future and the enjoyment of live performing music."

The sound-reinforcement industry developed and evolved in response to amplified music and larger performing venues. However, inherent problems persist in conventional live performance systems. For electric guitarists, these issues include the acoste directionality of guitar amplifiers, which can sound very harsh to listeners directly in front of them; the rapid diminishing of sound level over distance; and the need to travel with a large selection of amplifiers and effects to achieve a wide range of tones.

For acoustic guitarists, accurate amplification of the instrument is extremely difficult. Extraneous noise transmitted by microphones, feedback and the piezo pickup's inability to faithfully convey the timbre of the instrument are common difficulties.

The Line 6 Variax guitars model many classic instruments. Likewise, the PODxt adapts the circuitry and tone-shaping characteristics of classic amplifiers and effects to software models, which can be refined with virtual microphone placement options and such further effects as reverb, compression and tremolo.

The Bose Cylindrical Radiator, introduced in 2003, also takes a unique approach to loudspeaker design. Unlike conventional speakers, the Cylindrical Radiator is seven feet tall with a flagpole shape. Placed behind the performer, the speaker radiates evenly across the stage and throughout the audience, says Ken Jacob, director/chief engineer of Bose Live Music Technology Group.

"In the area of guitar amplification, this allows the guitarist to create his tone any way—with the Line 6 digital modeling technology—and then, for the first time, deliver that tone across the stage and throughout an audience of several hundred with very little change in tone or level," Jacob says.

"Now, the PODxt, along with the Variax—or any guitar, for that matter—can give you the perfect sound you would get at that one place," Ryle says, such as a recording studio. "The Cylindrical Radiator spreads that out evenly for the stage and the audience so that everyone can hear the hard work that has been put into crafting a great tone."

Tour Support

Continued from page 11

Other details include gear, wardrobe, production elements and meals.

DOES TOURING SELL RECORDS?
The extent to which touring affects record sales remains debatable even today. But DuBois says a sales spike from touring is not a myth, as it has sometimes been portrayed.

"You definitely see it, especially with a band like Cross Canadian Ragweed," he says. "You can tell when they've been through a market, even without airplay. In mainstream country, you have to have a peak in airplay when [the act] comes through to see a spike."

Irish artist Damien Rice has toured since well before his debut release in June 2003 on Vector Recordings. "Since the setup of his record, Damien has toured extensively in the U.S. and I'm happy, to say his last tour of theaters was completely sold out," Rovner says. Sales of Rice's album "O" spike 'every time he goes out, in every market, without fail," Rovner says.

Wehby cites Jason Mraz and Jet as acts that have received and benefited from label tour support.

"When Jet goes back out on the road in July, they'll be selling enough
tickets where they don't need tour support anymore," Wehby says. "What's that we call 188 graduation day? the day the band is off tour support."

In one of the more controversial developments of late, labels have made noise about tapping into touring revenue. They say they are entitled to portions of that money, because they have invested heavily in developing a brand that potentially creates revenue that labels never see. DuBois says short of voicing support of that concept, but he does say that "the current label model has to change. There are some intriguing possibilities out there where record companies become more like managers and managers more like record labels."

"We're all interested in building a band that makes a lot of money, and sometimes the lines get blurred," he adds. "Someone has to protect the artists' interests."

Rovner takes a similar view. "Our job, both on the label side and the management side, is to help create careers that endure. I wear the hat of a label and a manager all day, and the hat looks the same."

CAREER PARTNERS

At Nashville's new Equity Music Group, president/CEO Mike Kraski says label and artist are more like career partners.

"With the existing major-label models there's always a line drawn in terms of tour support, because record sales don't justify the expenditure on a market-by-market basis," Kraski says. At Equity, tour support is not 100% recoupable to the label, Kraski says, "because down the line we'll share in that revenue, so we're more motivated to invest in everything."

Most agree the traditional model is heading toward extinction.

"When you look at all the revenue that flows in to an artist, record companies are forced to be venture capitalists, and they only tap into one source of income," DuBois continues. "And that [label] income is under threat from several different angles. Any business person would say that situation has to change."
50 Brings Hip-Hop To The Speedway

Though the connection between hip-hop and stock car racing may seem a stretch, it's not as much of one as some may imagine. Consider 50 Cent's appearance at the recent Days of Thunder, a NASCAR-styled motorsports series at the Rockingham speedway in Corby, England.

Mike Lighty and Ice, 50 Cent's handlers at Emmel Communications, the live-music arm of management firm Violator, put together the deal that hooked the artist up with Days of Thunder.

"It went great," Lighty says. "This was a different marketing pitch for him. You don't see too many rappers at stock car races."

Negotiations began in March for 50 Cent's appearance at the June 6 race. "We had a few months of back and forth to get the money where it needed to be," says Ice, aka Jeremiah Younossi. "We tried to structure the deal so it would be impossible to turn down."

Ice says they did not want to impact any European dates, and they waited until a scheduled Wembley Arena show in London had sold out. They also had to make sure the money was right, and the final guarantee ended up doubling the initial offer.

"It ended up being one of the biggest offers of his career," Ice says. "People in hip-hop have never seen offers like this."

Handling negotiations on the other end was Rockingham COO Ashley Power. Ice stresses there was much more to the deal than money.

"The idea was to bring young people to the track, and they wanted to go to after something really prestigious," Ice explains. "Once we got the money where it needed to be, we discussed putting a car in the race as part of the offer.

"Well over 20,000 people saw 50 Cent perform outside the track after the race. Ice says the artist loved the experience. "For him, to watch the race with his car out there was very exciting." 50 Cent would like to see rappers hearken back to NASCAR in the United States. "We're waiting for the call," Lighty says.

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STORMY WEATHER: The same storms that made a swamp out of the Danzinger grounds (see story, page 1) hampered the Country Music Ass'n's Country Music Festival June 12 in Nashville. A large crowd was waiting to see Gretchen Wilson at the Riverfront Park stage, but her performance was delayed and fans were advised to take refuge at nearby shops and restaurants. Wilson did her set when the storm passed, but the evacuation had had to be repeated in the middle of Jamie O'Neal's set when another storm system approached.

Yet another severe storm system threatened the Coliseum shows that evening while Diamond Rio was performing. This time, fans were directed to shelter in the stadium.

The show resumed after 90 minutes, but some artists were unable to take the stage. Several performances that were lost on Saturday were made up on Sunday, while others could not be made up because of scheduling difficulties.

SOBRO SERIES: A Friday-night outdoor concert series in Nashville's SoBro district will run for eight weeks beginning July 23. They Might Be Giants kicks off the series. Also booked are Cowboy Mouth (Aug. 6), Cracker (Aug. 13) and Better Than Ezra with The Pat McGee Band (Aug. 20). The series is presented by Blueshore Rhythm & Blues Co., club owner Rob Fortney and produced by Mad Bookin' & Events.

Ice adds, "It's all about the possibilities. All it takes is a few people to break it open." Cara Lewis at the William Morris Agency books 50 Cent. "William Morris does a fantastic job on the tours," Ice says. "We try to create other opportunities."

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Broussard Grows Up On Solo Debut

BY GAIL MITCHELL

She first attracted attention on the “Love Jones” soundtrack with her mesmerizing cover of Minnie Riperton’s “Inside My Love.” That was in 1997.

Seven years later, R&B singer/songwriter Trina Broussard is finally realizing a career dream. Universal/Motown Records Group will release her solo set “The Same Girl” June 22.

The journey from buzz-generating album track to full-length project has taken a long time. In fact, this isn’t Broussard’s first stab at a solo album.

The veteran native began pursuing a music career in 1990. She had relocated to Atlanta, where she landed background vocal gigs for Bobby Brown, Babyface, Mariah Carey and Toni Braxton, among others.

Her session work caught the ear of another Atlanta resident, producer/songwriter Jermaine Dupri. She signed to his then-Columbia-distributed label, So So Def.

Following her “Love Jones” acclaim, Broussard co-wrote “Here We Go Again” for Aaliyah Franklin in 1998, So So Def released Broussard’s own single, “Love You So Much,” a year later. Her planned self-titled album failed to follow, however. Broussard insists she’s glad the record never appeared.

“We got to the threshold,” she says, “but the decision to not release the album was divine order. I wasn’t ready mentally; I had some growing up to do. I hadn’t found my voice.”

In the interim Broussard sang with Boney James, provided background vocals for Al Jarreau and Kirk Franklin and toured with Rahsaan Patterson. She also joined forces with current manager Bart Phillips, CEO of Atlanta-based Beacon Street Music, the two had worked together when he was at So So Def.

Motown chief Kedar Massenburg signed Broussard in 2002. She and writing partner Ra-Te Valverde set to work on what became the majority of “The Same Girl.” Broussard also co-produced the album, working with Gordon “Composer” Williams (Laurynn Hill, Santana), James Jaz and Steve Harvey (not the comedian).

“This time I dug deep, and I feel like I’m singing better than ever,” Broussard says. “Not to take anything away from that first album, but to me the vocals were contrived. I grew up on this [new] album. “The Same Girl” revolves around themes of love, friendship and perseverance reminiscent of music by such Broussard influences as Anita Baker and Donny Hathaway. The lead single, “Losing My Mind,” is the sole holdover from Broussard’s original So So Def project.

Airplay momentum has been slow so far. Phillips says he expected that scenario, given the music industry climate. “Anything organic like this is going to be a slow grind. But we’re up for it.”

Among the single’s early supporters is adult contemporary WHUR Washington, D.C. “Trina has a beautiful voice and unique style,” PD Dave Dickinson says. “Hopefully, now her time has come. She’s definitely a talent.”

To further build radio airplay and consumer awareness, Universal/Motown hosted listening events in New York clubs the Soul Cafe, Joe’s Pub and the Sugar Bar (owned by Motown alumni Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson).

“We discussed the best way to utilize our budget,” Universal/Motown director of marketing Liz Loblack says. “We decided the best way was to do some listening events.”

Broussard has also been featured in Vibe, appeared on “Soul Train” and performed an acoustic set at a convention hosted by travel magazine Spa Odyssey Network. Her gig for the magazine—which caters to top-ranking African-American female executives—led to another promotional opportunity: Broussard has signed on as spokeswoman for Ashley Stewart, a national clothing chain that specializes in fashion for larger women.

The chain’s fall campaign, launching in August, will blanket markets: New York, Chicago, Detroit, Houston and Atlanta. Along with using Broussard’s likeness, the chain will sell her album in its stores.

Phillips is also talking to Baccardi about underwriting additional tour support for Broussard. “We want to keep her out there performing and building a fan base. That’s the meat of it for us.”

In the meantime, a confident Broussard is glad she still has the chance to sing. “I could have been doing something else,” she says. “But the walls have been torn down, and my anxiety is gone. I’m happy to be here again.”

Free, Parr Will Host Billboard Awards

BET personality Free of “106 & Park” will co-host the Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Awards show. Syndicated Radio One airs personality Buss Parr will join her at the mic. The Aug. 6 show at Miami Beach’s Barton G will wrap the fifth annual Billboard/American Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference. The confab takes place crosstown at the Eden Roc Resort, Aug. 4-6.

R. Kelly and Jay-Z head the list of award nominees. The 2004 Founders Award honorees are Isaac Hayes and KRS-One.

JERMAINE & JAVIS: So So Def inked a joint-venture deal with Atlanta-based Triycle Records and its 16-year-old artist Javis. Under terms of the agreement, So So Def will release Javis’ R&B/hip-hop single, “Radio,” this month. Javis co-wrote the track, which Jee will distribute.

DAWN OF A NEW PROJECT: Dawn Robinson and husband Andre Allen are busy promoting the first release on their Movemakers Entertainment label (Billboard, Nov. 1, 2003). “L.Y.E.” by the Dre Allen Project bowls July 6 through Tommy Boy Records.

But that’s not all. Look for an En Vogue reunion in 2005. Robinson says she and fellow original members Terry Ellis, Cindy Herron and Maxine Jones will begin working on a new album next year after Herron gives birth.

Los Angeles-based Movemakers and Herron and Ellis’ Funky Girl label will release the project.

MUSICAL NOTES: Too long absent from the record- ing scene, Lalaha Hathaway returns on Verge/GRP’s upcoming Luther Vandross tribute album, “Forever, For Always, For Luther.” Donny Hathaway’s talented daughter contributes her version of “Forever, For Always, For Love.” Among other artists interpreting signature Vandross tunes are Ledisi and Kirko Bangz.

Hathaway will publicly perform the song for the first time at ASCAP’s annual Rhythm & Soul Music Awards. The June 28 soirée takes place at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. Joi has titled her new album “Tenyse Slim Is The Bomb.” It arrives in stores Aug. 24 on Raphael Saadiq’s Navaree-distributed Pookie Entertain ment imprint... Safaree Samuels & Karlin (Whitney Houston, Brandy) have signed a new multiyear publishing deal with EMI. Having wrapped tracks with newcomers Jada and Jazmine Sullivan, the pair are currently in the studio with Nelly, Toni Braxton, Heather Headley and Shawn Kane.

IN MEMORIAM: I had the pleasure of interviewing Ray Charles two years ago (Billboard, June 22, 2002). I was excited and scared as hell. After all, this man personified R&B.

But once he and I shook hands, it was all over. He put me at ease right away. We laughed and talked about his career, music, life—and all too soon it was time to leave. (Continued on page 23)
Rhythm & Blues
Continued from page 19

His emotional connection in person and in his music is what immediately came to mind when I learned of his death. As I was gathering quotes from his friends and musical associates for his obituary (Billboard, June 19), that same chord reverberated in their reminiscences.

"He taught me how to listen," says Mike John, a former Raquette. "He said people hear with their eyes, but he taught me to see with my ears. He had his hearing was so keen that he could hear a rat screech on cotton. Because of him, I can sit in front of an orchestra and hear only one instrument. He taught me how to find that note."

Everyone naturally recalls such signature hits like "Georgia on My Mind," "I Can't Stop Loving You," "America the Beautiful" and "I've Got a Woman." For me, the quintessential Brother Ray song is "Come Rain or Come Shine." Listen to that song sometime, to the joy and ache in his voice. Then you'll truly understand what love is all about.

"That's what you do with a song—at least that's what I try to do," Charles told me. "I try to become what the writer is talking about and put my feeling into it."

"The point is just to make the music good, because it's going to live on long after you're dead," he said. "That's what I strive for. A song has to say something. A song should give people something they can react to. If you're able to really make what you're doing believable, then that's soul."

Thank goodness the Lord gave us all the chance to share Ray's soul.

CARRYING A TORCH: Songwriter/producer Dallas Austin will carry the Olympic torch in Atlanta. He joins a list of relay runners that includes Sean "P. Diddy" Combs.

SAVE THE DATE: The Hip-Hop Peace & Unity Fest (hiphopfest.org) travels to Boston and Toronto this year. The free outdoor musical festival lands in Boston's City Hall Plaza July 16-17 and in Toronto at a location to be determined July 23-25. Inherated Rhythm and Grit Records are producing the event in association with the cities and the Temple of Hip-Hop.
Natasha, Saavedra Riding Latin Wave

BY LEILA COBO

JD Natasha, a promising 16-year-old from Miami, and Colombian-born Saavedra are about to make separate runs at U.S. stardom. Their timing couldn’t be better. After a year in which only two female artists reached the top 20 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart, the industry is witnessing a veritable female explosion.

Since the beginning of 2004, two female artists—Paulina Rubio and Jennifer Peña—have debuted at No. 1 on the chart. And just as important, a new crop of female artists is looking to capture an audience by performing original material.

The concept isn’t new, but it is one that has not had major names since Shakira burst out in the late ’90s. Then, last year, singer/songwriter Sonya Sonora returned to the limelight, and Natalia LaFourcade gained major success in Mexico with her own music. This year, alternative singer Juliesta Venegas scored massive sales with her newest album, “Si.”

Now, substantial attention is turning to Natasha—whose full name is Natasha Janeth Dueñas. She signed with EMI Music Latin last year, and the label has been preparing for her debut ever since.

In November, when he had just signed JD Natasha, label president/CEO Jorge Pino was already talking about her to Billboard. “There has been a lack of young girls in Latin music,” Pino said. “But the American market is full of young girls. I was very focused on finding a girl who was 15, 16 years old.”

Natasha’s timing, then, was impeccable. But the music—delivered on a rough cassette demo tape—and the convincing tape featured her own rock/pop compositions in English and Spanish. This led to Natasha’s debut album, which was produced by Sebastian Krys (Carlos Vives, Gloria Estefan, Obie Bermúdez) and Gustavo Menéndez. Although the album, “Imperfecto/Imperfecta,” isn’t due until July 13 and she hasn’t been playing gigs, Natasha already has an agent at William Morris and a publicist, Rogers & Cowan.

Natasha also has the label’s promotion power behind her. EMI is presenting the artist to media and industry bigwigs at listening sessions across the country, where Natasha plays live. Guests include radio and TV execs.

In addition, Natasha is the featured artist of “AOL Impulse.” The new AOL Musica franchise, loosely modeled after AOL’s Breakers program, launched with Natasha in February and has been following the development of her album and career since then.

“This artist really stands out,” says Richard Bull, AOL’s Latin music director. “She has raw talent and energy.”

Another standout is Saavedra. María Isabel Saavedra—who goes by only her last name—is a singer/songwriter first and a singer second. Her songs have been performed by Oscar D’Leon and Gisselle, among others. But now her deep contralto is giving a new voice to her songs. “Saavedra” was released last month on fledgling indie label Gili Music and is distributed by Universal Music Latino. Saavedra wrote nearly all of the album’s tracks. “Faltas” was composed with producer/songwriter Rodolfo Castillo. “Los de la Mata” was penned with Al Castillo and “No Te Importe Saber” was written by Rene Touzet.

“No Te Importe Saber” is a duet with singer/songwriter Armando Manzanero, who is also Saavedra’s mentor.

“I met him [at] a concert in Colombia, and he invited me to write with him in Merida [Mexico],” says Saavedra, who now lives in Miami. “That’s how this album was born.” Following that encounter, Saavedra arrived in Miami looking for a record deal. But she was sidetracked when writing gigs started to come her way.

“The songs that made it onto her album, she says, “are mine for the and no one else. They have my personal stamp.”

Saavedra’s music is acoustic, with a Caribbean rhythm and feel. Her songs have a singer/songwriter’s personal touch and well-crafted lyrics, and they also boast catchy hooks and choruses.

Without major label backing, radio play has been slow to respond, which is usually the case for new names in Latin music. Former Sony Discos executive VP Jorge Meléndez, who is consulting on the project, says programmers were given the option of playing different singles in Puerto Rico and the United States.

“I would like to break some myths,” Saavedra says. “I would like to show that women can write; we can feel attractive, we can think and say important things and [we can] change the course of a country.”

Syntek Opens Doors With His ‘Amor’

While performing a series of shows at Mexico City’s Auditorio Nacional, singer/songwriter Aleks Syntek received some good news. His single “Duelo el Amor,” a duet with Spanish singer Ana Torroja, was the Hot Shot Debut on the Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart in last week’s issue. It entered at No. 27.

It is a big showing for Syntek, a major artist in his native Mexico who has yet to make an impact in the United States. His only other track to chart on Hot Latin Tracks was 2002’s “Por Yolverte a Ver,” which peaked at No. 47.

“Personally, I’m very happy with the results,” Syntek says of his album, “Mundo Late,” released earlier this year on EMI Latin. “Personally, I think it’s my best-round album, and I thought it was a perfect album to open doors in other places.”

These “other places” include Spain, where “Duelo el Amor” is Syntek’s first track to debut on the country’s charts.

Syntek’s duet with Torroja was helpful in securing that chart bow, although he says he didn’t record it with Spanish charts in mind. “I recorded that duet because I admire her and am extremely fond of her,” he says. “If, in addition, she became a godmother for me to enter the Spanish market, the result is even better.”

Syntek’s prior album, “De Noche a la Ciudad,” was not released in Spain by EMI. Instead, it came out on Music, which did not promote him in the country. In fact, “De Noche” was not released on EMI in most territories, which marks the difference with his current situation, where EMI has pledged full support.

In the United States, such support is changing the perception of Syntek as that of an alternative artist whose music is not intended for airplay on Latin radio in the States.

“My music is pop,” he says. “The difference is I’m a musician, and I play my songs on the piano. But that doesn’t make me an alternative rocker. And I’ve finally seen a change in that. The Latin audience understands that an artist who plays pop can also be a musician and play a guitar.”

Syntek is currently on a promotional tour in Spain. He is planning a U.S. tour, booked by the Agency, for late summer.

LOPEZ TAKES THE GRAMMYS: At the 2003 Latin Grammy Awards, host George Lopez told several jokes that some Latin viewers considered controversial.

While some in the audience moaned, most found the irreverent, self-deprecating humor to be amusing. Viewers must have agreed, as the show saw an increase in ratings, and Lopez was asked to return as host of the 2004 edition.
Latin Billboard Award Female Pop Album “Por Ti”

“Por Ti” debut #1 in Top Latin Albums

“Por Ti” (album) certified gold by RIAA

ASCAP recognizes Ednita with the Hispanic Heritage Award

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PR Roberto Clemente Coliseum

15
PR Roberto Clemente Coliseum
(2nd. Season)

JUNE
18
29

JULY
3
4

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SonyMusic
### Latin Pop Airplay

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### Regional Mexican Airplay

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Young artists who boldly fuse hip-hop sounds and attitude with traditional rhythms are driving a new urban movement within the regional Mexican genre.

But this new movement has had its share of growing pains. Urban regional acts face obstacles including a lack of effective promotion and marketing and elusive radio play.

Yet success is possible, as such new groups as Akwid, Mexiclan and Kumbia Kings have proved.

Record company executives use the term “urban regional” to refer to new acts that infuse traditional norteño and banda rhythms with hip-hop and urban elements.

The movement ranges from the cumbia-dance grooves of the Kumbia Kings and ATM to the hardcore banda/norteño/hip-hop fusion of Akwid, Mexiclan and Lil J. On the fringe are a variety of artists from hardcore Latino rappers like Chingo Bling and

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Indepednents On The Rise
*Despite Airplay Hurdle, Artists Herald Labels’ Flexibility*

**BY RAMIRO BURR**

Despite the challenges facing the broader music industry, independent and artist-owned labels working within the regional Mexican music community are blooming.

Artists and managers herald the freedom and flexibility of indie label culture.

“We can react quicker to changes in the market, or change course in midstream if we feel we have to, whereas major labels, you have to wait until you get approval from upstairs,” says Alan Baxter, president of Platinum Artists Management, who works with Emilio Navaira, David Marez, Intocable, DJ Kane, Iman and Dope House Records.

“The down side comes when sometimes, working with an indie or artist-owned label, you just don’t have the clout to get radio play or into the right stores for distribution,” Baxter adds.

While regional Mexican has always had a healthy number of independent companies, recent developments have bolstered the indie sector.

Within the past two years, several artists have moved from the majors to join indie or launch their own labels, including Los Palominos, La Sombra, Jay Perez, David Lee Garza, Ramiro Herrera, Ruben Ramos, Stefani, Gary Hobbs, Michael Salgado, La Tropa F, Chente Barrera, Roberto Pulido, Little Joe, Marcos Orozco, Pete Astudillo and Jimmy Gonzalez y Maxi.

Meanwhile, Aniceto Molina, a master of the Colombian-rooted vallejero style, signed with San Antonio’s ARC Discos, while “Juana la Cubana” legend Fito Oliveros is on Houston’s F.O.C. label.

**MORE CONTROL**

Veteran Tejano group David Lee Garza y Los Musicales spent more than a decade with EMI Latin and Sony Discos. But band manager Joey Rodriguez says the decision to go independent is all about having more control.

“We can record the music we want and release the singles we think will work without having to argue with the label heads,” Rodriguez says. “We have also been reconnecting again with the industry people, from radio DJs to record buyers.”

“We have known many of these people for years but before, we had the label rep making all the calls and arrangements. Now we’re doing it and in many cases, renewing old friendships,” Rodriguez says. “We’re also reaching out to the Wal-Marts and other chains to see what will work best for everyone.”

Predictably, the best opportunities usually come when majors partner with indies, combining distribution, promotion and marketing.

“Generally, major labels have a lot of big artists, and they usually do not deal with developing artists like the indie labels,” says Abel A. De Luna Jr., president of A&M Music, whose group Mexican is distributed by Univision Records. Mexican is a California duo that combines regional Mexican and hip-hop on its self-titled debut.

The advantage comes, De Luna says, when the indie’s ability to scout and groom a new artist is combined with a major TV show like “Sábado Gigante” on the Univision Network and “The Roof” on Mun2.

(Continued on page 34)

**The Distrib Landscape**

*Mom And Pop Wholesalers Make A Comeback*

**BY RAMIRO BURR**

When Latin music sales begin to rise in the ’90s, part of that increase resulted from the shift to mainstream distribution and consolidation.

But with consolidation and structural change across the music industry, a new independent spirit has returned. And that’s evident within the distribution ranks that handle regional Mexican music.

With the closing of Southwest Wholesale, a key distributor serving the genre, and the consolidation of major-label distribution channels, other indies are taking up the slack. They include C.E. Distributors, South Central Music, Angelica, Grupo Central de Discos and TejanoClassics.

Houston’s Dope House signed with Memphis’ Select-O-Hits for distribution to traditional music retail outlets and also created its own distribution arm, HustleTown, for flea markets and mom-and-pop stores.

“We were already established as a Latino distributor when the majors started polling back,” says Chano Elizondo, owner of C.E. Distribution. “All the demise of the [major] labels did was make retail chains and mom-and-pop stores come to me, especially for Tejano product.”

Elizondo says his smaller company, like other distributors, has distinct advantages over major-label distributors.

“We’re more attuned to local and regional tastes, and we know how to rack the stores like the Wal-Marts, the Kmart,” he says. In the past, he notes, a major-label distributor could “saturate the market with CDs, but there was also a lot of returns.”

“We’re more attuned to local tastes.”

—CHANO ELIZANDO, C.E. DISTRIBUTION

Another player is South Central Music, a new Houston-based distributor.

“With the closing of Southwest Wholesale, there came opportunities for others to fill the huge void that was created for independent artists and labels to get their product out in the marketplace,” says GM Armando Sanchez, who spent nine years as a Sony Latin sales director. “It seemed a natural opportunity for me to use my contacts at national retail and in the artist community to help fill some of that void.”

South Central distributes to Anderson Merchandisers (Wal-Mart), Hastings and several independent distributors across the country.

“But my approach is fairly conservative versus other distribution companies: I will only recommend a national spread of product when the product warrants it, via promotional tour or previous sales history,” he says. “This is far more efficient in the end.”

Among South Central’s recent distribution projects are the Jay Perez album “Mi Destino” and Los Palominos’ “Canciones de la Rockola,” both on the new Urbana Records label, based in Houston and calling itself a “distributor of independent labels.”

Aggressive promotion and 24-hour hustle are the new strategies for other indie labels like Tejaz Records. The label boasts several veterans that were formerly with majors: Ramiro Herrera, Latin Breed, Elida, Shelly Lares and Los Desperadoz.

“To survive, we’ve been focusing on promoting the music directly to the...”

(Continued on page 34)

**New Blood**

Urban regional Mexican music is led by a young group of daring players who mix rap, rock and hip-hop. They have made a splash with punk-style hair, bright hip-hop clothes, and a fearless urban attitude, eager to buck the status quo.

Here are profiles of some of the artists who are part of a new generation challenging tradition in Tejano, norteno, banda and other genres.

**BY RAMIRO BURR**

With a powerful voice and spirited demeanor, Yolanda Perez is making her mark. Perez’s debut Fonovisa album, “Dejeme Llorar,” impressed banda enthusiasts with its rich traditional appeal. Yet the Los Angeles-based singer broke through earlier this year with “Estoy Enamorada,” a rap duet with DJ Cheto that made Perez a hot commodity. Her album also features the song “Bueno, Buey,” a duet with the late nortero corridista Adan Sanchez.

The Gomez brothers, Sergio and Francisco, better-known as Alwidx, are among the innovators of the urban regional movement. Their roots embody what the music represents. Born in Mexico, the brothers grew up in a tough Los Angeles neighborhood. They embraced their Mexican culture but also the urban sounds around them. Alwidx’s first album, “Proyecto Alwidx” (Univision), has sold more than 134,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and earned Alwidx a Grammy Award nomination.

Mexiclan, the L.A. duo of Sens “Leon” Vargas and Marco Antonio Perez, has carved their nortero back- ground and its present-day urban influence. With their self-titled 2003 debut for Univision, they take a page from Alwidx’s blueprint with a deliberate, intense style on the track “Stupid & Creido.” The group pays homage to its Mexican roots with “Me Siento Bien.” While the music fuses two very different cultures, Mexiclan’s message never strays far from a common theme: pride.

ATM, which hails from Austin, gave the cumbia style a hip-hop upgrade with its 2003 Univision release, “A TODA MAQUINA.” ATM is fronted by David Elizondo, who grew up listening to R&B acts like Lionel Richie and the Temptations as well as traditional Mexican music. He is a veteran singer whose career included a stint with the Kumbia Kings. With ATM, Elizondo takes the urban influence a step further, leaning more on the R&B of his heroes and infusing it with Mexican flavor.

Although Big Circo may be best-known for its outrageous punk rock image that includes piercings and clown makeup, its music is gimmick-free. The group exploded onto the scene with a groundbreaking style that used traditional Mexican instruments to create an alternative sound. Originally from Brownsville, Texas, the vet- eran norteno group decided to experiment by blending in hip-hop. EMI released the group's latest album, “Cir- corama,” in May.

An all-female grupero outfit, La Conquista emerged with a defiant image and dance-friendly cumbia rhythms. Sporting brightly colored locks and full urban garb, they members break the grupero mold. Their music is also challenging, because they inject their rock influences—Van Halen and Led Zep- pelin, among others—into traditional cumbias. The Corpus Christi group’s latest...”

(Continued on page 39)
The chart recaps in this Latin Music special issue are year-to-date from the Dec. 6, 2003, issue (the beginning of the 2004 chart year) through the May 29, 2004, issue.

Recaps for Top Latin Albums and Top Regional Mexican Albums are based on sales information that Nielsen SoundScan compiled. Recaps for Hot Latin Tracks and Hot Regional Mexican Tracks are based on radio airplay that Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems monitors. Titles receive credit for sales or audience impressions accumulated during each week they are on the pertinent chart.

Anthony Colombo compiled the recaps with assistance from Latin chart manager Ricardo Companioni.

### Hot Latin Tracks Titles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label/Imprint</th>
<th>Charted Titles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MAS QUE TU AMIGO</td>
<td>Antonio Solís</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CUIDAETE EL ALMA</td>
<td>Chayanne</td>
<td>Sony Discos</td>
<td>(23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Y TODO Queda EN NADA</td>
<td>Ricky Martin</td>
<td>Sony Discos</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>TE QUISE TANTO</td>
<td>Paulina Rubio</td>
<td>Universal Latino</td>
<td>(10)</td>
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### Latin Regional Mexican Airplay Artists

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<td>Grupo Montez De Durango</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BANDA EL RECODO</td>
<td>Adam Chalino Sanchez</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
<td>(3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LAGRIMAS DE CRISTAL</td>
<td>Grupo Montez De Durango</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
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### Top Latin Albums Titles

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LA HISTORIA CONTINUA</td>
<td>Marco Antonio Solís</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>TRIBUTO AL AMOR</td>
<td>Los Temerarios</td>
<td>Fonovisa/UG</td>
<td>(23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>UN DIA NORMAL</td>
<td>Juanes</td>
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### Latin Regional Mexican Airplay Imprints

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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BANDA EL RECODO</td>
<td>Adam Chalino Sanchez</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### New Blood

Continued from page 29

est album, “Venciendo” (EMI) features a more urban dance/pop sound.

Raza Obrera specializes in traditional michoacano tierra caliente, a folk style featuring harp and accordion. However, the California band’s lyrics focus on the struggles of working-class Mexican-Americans. While the group used to sport the usual cowboy attire of regional Mexican music, it now has a more urban image, including baggy clothes and hip-hop style dance moves. Their latest album, “Rolonononas Pa’ La Raza” (Univision), showcases the quartet’s new edge.

Frijoles Romanticos started gaining attention in 2003 with its mellow Tejano-pop ballads. Originally formed as a backup band to Tejano singer Elida Reyna, the group struck out on its own as Frijoles Romanticos when Reyna decided to take time off from music. The first single, “No Me Asustan” from its self-titled Universal Records album, helped make the group one of the most-talked-about Tejano bands with its catchy rhythm and rebellious message.
¡La nueva sensación del momento!
Incluye su éxito

La Milpa

¡Es el nuevo ídolo de la banda!
Su primer sencillo

¿DÓNDE ESTÁ EL AMOR?

Let's Dance!!! Con
Las rolas más calientes para bailar pegadito.

Incluye un comic y dos temas inéditos
El Chiquillo y La Cuchi Cuchi

www.americanradiohistory.com
Digs In
Continued from page 27

SPM to Latino R&B balladeers like DJ Kane, Baby Bash and Amanda Perez.

The hip-hop culture is also influencing mainstream norteño/banda acts like Los Razon, Chuy Jr., Big Circo and Yolanda Perez, who are now including one or two rap/hip-hop tracks on each album.

The rise of this style is not surprising, says Bird Rodriguez, veteran DJ at regional Mexican KLEY San Antonio, which plays ATM, Quinto Sol and DJ Kane.

"Whenever the radio isn't giving the kids what they want, they are going to find it somewhere else, even if it means they have to create it," Rodriguez says. "The new kids always have to find their own identities, their own styles."

The fusion of urban and traditional rhythms is a natural evolution, says DJ Khooll Ayoo, who is heard on Los Angeles-based syndicated radio show "Pocooperoloco.fm."

"This music has been on the street for 10 years," he says. "Some label guys just gave it a name, but it really is more like Latin hip-hop. The music works because the kids get the hip-hop they like mixed with the Mexican music they grew up listening to, like Ramon Ayala and the other oldies. So right away you feel good, because it's the hip stuff with your early influences."

GETTING THE WORD OUT
Yet getting this "street culture" into the mainstream has not been easy.

"It's been difficult to work our group Mexican at radio," says Abel A. De Luna Jr., president of A&M Music. "The stations consider the music too regional. Mexican for pop formats and too urban, too edgy for regional Mexican stations."

Undaunted, De Luna, like executives at other indie labels, has resorted to word-of-mouth, street promotions and guerrilla marketing as well as reaching out to flea markets, municipal garage sales, low-rider shows and other nontraditional venues.

"We use whatever we can, from TV campaigns to appearances on hip-hop shows like "The Roof" on the MunDos network," De Luna says. The label also schedules promotional events and relentlessly circulates all press reviews and interviews of the group.

As a result, Mexican, like Akvid, has slowly begun to gather steam.

Akvid in particular has enjoyed a successful run of its debut CD, 2003's "Proyecto Akvid," a fusion of traditional Mexican norteño and cumbia rhythms and hard-core rap and R&B that took off and earned the act a Grammy nomination.

Akvid received a major boost when regional Mexican KUBE Los Angeles PD Pepe Garza began playing the duo's music last year.

A major part of the appeal of urban regional is its underground cachet. It is rarely heard on mainstream radio, which makes Akvid's sales all the more impressive.

So why didn't the style catch on before?

"Probably because people didn't think it was real music," says rapper Serm "Leon" Vargas, half of Los Angeles-based duo Mexican. "They probably thought it was just ruido [noise]. I know, for sure, there's been people that have been trying to do this for a long time, more than 10 years probably.

"But it wasn't taken seriously, or the music was too 'street' or too violent," he adds. "They probably said, 'There are too many bad words in that music' or too much violence. But we're just teaching them that this is real music. There's also music in urban and hip-hop styles, and youngsters also like the Mexican music, so we add everything together."

EMBRACING THE STREETS
Label executives have realized that, as with the punk and rap movements, street marketing is essential for urban regional acts.

Street teams work out-of-the-way clubs, college radio and small-market and local access TV shows to reach audiences.

Contraband Records, based in Los Angeles, has been promoting its Latino hip-hop Reem in a non-conventional fashion. Label head Jesus Torres says his staffers have previous experience in tagging, a type of graffiti where individuals write their name all over the city—on fences, sidewalks, overpasses—for street fame and visibility.

"Although they no longer participate in such activities, their experience allows them to carry a wealth of knowledge for identifying locations for promotional product placement," Torres says. "If you want to be seen in an urban environment, these guys are the experts. Where major sees concrete, we see opportunity."

The urban regional movement also has influenced other Tex-Mex artists who have begun to inject varying degrees of R&B, funk, pop, rap and hip-hop into their music. These include San Antonio's DJ Kane and Stefani, Corpus Christi's La Conquistita, Houston's El 7 and the Kumbia Kings offshoot Kings One from Dallas.

Stefani unveiled a new R&B/hip-hop/cumbia fusion on her new CD, "Takin' on the World." In a packed showcase April 22 at San Antonio's Arjon's International Club, Stefani, joined by a rapper and two dancers,
**El Mexicano Presenta**

**Los Dos Grandes**

Joan Sebastian  Marco Antonio Solis

### Fechas de la Gira

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<td>Julio</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Info:** www.promocionesmarquez.com
On The Rise

Continued from page 29

“These shows are good, but we don’t yet have mainstream TV shows that specialize in this urban regional music,” DeLuna says. “That would be ideal.”

For Stefani, another artist who spent 10 years with Sony Discos during the height of the Tejano renaissance, switching to an indie label means more personal public relations.

“It definitely means we are working a lot harder,” Stefani says. “I have had to do a lot more work that before was done by the labels, from calling the (radio) stations to calling concert promoters,” she says. “We realize that in order to be successful, we have to get down and dirty.”

Stefani pursued a new R&B/hip-hop/cumbia fusion on her new CD “Takin’ on the World” on San Antonio-based World Records. This type of urban fusion is what more new young artists such as DJ Kane, ATM, Grupo Chevere and others are using to help break through in a tradition-bound genre.

CREATIVE THINKING

Guerrilla marketing is part of the hustle for Los Angeles-based indie label Contraband Records, label president Jesus Torres says.

“As a smaller startup label with limited resources, we’ve been forced to think creatively on ways to promote our artists,” he says. “Our efforts have been focused around strategic grassroots promotions, for example, the extensive use of street teams and online marketing campaigns to promote our artist Reazn. aka Jorge Ramirez. Reazn, a Latino hip-hop artist, is out touring and promoting his bilingual debut CD “Reazn Being (La Razon de Ser)”.

Still other artists on such indie labels as Corpus Christi, Texas’ Hacienda, Freddie and Crown Records find they now have to go out of the way to seek smaller radio stations, weekly radio shows or even Internet radio channels like Houston’s BNET Radio that previously they would bypass.

“We have to hit every nook and cranny we can find,” Tejano/Tejano fusion artist Jonny Martinez says. His latest CD, “La Callejera,” on AMI Records, spics up his Tejano sound with vallenato cumbias.

Ultimately, despite the availability of new Internet radio and cable TV outlets, artists still find that whether they are on indie or major labels, radio airplay remains crucial.

“The starting point is radio; always has been, always will be,” says Frank Zuniga, Universal Records radio promoter. His promotional roster includes Bobby Pulido and Frijoles Romanticos.

“Without radio play, there is little any one of us can do.”

Distribution

Continued from page 29

people who help us get the CDs out,” Tejas VP John Whipple says. “For example, when we know an artist like Elida is going to West Texas, we call the record stores, radio stations and the distributors there to let them know she is coming in and is available for interviews or in-stores. We do not take it for granted that there will be a success.”

For veteran musicians like Jaime Farias of La Tropa F, the shift to an independent business model isn’t anything new.

‘HOW WE STARTED’

“I think we’ve always been independent when it comes to booking, promoting and distributing,” Farias says. “This is how we started more than 30 years ago, so for us, it’s just going back to how we used to do it.”

La Tropa F re-signed with Freddie Records, based in Corpus Christi, Texas, a label it had been on briefly in the ’70s. In the ’90s it recorded for EMI Latin.

Recently, Freddie Records also signed Michael Salgado and Jimmy Gonzalez y Maz, two top groups that were also previously with majors.

“I think as long as our company has been in the business I’ve seen cycles, the ups and downs, of different genres of Latin music,” Freddie Records VP Freddie Martinez Jr. says.

“So with the push now towards new (urban regional) sound, we’re just relying on the small distribution network we have always had.”

Ultimately, the basics of distribution are a constant, says Mark Lambert, operations manager of ARC Discos, whose roster includes Aniceto Molina and Grupo Montu, Los Fierros, Briania, 20-20 and Carlos Gonzalez.

“It is the job of the labels to keep the distribution companies informed of all the successes of our artists,” Lambert says. “We have to provide the distributors with our radio play reports, TV appearances and the performance schedules of our artists.” Without that information, Lambert says, orders for the distributors—whether major or indie—are unlikely to follow.

You can hear the whisper of a refrain... It’s Celia, and her voice makes us feel for and think about Cuba, no matter the years or the distance. This CD of music from the heart was independently produced in Cuba in 2003, before Celia passed away, and under uncertain conditions but, with love and determination.

In the “De Cuba con Amor” music CD Maria Victoria and Los Niños Cantores de Cuba perform the most popular songs of Celia Cruz’s repertoire and “De Cuba con Amor”, a new song dedicated by Maria Victoria to Celia Cruz. The Bonus DVD contains home video scenes of the recording session and wrap party.

Sparish Broadcasting System, Inc. is the largest Hispanic-controlled radio broadcasting company in the United States. SBS currently owns and operates 25 stations in six of the top U.S. Hispanic markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco, and Puerto Rico. The Company also operates LaMusica.com, a bilingual Spanish-English Internet Web site providing content related to Latin music, entertainment, news and culture.
unloaded a gripping blend of cumbia-funk grooves on “Baila,” the CD’s first single. She used electronica effects on “Rritmo Chido,” which echoed her mid-90s hit “Baila Conmigo.”

More hip-hop and funk came through on the winning English-language pop tunes “Promises” and “Getcha Groove On.”

The new R&B/hip-hop/cumbia hybrid is just a continuation of a cycle in which music reflects culture and culture reflects music, Stefani says.

“We definitely used more R&B and hip-hop on this album because we are really trying to appeal to the youth,” Stefani says. “But the main focus is still on our dance cumbias.”

The urban regional scene includes several other artists of note.

Austin’s unsigned Grupo Chevere, currently gaining attention from several labels, is a seven-piece fronted by 19-year-old singer Sonia Bass. The group’s signature sound is a fresh fusion of reggae, cumbias, hip-hop, funk, rap, dancehall and Tejano.

Its single “Ensename,” a bewitching cumbia with crisp melodic hooks and singalong choruses, is getting airplay in Austin and San Antonio. Ex-La Sombra Rey Talamanca, who plays sax and keyboards, also manages the band.

**THE EXTREME FRINGE**

One extreme fringe of the urban regional scene are the hardcore Latino and Chicano rappers like SPM, Mr. Capone-E, Scrappy Loco, Brown Boy, Don Cisco and Hispanic MCs. Many of these comprise the Chicano rap division of Pomona, Calif.-based Thump Records.

In Houston, Chingo Bling is touring the familiar circuit of ice markets, rodeo shows and festivals that SPM pioneered in the late 90s. Chingo Bling’s latest CD, “The Tamale King,” features more than a dozen guest artist/rappers, including Baby Bash, 5th Ward Weebie, Fad Dogg, Mike Jones, Paul Wall, Russell Lee, Max Minelli, Mello and Risky.

Chingo Bling’s single “Walk Like Cleto” is getting airplay on rhythmic top 40 stations KBFF 92.5 FM San Antonio and KPTY 104.9 The Party. Houston and on the “Popperolocos.fm” syndicated radio show.

And on her debut CD, “Dejeme Llorar,” Volanda Perez has been tapping the urban regional style and gaining radio play thanks to the amusing song “Estoy Enamorada,” featuring rapper DJ Cleto.

A fan of Tupac Shakur and Alicia Keys, Perez says she wants to add more R&B and hip-hop to her next album.

“I would really like to include my R&B tastes on my next album to let people hear the inspirations in my music,” she says.

Ramiro Burr is a music reporter for the San Antonio Express-News and author of “The Billboard Guide toRegional Mexican Music.” He can be reached at rrurr@express-news.net.
We Salute the Greatest Names in Regional Mexican Music

vivelo@clearchannel.com

MIAMI NEW YORK CHICAGO HOUSTON LOS ANGELES
## Billboard Top Latin Albums

**Top Latin Pop Albums**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
<th>Sales Data</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marc Anthony</td>
<td>Ana Sin Mentiras</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nuevo Latino #1</td>
<td>Sony Music Español</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Fuentes</td>
<td>El Lado De La Vida</td>
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<tr>
<td>K-Paz de la Sierra</td>
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<td>50k units</td>
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<td>The Last Don</td>
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<td>50k units</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yo Te Propongo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50k units</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Exitos Eternos</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Mi Corazon Atonal</td>
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**Top Tropical Albums**

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<td>The Last Don</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vivir Por un Amor</td>
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**More Information**

- The chart is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, Inc., and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. presents the Nielsen SoundScan chart data.
- Sales data is compiled for the week ending June 26, 2004.

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**Latin Pop Albums**

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**Regional Mexican Albums**

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Fashion + Music = Armani Exchange

By Michael Paolletta

Walking into any one of fashion retailer Armani Exchange’s (A/X) 47 U.S. stores is akin to entering a hip discothèque. In both environments, fashion and music rule.

“For us, club music and the A/X brand go hand in hand,” AJX senior director of PR/event marketing Patrick Doddy says. “Music hits you the minute you walk into one of our stores. It reflects the A/X style, the AJX sensibility.”

The chain has packaged its sound on three compilation CDs spotlighting dance/electronic music. They sell for $12.50 at all A/X stores nationwide.

The fashion company has entered an exclusive deal with Virgin Entertainment Group, which began selling “AJX Music Series Volume 3: Higher” for $16.99 June 1 in its U.S. Virgin Megastores.

This is not the first time the two companies have worked together. VEG music product manager for dance and singles Richard Bridge says the chains began their relationship with special promotions and sweepstakes last year.

Virgin also provides content (“Virgin Recommends…” to A/X’s Web site, armanianexchange.com.

“This CD deal came as a natural extension,” Bridge says. “Additionally, it was a good opportunity to get behind an artist with a track record.”

Bridge is referring to Grammy Award winner Peter Rauhofer, who beat-mixed “AJX Music Series Volume 3: Higher.” He has also remixed for such multi-million-selling artists as Madonna, Britney Spears and Janet Jackson.

Bridge explains: We’ve done solid business with Peter’s Live @ Roxy series. We have a proven track record with Peter’s music—both his compilations and remixes. For us, it’s about supporting as much quality as we can.

There’s also something else at play here: a certain hip synergy that exists between A/X and VEG.

A younger, street version of Emporio Armani—and also part of the Giorgio Armani empire—A/X has DJs [playing] in its stores, says Emil Wilbekin, editorial director/VP of brand development at Vibe magazine. “This is making a strong and real connection to youth and urban culture.”

Doddy says the A/X/VEG partnership “illustrates the evolution of our music program…By working together with Virgin, the CD is given added credibility. It now also has Virgin’s stamp of approval.”

And for Virgin, aligning itself further with AJX increases its own cool factor. “This deal enhances both of our brands—it’s good for us both,” Bridge says.

Wilbekin of Vibe adds: “Whenever you have two strong, authentic brands, the results usually stack up.”

FAST MOVER

A/X retail stores in the United States have been selling “AJX Music Series Volume 3: Higher” since March. Doddy says the third installment—a partnership between A/X and Rauhofer’s Star 69 label—is the series’ best seller, averaging 500 CDs per week.

To put this in perspective, Vic Latino & David Waxman’s DJ-mix, “Ultra.Dance 05,” sold 3,800 copies the week ending June 13, according to Nielsen SoundScan. In the same week, Rauhofer’s “Live @ Roxy Vol 3” and Johnny Vicious’ “Ultra.Trance 03” sold 500 and 1,100 units, respectively.

Highlights of “Higher”—which follows last year’s release, “AJX Music Series Volume 2: Bring on the Night,” mixed by Grammy winner Frankie Knuckles—are many. They include Pet Shop Boys’ “Break 4 Love” and Mr. Fingers’ “Can You Feel It.”

The set also features Rauhofer’s remixes of Madonna’s “Nothing Fails” and Murk’s “Time,” as well as current Star 69 singles like “Heartattack” by Jahkey B. Featuring Satta and “I Try” from Made by Monkeys.

“I put a lot of thought into the music selection on this compilation,” Rauhofer says. “I tried to imagine the CD playing in the store while people are shopping.”

But this offered its own set of challenges, Rauhofer acknowledges. “It was tricky to pick music that would be fun and get your attention without being too hard or overwhelming. Additionally, I wanted tracks that could be played in the daytime or evening.”

Doddy says A/X and VEG are discussing ways to continue their working relationship, which could include past and future volumes in the A/X Music Series being sold at Virgin Megastores.

“Consumers are so into both music and fashion today,” Wilbekin says. “It’s quite innovative for Armani and Virgin to come together. It’s a natural fit.”

Dimitri ‘Cruising’ With Amigos

Earlier this year, U.K. label Defected Records issued Dimitri From Paris’ beat-mixed “In the House,” one of this year’s best DJ compilations. Among the many jewels are Dimitri’s re-edits of “Any Love” (Rufus & Chaka Khan) and “Gypsy Woman (She’s Homeless)” (Crystal Waters).

In Japan, Victor Entertainment released “Soul Source: Remixed Boogies,” which includes Dimitri’s positively uplifting remix of Sylvester’s 23-year-old classic “I Need You.”

Last year, Victor released Dimitri’s second studio album, “Cruising Attitude” (which recently released in Europe (Global Music Pulse, Billboard, June 12). “Cruising Attitude” follows the DJ/producer’s 1996 debut studio full-length, “Sacred bleu.” It spotlights collaborations with Omar, Los Amigos Invisibles and others.

Dimitri tells Billboard that he often uses Los Amigos Invisibles for his own productions because of the members’ deft musicianship. The respect goes both ways.

According to Dimitri, Los Amigos Invisibles have tapped him to co-produce their next album, a covers collection of Venezuelan funk/disco from the ’70s and ’80s.

One of the songs, “Mau et Moa,” was popularized by Nino Ferrer in France in the ’60s. Dimitri says, “We all had a good laugh when I told Los Amigos this, because they only knew that was island in Venezuela.”

In addition to his work with Los Amigos Invisibles, Dimitri is confirmed to create the opening theme music to new Japanese animation TV series, “Moon Face.”

Recently, he completed remixing Cerrone’s “Hooked on You” (with J Prayns & Dwan on voca) for Switzerland’s Purple Music. Due later this month, it is the B-side of “You Are the One” (the Jamie Lewis remixes).

Come October, U.K. label BBE will release a two-disc disco compilation, mixed—tag team style—by Dimitri and Joey Negro.

“It will feature lots of special re-edits,” Dimitri says of the stuff that “will also showcase stuff that we deem totally unknown or unusual—not the usual suspects.”

But there will be one exception: Negro’s re-ed of Yaz’s “Situation,” Dimitri explains, “It’s too good not to include.”

ALL MIXED UP: The United Kingdom’s Defected Records will release in August Soul Central’s reinterpretation of late-’80s Detroit techno classic “Strings of Life” by Rhythm Is Rhythm (aka Derrick May).

The track features a Danny Krivit re-edit, as well as remixes by Kenny Dope, Cevin Fisher and Mark Knight.

THIS ‘N’ THAT: Michael Prommer of music/media development firm Prommer Inc. has launched a new label, Defend Music, with the release of Danish newcomer Tina Dico’s “Far” EP.

Those that were taken by Dico’s contributions to Zero 7’s latest album, “When It Falls,” will not be disappointed. “Break of Day” and “Let’s Get Lost” are particularly pleasing.

100 CANDLES, PLEASE: Über-hot Cologne, Germany-based indie Kompakt celebrates its 100th release with “Kompakt 100.”

Due next month, the two-disc, 21-track collection is home to Kompakt artists remixing tracks from the label’s catalog.

“Kompakt 100’s illustrious line-up includes Thomas Fehlmann, Reinhard Voigt, Ken M. Mayer, the Orb, Joachim Spieh and Sascha Funke.”

U.K. act Way Out West completed several North American live dates last month. Now, the duo—Nick Warren and Jody Wisternoff—is preparing for a September release of its third album, “Don’t Look Back” (Distinctive).”

Cause & Effect—which scored two top 10 club hits in the early ’90s (“What Do You See?,” “You Think You Know Her?”)—returns with “The Sunrise EP” (Liquesfaction/Cause and Effect Music). The soothing vocals and warm electronics of Rob Rowe and Keith Milo, respectively, beautifully recall classic club jams like the Beloved’s “The Sun Rising,” Lighthouse Family’s “High” and Paul Rutherford’s “Oh World.”
Harms Tops Nominees List For Western Music Awards

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Joni Harms, Kip Calahan and R.W. Hampton lead the nominees for the Academy of Western Artists Awards, set for July 13 at Will Rogers Memorial Auditorium in Fort Worth, Texas.

Harms earned four nods, including nominations in the top Western music female vocalist and Western swing female category.

She is also nominated in the Western music album of the year category for her Wildcatter Records set “Let’s Put the Western Back in Country.” The title track, penned with Wood Newton, was nominated for Western music song of the year.

“I’m honored to be nominated in several categories for this year’s Will Rogers awards. There’s no greater thrill than having your fans and your peers recognize your efforts to continue to make good, wholesome music.”

Calahan picked up three nominations: Western music female vocalist, Western music song for “What Cowboy Means” and Western music album for “Cowboys, Cowgirls, Roundups and Rodeos.”

Hampton also nabbed three nominations: entertainer of the year, Western music male vocalist and Western music song for “Troubadour.”

Perennial solo favorites Belinda Gail and Curly Musgrave teamed up this year and received nominations for Western music duo/group and for Western music album for their “When Trails Meet” set. Each was also recognized individually: Gail in the Western music female vocalist category and Musgrave for Western music male vocalist.

Brenn Hill earned two nominations: entertainer of the year and Western music male vocalist. Wylie Gustafson was nominated in the entertainer category as well as Western music yodeler.

Riders in the Sky also earned dual nods, one for Western album for “Silver Jubilee” and one for Western music duo/group. Sons of the San Joaquin are up for entertainer of the year and Western duo/group.

The awards show will conclude the organization’s annual gathering, organized by AWA president Bobby Newton. This year’s event will be held July 9-13 at the Doral-Tesoro Hotel.

In addition to seminars and showcases featuring Western musicians, cowboy poets and Western swing performers, this year’s event will feature the first Doral Chuckwagon Cookoff Challenge. There will also be a trade show showcasing cowboy craftsmanship and Western art.

For a complete list of nominees, log on to billboard.com/awards.

End Of An Era: Jim Ed Leaves Warner Nashville

Jim Ed Norman has exited Warner Bros. Records in Nashville where he has been president for 21 years. While his departure from the label had been rumored, the 55-year-old Norman was not expected to leave until the end of the year. His last day on the job was June 11. A replacement has not been named.

In addition to running the label for more than two decades, Norman had a distinguished career as a producer, arranger and piano player. Among the numerous acts he produced are Hank Williams Jr., Kenny Rogers, Anne Murray, Crystal Gayle, John Anderson, Take 6, Brenda Lee, Emmylou Harris and Michael Martin Murphey.

Norman got his start in the band Shiloh with Don Henley and went on to arrange and perform on albums by the Eagles and Linda Ronstadt.

SIGNINGS: Universal South Records has signed Canadian singer-songwriter George Canyon. He is the first runner-up on the second season of the USA Network series “Nashville Star,” which wrapped May 1. Canyon’s first album for the label is due in the fall.

Canyon has also signed with Bob Doyle & Associates for management and with Creative Artists Agency for booking. He will spend the summer and fall on the road in North America as part of the “Nashville Star” tour.

In other news, Ten Ten Music Group has re-named Harley Allen to a long-term publishing agreement. Allen has been with Ten Ten since 1992.

ON THE ROW: Curb artist Jo Dee Messina has parted amicably with Stuart Dill of Refugee Management, who has guided her career for seven years.

“I don’t think anyone, unless you’re an artist or a manager, has an inkling of how intense these relationships can be,” Dill tells Billboard. “There’s a time when it’s healthy to disengage without losing any admiration for each other at all. She wanted a fresh start, and I’m excited about that for her.”

Dill continues to manage Rodney Crowell and is co-managing the Notorious Cherry Bombs project with Larry Fitzgerald and Terry Elam.

In other news, CMT has promoted Sarah Brock to VP of production and Suzanne Norman to VP of finance. Brock previously was director of retail sales.

Singer/songwriter Rosie Dean has launched her own label, Roar Records, in Nashville. Dean previously was signed to DreamWorks Records.

ARTIST NEWS: The Canadian Country Music Assn. Awards have tapped Paul Brandt to host the Sept. 13 ceremony in Edmonton, Alberta. It will be Brandt’s fifth time as the show’s host. He has won 11 CCMA Awards.

UPCOMING RELEASES: The Americana Music Assn. has teamed with the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers to produce a CD sampler, due Aug. 3. The CD, which will be distributed by Ryko Distribution, will retail for a suggested price of just $1.98.

The sampler features tracks from Alison Krauss + Union Station, Willie Nelson, Lucinda Williams, the Jayhawks, Ralph Stanley, Shelby Lynne, Rosanne Cash and others. It is designed to raise awareness and sales of Americana acts.
### Top Country Albums

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Last Week</th>
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<td>GRETCHEN WILSON</td>
<td>NUMBER 1 ✔</td>
<td>5 Weeks At Number 1</td>
<td>Here For The Party</td>
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<td>SHADYSIDE</td>
<td>HOT SHOT DEBUT</td>
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<td>LARRY THE CABLE GUY</td>
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**Source:** Nielsen SoundScan

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**Source:** Nielsen SoundScan
## Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks

### Top 20 Singles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE GIRL’S GONE WILD</td>
<td>Travis Tritt</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>YOU ARE</td>
<td>Jimmy Wayne</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BLAME IT ON MAMA</td>
<td>The Jennings</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LOOK AT US</td>
<td>Craig Morgan</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>WHAT IT AIN’T</td>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I ONLY HURT WHEN I’M BREATHING</td>
<td>Shania Twain</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I MEANT TO SAY</td>
<td>Brad Cotter</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>THE WRONG GIRL</td>
<td>Lee Ann Woamick</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>HOW AM I DOIN’</td>
<td>Dickie Brown</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>PUT YOUR BEST DRESS ON</td>
<td>Steve Holy</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>DANCE WITH MY FATHER</td>
<td>Kellie Coffey</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>SWEET SUMMER RAIN</td>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>HERE FOR THE PARTY</td>
<td>Gretchen Wilson</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>BOTTOM OF THE DRAWER</td>
<td>Chely Wright</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>THAT’S COOL</td>
<td>Blue County</td>
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### Hot Country Albums

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Josh Turner</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Craig Morgan</td>
<td>55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddy Jewell</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Betty Wright</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Lawrence</td>
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### Top Bluegrass Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Krauss</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Crow Medicine Show</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickel Creek</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Garcia &amp; David Grisman</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Heart</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Various Artists</td>
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### Billboard Hot Country Singles Sales

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEANT TO SAY</td>
<td>Brad Cotter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK DOWN HERE</td>
<td>Julie Roberts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLAME IT ON MAMA</td>
<td>The Jennings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILD WEST SHOW</td>
<td>Big &amp; Rich</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERYDAY LOVES</td>
<td>Reba McEntire</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN’T TAKE YOU ANYWHERE</td>
<td>Sissy Erich &amp; Taylor Kent</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAYS OF OUR LIVES</td>
<td>Jamey Johnson</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SINGLE FATHER</td>
<td>Kid Rock</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I WANNA HEAR A CHEATIN’ SONG</td>
<td>Asa Cochrane &amp; Connie Taylor</td>
<td>10</td>
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**Notes:**
- The chart reflects the top 20 country singles as of June 26, 2004.
- Songs are ranked based on radio airplay data collected by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems.
- Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems monitors radio airplay and Nielsen SoundScan monitors retail sales.
- Radio airplay is measured by Billboard's Nielsen SoundScan, which collects data from more than 100 Mediabase Top 40 radio stations.
- Retail sales are monitored by Nielsen SoundScan, which collects data from more than 1,000 stores.
- The chart covers the top 20 songs and albums, with each song and album ranked based on the number of plays received.
- The chart is updated weekly, with the latest data reflecting the sales and airplay data from the previous week.
ALBUMS
Edited by Michael Paolletta

POP

**THE CALLING**
Two
PRODUCERS: Marc Tanner, Aaron Kamrin, Alex Band, Clif Magness
RCA 82876 556612
RELEASE DATE: June 8

The Calling's sophomore album, "Two," arrives two years after the band's debut, "The Calling," that album sold at No. 36 on The Billboard 200 and included the top five hit "Wherever You Will Go." The lead single from "Two"—"Our Lives"—has yet to click in a similar manner. Like this single, much of "Two" is incredibly polished and harmless pop music. While there's nothing wrong with that, it does not necessarily make for the strongest collection of songs. That said, there are a few noteworthy tracks to be discovered. The songs include "Surrender," "The Calling's Last Night," and "Sissoo." The Calling is more durable.

**Razor & Tie**
Razor & Tie 2018
PRODUCER: Justin Niebanck

Clayton's fast-moving Cars tour is well under way. The band has amassed a large catalogue of music. To date, the band has released three studio albums, "The Cars," "Heartbeats," and "Move It On Over." The most recent album, "Move It On Over," was released in 2000 and featured the hit single "The Time." The band has been described as a "pop rock" band, and their music is characterized by catchy hooks and a focus on melody.

**THE CALLING**
Fast Moving Cars
PRODUCER: Justin Niebanck

Razor & Tie 2018

**BEBO & CIGALA**
Lagrimas Negras
PRODUCERS: Fernando Trueba, Javier Limón
Bluebird/RCA Victor 82876-55910
RELEASE DATE: June 22

Just what is it that makes people fall in love with an old Cuban cigar? As if the octogenarians of Buena Vista Social Club hadn't been enough, along comes 86-year-old pianist Bebo Valdes and Spanish gypsy singer Diego El Cigala. A tasteful and delightful marriage of traditional Cuban son and Spanish coplas, "Lagrimas Negras," an international success last year, will resonate with the Buena Vista/Gypsy Kings crowd in the United States. Among purists, it should do even better. This is musically superior to Buena Vista; only excellent playing could carry these sparse arrangements, adorned by the most tenacious percussive backbeat ever. Titled after the Miguel Matamoros classic, "Lagrimas Negras" also spotlights other Cuban standards, including "Inolvidable" and "Viente Años." Throughout, the songs are delivered with adventuresome verve.

**SLOW TRAIN SOUL**
Illegal Cargo
PRODUCERS: Slow Train Soul

Tommy Boy TB-1584
RELEASE DATE: June 15

If music is all about the mood, then Slow Train Soul is all about the music. The Danish duo--producer Morten Varano and singer-songwriter Lady Z (aka Z Stari)—has curated a collection of mellow yet moving songs that intertwine funk and soul over jazz-break beats. The results are impressive. Lead single "In the Black of Night," which was featured in the Hotel Costes compilation series, is a hypnotic, beep-bop-flavored affair. In "Naturally," Lady Z's vocals are confident and strong. Other highlights include "Twisted Cupid," "Slow Train," and "Stoned Rays."—RH

**BEASTIES BOYS**
To the 5 Boroughs
Capitol 84571
RELEASE DATE: June 15

The Beastie Boys go for party-ready aptegroup on their first studio album in almost six years, mixing rants about the U.S. occupation of Iraq and the Kato Tochi and grofts about the Keebler Elves and "Mr. Belvedere." Musically, the Beasties pick up where 1998's "Hello Nasty" left off—still exploring and crafting their brand of edgier hip-hop sounds. But this time the beats are predominantly focused and isolated (the singular looping sample in "Che-Chek It Out") rather than the layered sound collages of "Nasty." And the lyrical message commands as much attention as the music. Tracks like "Right Right Now Now" and "Time to Build" put the trio's sociopolitical agenda front and center. Sure, the Beasties still have their fun ("Trip Trouble" and "Oh Word"), but "Open Letter to NYC" tells the real story of the threesome in 2004: post-Sept. 11 New Yorkers looking at the world around them and wondering, "What's going on?"—BG

**R&B/HIP-HOP**

**SAKAI**
Dream Big
PRODUCER: Darkside
Family tree 829757624129
RELEASE DATE: June 8

You've heard her voice before. Sakai's lilting vocals graced Celine Dion's "A New Day" and have backed such singers as Oleta Adams and Curtis Mayfield. Now this San Francisco Bay Area native is stepping out on her own. Mixing R&B, soul, pop, jazz and gospel, singer-songwriter Sakai demonstrates she's more than up to the task. Dwayne Wiggins (Tony! Ton! Ton!) provides his signature guitar accompaniment on the midtempo lead single "I Like." She adeptly steers from love to everyday relationships like friendship, happiness and perseverance. Reminiscent of the work of such luminaries as Phyllis Hyman and Angela Bofill, Sakai paints lyrical phrases that stay with you long after the music ends ("You can't just kiss into my life/But there's nothing I can do"). Worthy of pressing the repeat button more than once is "Leap of Faith," "Corona Be Fierce," "1/2" and "Yesterday's Touch." In the end, Sakai has every right to dream big. For more information, log on to family-treeproductions.com.

WORLD

**LILA DOWNS**
Una Sängerin/Eine Blood
PRODUCERS: Paul Cohen, Lila Downs, Antero Talo
RCA 82435-76757
RELEASE DATE: June 15

Known to film fans for her work in the Kahlil biopic "Frida" (appearing in the film and on its soundtrack), Lila Downs is an exotic flower of a singer with roots that stretch south (through her Mixtec-Indian Mexican mother) and north (courtesy of her Scottish-American father). With such a background, perhaps it was inevitable that Downs would incorporate a dazzling array of influences that reach from traditional Mexican songs and Afrokanotopian to funk, jazz, hip-hop and folk. On her fourth outing, Downs is smart, subversive, sexy and soulful, with a profoundly rich voice that changes color like a chameleon, framed by her sensitive and highly talented band. Whether Downs is reinventing "La Llorona" and "La Bamba" or offering paens to courageous women ("Mother Jones" and "Dignificada"), her presence is unforgettable.—AT

BLUES

**J.C. LEAR**
To Tulsa and Back
PRODUCER: David Teegarden
T-Bone/Scott/440 84471
RELEASE DATE: June 8

Returning with his first studio album since 1996's "Guitar Man," J.C. Lear "To Tulsa and Back" is worth the wait. In his mid-60s, Lear is clearly aging gracefully while staying true to himself. Blues in a modern production setting can sound awkward and unconvincing, but "Tula" relies almost entirely on acoustic instruments. The odd electric keyboards only complement Lear's sinewy guitar licks and laid-back vocal delivery. "To Tulsa and Back" is, in fact, Lear's best album thus far. The collection of Robert Johnson songs recently recorded by his contemporary Eric Clapton, Lear who ago scored hits with several Cafe songs. Standards here include the jazzy/gypsy-influenced "These Blues" the genteel, funky "New Love," the somber "Homeless" and the breezy, country delivery of which always discharges its indiscretion of an incompetent political leader.—CM

JAZZ

**GEORGE BENSON**
Irreplaceable
PRODUCERS: Joshua F Thompson, Rex Rideout, Bud Harner, Paul Brown
GRP/Verse/Universal Music & Video
RELEASE DATE: June 8

George Benson first gained notoriety as a Wes Montgomery-influenced jazz guitarist. Then he decided to go to

Contributors: Lella Co, Deborah Evans Price, Brian Garrity, Rashad Hall, Gail Mitchell, Chris Morris, Dan Ouellette, Michael Paolletta, Wayne Robins, Jana Schieveltz, Chuck Taylor, Christa L. Titus, Anastasia Taiolacces, Christopher Walab. ESSAYIST. Pick an edit for the review editors to denote special attention to the basis of musical merit and re. Billboard chart potential for. REVIEW. Released albums of special artistic, archival and commercial interest and restored. (Continued on next page)
mix and strick R&B/pop crossover go. It’s the only still-dullesticle ballad “This Masquerade.” On his latest album, Benson follows in the footsteps taken by many veteran artists of late: He hooks up with contemporary producers. In this case, the helmsman is Joshua P. Thompson, who has worked with Joe and Case. The results are mixed. Benson still commands attention with his distinctive guitar playing, especially on such tracks as the overblown “Softly. As in a morning Sunrise” and “Arizona Sunrisr.” However, some of the vocal outings don’t ring true lyrically. For example, there’s something slightly false about the 61-year-old singing “You got my heart bangin’ like an 800” on the title track. That misstep aside, Benson redeems himself on the Thompson-co-penned “Six Play” and “Stairway to Love,” which call to mind Benson’s sublime sublimity turn on “This Masquerade.” —GM

KARRIN ALLYSON

Wild for You

PRODUCERS: Karrin Allyson, Nick Phillips, Gil Goldstein

CONCERT JAZZ C-2220

RELEASE DATE: June 8

After her last two jazz adventures, “Ballads: Remembering John Coltrane” and the blues-steeped “In Blue,” vocalist Karrin Allyson veers into a new direction with mixed results on “Wild for You,” her ninth Concord disc. Like music-making so often is, it’s a winning combination: Allyson, still commands an impressive voice, she grew up immersed in ’70s pop music. Here she devotes a full album to songs ripe for jazz interpretation. However, Allyson misses the mark on several numbers by clenching too close for comfort to the originals. The CD’s first three tracks are a case in point, off the shelf: “Over the Rainbow” is a bit of a mess, “Love Letters” is overly sweet, and “Take Me to Your Heart” is weak. Allyson fares better when she departs from the classics, such as on her slow and passionate read of “Goin’ Wild for You Baby” and her moving rendition of the lesser-known Carly Simon song “Mind on My Man.” —DO

CHRISTIAN

► VARIOUS ARTISTS

Amazing Grace: 3: A Country Salute to Gospel

PRODUCERS: Scott Hendricks, Brent Rowan, Don Cook, Frank Rogers, Speight, Wild Studios

RELEASE DATE: June 15

Like its predecessors, “Amazing Grace: 3: A Country Salute to Gospel” features established country artists performing well-known gospel tunes. It’s a winning combination—but Derks Bentley’s plaintive rendering of “It’s No Secret” and the Isaacs’ gospel shout on take Bill Gaither’s classic “He Touch Me.” Keith Urban tackles the title track and the Isley brothers re-recorded “T’l Fly Away” and makes it sound brand-new. Sara Evans provides a spirited reading of “Sweet By and By.” Also featured is Cyndi Thomson with a delicate performance of “As Long As I Live.” —CM

► BANDCAMP

Celebrity (3:03)

PRODUCER: David McNair

WRITER: M. Bair

PUBLISHER: BMI

BANDCAMP b2c (LP track) —

While BANDCAMP has yet to align itself with a label, expect that to change soon. One of five tracks on the photocover’s self-released “Radio Radio” EP “Celebrity” is a rocking post-punk rock jam. Lyrically smart and musically alive, the tune is catchy and hook-laden. Lead singer Matt Bair sings of an ex-girlfriend turned celebrity: “I think I saw you on the TV/You heard you on the radio/Perhaps in the magazine/You’re celebrated.” Don’t be surprised when, paraphrase Kylie Minogue, you can’t get this charming chorus out of your head. Modern rock and 80’s influenced wave had success with Sum, 41 Goodlette and Simple Plan are cautioned not to overlook this band’s summer-primed track. Though currently one of Long Island, N.Y.’s best-kept secrets, Bandcamp is on the verge of becoming something much larger. For information, call 516-641-3929.—MP

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

► AVRI LAVIGNE

My Happy Ending

(PRODUCER: Butcher Walker

WRITERS: A. Lavigne, B. Walker

PUBLISHERS: Almo Music (ASCAP); Avis Lavigne (SOCAN); Sonotrack/EMI Blackwood (BMI)

Artista/RCA 82876-62122 (CD promo)

Top 40 radio may have indulged Avril Lavigne’s “Don’t Tell Me,” the launch single from her sophomore album, “Under My Skin,” but it was more of a buzz cut than a hitworthy song. Hasty follow-up “My Happy Ending” is an infinitely stronger, more creative effort, showcasing the perpetually productive songwriter in her best—as a fine lyricist, robust vocalist and heavy on harmonies and hooks. Production-wise, Butcher Walker bespeaks the song with a cadre of ripping guitars and machine-gun percussion, which give it plenty of pluck, as Lavigne sings about a regretfully broken love affair. Quite possibly the best single yet for the artist and with the goods to go the distance.—CT

► JOSH GROBAN WITH TANIA TARZOVSKA

Remember (4:17)

PRODUCER: David Foster

WRITERS: J. Horner, C. Weil

PUBLISHERS: Warner-Olive Music/Horner Publishing (ASCAP); Warner-Baham Music/Bad Music (BMI)

Waver Sunset/Reprise 1031346 (CD promo)

Creating a ballad for a movie, especially one designed to be a block-buster, runs the risk of sliding into schmaltz. But “Remember” avoids that pitfall; it is a worthy theme for the end credits of the Brad Pitt vehicle “Troy.” The Greek mythology of the film’s plot explains the song’s expansive power and exotic flavor, which singer Tania Tarzovska accents with her Middle Eastern stylings. Instead of hammering its epic nature home, this is a classy accompaniment that could become overwhelmingly. Foster lets the strings breathe in one scene and the piano quietly file in another, building the tension and even dropping in a few electronic gurglings for added hip factor. Groban’s tenor, always strong while retaining a tender fluidness, is absolutely gorgeous.—CLT

COUNTRY

► CON HUNLEY

Still (4:00)

PRODUCERS: Con Hunley, Norro Wilson

WRITERS: B. Anderson

PUBLISHER: Johnny Biestock Music (BMI)

IMMI Records 80862 42825 (CD promo)

During the ’70s and ’80s, Hunley charted 25 singles on the Billboard country charts, including such memorable songs as “When’s Your Next.” And “No Relief in Sight.” He returns with a new full-length on Knoxville, Tenn.-based IMMI Records. The set features Hunley’s soulful take on a solid collection of country songs, for the lead single, he reinserts Whispervin’ Bill Anderson’s gem “Still.” Hunley puts a whole new spin on this evergreen hit, transforming Anderson’s plaintive country ballad into a smoky, sultry number, oozing with Hunley’s trademark blue-eyed soul. The subtle, aching steel guitar is an effective back drop for Hunley’s vocals. While certainly a long shot at country radio, it would surely be great to see program managers take a chance on this. In the process, listeners will get the opportunity to rediscover this incredible stylist working his magic one of country’s greatest songs.—DEP

SINGLES

KANYE WEST

Jesus Walks (3:21)

PRODUCER: Kanye West

WRITERS: K. West, C. Smith

PUBLISHER: Sony/ATV

Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam 160668 (CD promo)

Kanye West is at the top of the hip-hop game. From producing chart-topping hits for T.I., Brandy, and Slum Village to his own platinum debut, “The College Dropout,” West is everywhere. Here he keeps to his consecutive trend with this third single. As “All Falls Down,” “Jesus Walks” is not light-hearted fare. On this production, West tackles the issues of social responsibility and religion: consider this his very own call-to-arms anthem. “God show me the way,” the devil is trying to break me down,” he raps. “The only thing that I pray is that my feet don’t fail me now/I don’t think there’s nothing I can do now to right my wrongs/I want to talk to God/I’m a new man and we ain’t spoke in so long.” Despite the song’s religious theme—uncommon for R&B/hip-hop radio—the single is steadily climbing the charts. West wins again.—RH
Marc On ‘Today’
Marc Anthony performed June 8 at New York’s Rockefeller Center as part of the Summer Concert Series on NBC’s morning show “Today.” Despite the best efforts of co-anchor Matt Lauer, Anthony refused to discuss his relationship with Jennifer Lopez, whom he married June 5. Anthony is currently promoting his new Sony Discos album, “Amir Sin Mentrías.” He begins a new arena tour in November. (Photo: Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com)

EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

RECORD COMPANIES: Virgin Records in New York appoints Larry Mestel COO/GM. He was executive VP/GM at Arista Records.

Sugar Hill Records promotes Nashville-based Kim Fowler to VP of artist and media relations and Durham, N.C.-based Holly Lowman to marketing manager. Fowler was director of artist and media relations, and Lowman was local/regional promotion coordinator.

Vanguard Records in Santa Monica, Calif., ups Mary Mahoney to promotion manager. She was promotion coordinator.

DISTRIBUTION: Handleman in Troy, Mich., promotes Chris Kwan to national team assortment manager. He was rebuyer of product management and logistics.

PUBLISHING: BMI elevates New York-based Roger Miller to assistant VP of performing rights and Nashville-based Michael Mulkey to director of general services. Miller was senior director of performing rights, and Mulkey was manager of general services.

Windswept Publishing in Beverly Hills, Calif., names Carol Dunn director of film and TV music/lifestyle. She was founder of music supervision company FAN: music.

RAVON VP of its special products division. He was VP of business operations and business development at EMI Music Marketing.

EDITORIAL: Edson Media Research in Somerville, N.J., names Tom Webster VP. He was a VP at Broadcast Architecture.

Playing With The King
B.B. King, left, joined Eric Clapton June 6 at the Crossroads Guitar Festival at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas. The event, which took place June 4-6, raised money for Clapton’s Crossroads Centre rehab facility in Antigua. The festival had performances from a slew of other musical heroes, including Jeff Beck, Carlos Santana, Buddy Guy, Joe Walsh, ZZ Top, Bo Diddley, Larry Carlton and Jimmie Vaughan. (Photo: Kevin Mazur/WireImage.com)

Triple Threat
Snoop Dogg, left, Warren G, center, and Nate Dogg held a press conference May 10 at New York’s Millennium Hotel to announce that the three rappers have formed a supergroup, 213 TVT Records will release 213’s first album, “The Hard Way,” Aug. 10. (Photo: Theo Wargo/WireImage.com)

‘In Tune’ With Mayer & Simon
John Mayer, left, teamed with Paul Simon to tape the first episode of VH1 series “Baileys in Tune,” which premiered June 15. Hosted by “American Idol” judge Randy Jackson, “Baileys in Tune” pairs music legends with musicians they have influenced. The series tapes at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland. (Photo: MarkTomas)
Monkee-ing Around At Billboard

Mickey Dolenz, best-known as the drummer/co-vocalist of the Monkees, stopped by Billboard’s New York headquarters May 28 for a Billboard Cafe meet-and-greet. Dolenz is currently co-starring in the Broadway musical “Aida.” Pictured, from left, are Billboard advertising director Suzanne Lang, Billboard president/publisher John Kilcullen, Dolenz, Billboard executive editor Ken Schlager and Billboard senior editor Marc Schiffman. (Photo: Mary Ann Kim/Billboard)

Trouble At The Playboy Mansion

Columbia Records rock band Start Trouble performed at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles at a May 11 party celebrating Playboy’s first branded videogame, “Playboy: The Mansion.” The game—a project from Playboy Enterprises, Arush Entertainment and Groove Games—is set for release before the end of the year. Start Trouble’s music is featured in the videogame.

Now, Hear This …

RICKY FANTE
Artists to Watch

It is no wonder that the debut album from Ricky Fanté is titled “Rewind.” The R&B singer’s music harks back to 1960s soul. “Rewind,” which Virgin Records releases July 13, includes first single “It Ain’t Easy,” a perfect example of the singer’s passionate delivery of retro-influenced R&B. Fanté collaborated on the album with Grammy Award-winning songwriter Jesse Harris, who is best-known for his work on Norah Jones’ debut album, “Come Away With Me.” Although Fanté’s rich and powerful voice draws inevitable comparisons to such revered predecessors as Otis Redding and Sam Cooke, “Rewind” is contemporary enough to be enjoyed by multiple generations. Isaac Hayes has endorsed Fanté by issuing a statement saying that “Rewind” is “the shot of adrenaline the music industry needs today.” A native of Washington, D.C., and now living in Los Angeles, Fanté has already received exposure on national TV. He made a guest appearance playing Wilson Pickett on NBC’s “American Dreams.” Fanté has also appeared on the syndicated “Soul Train” series, CBS’ “Saturday Early Show” and the syndicated “The Wayne Brady Show.” Fanté is performing select U.S. dates, and he has landed a cameo role as a nightclub singer in “Their Eyes Were Watching God,” a TV movie from Harpo Productions (Oprah Winfrey’s company). The movie stars Halle Berry and will premiere on ABC during the 2004-2005 season.

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Songwriters Got Games—And New Challenges

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

LOS ANGELES—"This is a real exciting time for songwriters and composers to be involved in the 'music for games' market," said NovaLogic audio director, composer and moderator Russ Brower.

He was speaking May 9 at the E3 games expo, part of the second annual seminar sponsored by the Los Angeles-based Society of Composers & Lyricists.

Within the dramatically changing retail music marketplace, more artists, songwriters and composers of music for TV and films are finding a rapidly expanding revenue stream.

"Original game music typically is bought for $800 to $1,200 per license; an original song can command up to $5,000 or more depending on the artist; and licensed tracks are being offered by music publishers for prices depending on the various artists and songs involved.

"Held at the American Film Institute, the program featured mini-case studies on game music projects from three artists. Laura Karpman, composer of Stephen Spielberg's sci-fi TV mini-series "Taken," scored the online game "Everquest II." Inon Zur, who composed the score for the original "Everquest" as well as best-seller "SOCOM II: U.S. Navy Seals," addressed his just-completed work for "Men of Valor," Billy Martin, whose credits include "Tarzan Untamed" and "Spy Kids 3D," wrote children's songs for "The Book of Pooh."

Karpman noted that "Everquest" producer John Blakely and the developers had liked her work for "Taken," and that kids were really listening to big orchestral music. She had only about three weeks to come up with more than 80 minutes of a fully orchestrated score for "Everquest II," she recalled, "but it was the favorite project in my life as a film and TV composer."

"I had only about three weeks to come up with more than 80 minutes of a fully orchestrated score for "Everquest II," she recalled, "but it was the favorite project in my life as a film and TV composer."

She detailed some of the challenges in creating themes with many variations for two key city environments—Guthrie's Egyptian" and the music for what could happen in those places.

"Going to Prague to work with the orchestra there was a wild experience," she said. "It was like writing a symphony."

"Orchestral" was the music for what could happen in those places.

"Going to Prague to work with the orchestra there was a wild experience," she said. "It was like writing a symphony."

"Zur offered some tips that he used to create the score for "Men of Valor," which he described as an "action-laden, first-person shooter with more complex elements" than a typical game of its kind.

"As a composer, my job is to trick the gamer into thinking that the music is always with them," he added. He talked about activating "stingers" to keep action moving; the use of "stems," or taking a 90-second cue and breaking into one to three stereo streams; and using "nodes" to flag music breaks.

"Music can work to create an interactive score that lets the gamer feel he is in control of 'driving' the orchestra," he said.

For Martin, the challenge was writing two-minute songs aimed at the 5-year-old and younger audience for Disney's "The Book of Pooh." He came up with the creative solution of providing three endings for each of 20 interactive songs, with the kids helping Eyore the donkey find his tail, as one example.

"What do games demand of you?" he asked the audience rhetorically. "You're often working with just a description of gameplay, with no animation; so a good imagination is required," he said.

"Most important, make sure that everyone involved in the project is on the same page to make it work."

New Ads Have Viewers Playing Name That Tune

Two TV commercials have sent at least two viewers scurrying to their online search engines.

Best Buy's "Marionette" spot has generated numerous responses since an initial query about the enormously catchy "I'm Free, I'm Free" tune accompanying the ad about a puppet inquiring about wireless laptops at a Best Buy store.

Respondents suggested the Rolling Stones' "I'm Free" (which the song most certainly is not), the Who's "I'm Free (I'm Free)" (and even Elvis Presley's "Puppet on a String"—nothing remotely similar).

One guy went through 50 songs searching for a match, another moaned about being "driven nuts" with frustration. Closer to the mark, someone heard a Turtles' "Happy Together" 1960s pop feel. (The Turtles' ubiquitous commercial anthem, incidentally, is now heard simultaneously in ads for Coldwell Banker, Applebee's and Clinique.)

To me, "I'm Free, I'm Free" is more like the Cowells' 1967 hit "The Rain, the Park and Other Things"—but I finally couldn't stand the same frustration anymore and contacted Best Buy headquarters in Minneapolis.

I was contacted by a local Tom Lescher, and performed by him and his group Echo Boys. The BMI writer wanted an upbeat tune that sounded like an album track rather than a TV commercial—and boy, did he deliver.

Another channel-surf stopper is Sheraton Hotel's TV campaign promoting its new Sweet Sleeper bed, which uses a version of the lullaby "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" that sounds dead-on like Roger McGuinn and the Byrds. Not.

The great McGuinn, now out promoting his new album "Limited Edition," could only wish he trademarked his sound when informed that the Internet was all abuzz with the McGuinn/Byrds sound-alike. One post surmised that someone was "going out of their way" to approximate McGuinn's unique vocal.

After a little more sleuthing, it can be stated with certainty that the voice is that of New York singer/songwriter Dayna Kurtz, who is currently opening for Richard Thompson while supporting her album "Beautiful Yesterday," due Aug. 3 from Kismet Records.

"We felt it was important to visually capture that wonderful feeling of falling into a Sheraton Sweet Sleeper bed at the end of the day, and the music choice of 'Twinkle, Twinkle' underscores that most childlike feeling of being wrapped in the utmost of comfort before you drift off," ad agency Deutsch's Kathy Delaney said in a press release.

Two other TV ads should be noted. The MCI spot featuring the readily identifiable Tony Bennett K. K. lang duet "What a Wonderful World" has nonetheless engendered service engine activity.

And the use of the glistering keyboard intro to Joe Jackson's 1982 hit "Steppin' Out" in the Lincoln Mercury sport utility vehicle commercials has increased sales of the "Night and Day" album from which it first emerged, as well as Jackson's "Steppin' Out" compilation, according to his management office.

Meanwhile, in the New York area, the local-leased cable TV Bollywood programs have been running a series of one-minute New York Life Insurance ads focusing on vintage Bollywood film songs, backed by a CD compilation promotion.

"I had a little money left in my advertising budget last year, but not enough time to shoot anything," says New York Life corporate VP Ashwin Verma, whose self-produced ads flights have previously involved human interest themes. Appreciating the South Asian community's fanaticism for films, Verma opted to license classic Bollywood film songs and tag them with a "build your own legacy" theme.

"I bought the rights for [one-minute clips] of songs I thought were classic and would live forever," continues Verma, who chose black-and-white films from the late 1950s and early 1960s.

"After people first saw the commercials, we started advertising that they could get a free CD of the songs by answering simple questions on our Web site. They didn't have to have the right answers: We just wanted them to log into the site to get them interested in finding more about our products."

The 15-track disc includes classic songs like "Kahin Deep Jalnaa..." sung by Lata Mangeshkar and written by Hemant Kumar and Shakeel Badayuni, from the 1962 film "Bees Saal Baad"; and "Tu Mera Inteqar Hai," written and sung by Kumar with lyrics by Gulzar, from 1969's "Kh_iconi."

Response has been "excellent," Verma says, counting about a thousand requests per day. He says he may follow the promotion with a second one featuring more recent color films.
Musicrama Expands Distribution Offerings

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—In a move to become a full-service independent distribution company, Musicrama has created a new division and hired indie veteran Duncan Hutchison to lead it.

Dubbed MDM Musicrama Distribution and Marketing, the new division will allow the distributor to expand its expertise beyond dance, imports and Latin music to also focus on rock, pop and hip-hop. It is also expected to complement Musicrama’s presence in the major accounts by helping the company service independent stores.

"The whole idea is to enhance Musicrama’s services and capabilities to appeal to a broader swath of labels," says Hutchison, who reports to Mark Jarzabek, president of the Long Island City, N.Y.-based company. "We want to be a front-line player in the indie distribution arena."

Musicrama, founded in 1977 as an importer, has been on "a long journey...and this is the final step in getting to become a company that we always dreamt of becoming: a full-service, very well-funded independent distributor."

Musicrama, which had revenue of about $25 million last year, was acquired by Sheridan Square Acquisition, whose principals include Joe Bianco and Amil Narang. The pair formed Alliance Entertainment, which they controlled until 1996. During their tenure at Alliance, they worked with Hutchison when he ran Alliance’s independent distribution division, AEC Distribution.

MDM will be located in Manhattan. The staff of five now includes Mike Worthington, label and retail marketing director, and Dounia Dimar, retail marketing manager. The division expects to expand to a 15-person staff by next year.

Hutchison, who has held top posts at Shelter Music Group, K-Tel International and Caroline Records, says that his division will enable Musicrama to offer such services as manufacturing, marketing, promotional, publicity, consumer awareness campaigns and handling labels’ digital content.

He says, "We want to be able to go head to head with the top independent distribution companies."
Navarre Meet Celebrates Distributor Health

We don't know why, but they were singing the blues at Navarre Entertainment Media's national sales meeting, held June 9-11 in Los Angeles at the Wyndham Bel Age. Replaying some schtick from a previous company conflag, blues "singer" Vyto Lazauskas, Navarre's Eastern director of sales, and "guitarist" Ed Maxin, Western director of sales, reunited for a performance as the Minnesota Destroyers.

But there was really nothing for New Hope, Minn.-based Navarre to be blue about. The company recently reported record financials for the fiscal year ended in March (Retail Track, Billboard, June 12).

Navarre senior VP/CMO Steve Pritchitt reported sales up 40% in the fourth quarter.

Chairman/CEO Eric Paulson noted that Navarre tallied more than $1 million per employee for the year, and Business Week named it one of the 100 fastest-growing firms in America.

Navarre's music distribution side boasts a roster of 67 labels. The Los Angeles meet telegraphed how much the company has changed during the past decade. Paulson noted that until recently, Navarre had been pigeonholed as a new-age or rap distributor.

The offerings on view reflected the company's move into other genres. Highlights of the meet included a showcase by DRT's pop-punk band Lit at the Viper Room, a set by Revolution's lounge satirist Richard Cheese at Tower Records on Sunset, conference performances by Majestic's droll singer/songwriter Peter Himmelman (who improvised a song about product development manager Bobby Bland), Ragin' Grace/Titan rockers Eight Days Gone and a Whisky A Go Go gig by F.E.'s Swedish band Last Amanda.

Navarre revealed its intention to move deeper into a digital strategy. Product development director Mike Cornette said the distributor is finalizing an agreement with the Digital Rights Agency to encode its labels' product and market it to major Internet sites.

The company plans to offer prescreened publicity and promotion services to its labels, according to marketing VP Joyce Fleck. In another twist, VP of business affairs Jim Colson said Navarre will focus on catalog and labels that need development.

Details in the latter area remain undefined, during Colson's watch as president of Distribution North America—the distribution arm of now-defunct wholesaler Valley Media—DNA formed Emerge Distribution as an enclave for catalog-driven labels and developing imprints.

POSSESS CROSING: Fat Possum Records and Epitaph Records have ended their joint-venture relationship.

Left-of-center Oxford, Miss.-based blues label Fat Possum joined Los Angeles punk power Epitaph in 1996. Fat Possum head Matthew Johnson says New York-based MRL, through Ryko Distribution, will handle the label, effective immediately.

MRL has distributed some of the company's titles since late 2003. Fat Possum retains its catalog, except for recordings by Solomon Burke and King Ernest. "Rubber Factory," a new set by Lenny, Ohio, blues-punk duo the Black Keys, will arrive in the fall as a Fat Possum/Epitaph album.

The next Fat Possum release will be "A Bothered Mind," a new collection of remixed tracks by bluesman R.L. Burnside, scheduled for Aug. 17.

PRETTY COOL DEAL: Artemis Records has acquired Wellesley Hills, Mass.-based blues and roots label Tone-Cool Records. The label's roster includes Susan Tedeschi, the North Mississippi All Stars and Double Trouble.

New York-based Arista, which Koch handles, has distributed Tone-Cool since September 2001. Tone-Cool previously had a long relationship with Rounder Records, then went through Universal Music & Video Distribution for two years before joining Arista.

Tone-Cool CEO Richard Rosenblatt, who founded the label in 1985, will remain with the new title of president.

"Mambo Italiano" and other songs that topped charts beyond the States. Bryan Everitt, director of music purchasing at Amanti, Texas-based Hasting Entertainment, says Capitol/EMI chose the right time to release the set.

"The adult-oriented customer is coming out and buying music again, so we feel good about the album's sales potential," he says. "Also, with Fred Stewart and Bette Midler having hits now, it was the perfect time."

Other merchants wonder if Capitol/EMI is saturating the market, given all the other Martin greatest-hits compilations available.

Capitol itself has six Martin compilations, including those in its Capitol Years and Capitol Collectors series, both greatest-hits packages. The label just deleted its 1998 "Greatest Hits: King of Cool" album—the first U.S. set to include songs from both Capitol and Epic—plus 15 minutes of bonus material.

Meanwhile, the album will come out internationally Sept. 6. Since EMI is releasing the same package worldwide, EMI worked closely with the EMI international marketing department so the album would include Martin's biggest hits from key markets outside the United States.

In addition to classic U.S. hits like "Return to Me" "Swing," "Standing on the Corner," "Memories Are Made of This" and "Everybody Loves Somebody," the album contains "Under the Bridges of Paris," "Let Me Go Lover,

Fat Possum head Matthew Johnson says New York-based MRL, through Ryko Distribution, will handle the label, effective immediately.

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Indie artists are seeing RED—and they couldn’t be happier.

Pop veterans Hall & Oates, pop-punk rockers Taking Back Sunday, country star Joe Diffie—each records for an indie label signed with RED Distribution, which this year marks its 25th anniversary as a key player in the independent music business.

In recent months, RED has helped drive sales for an array of acts, including Los Lonely Boys on Or/Epic Records, Coheed and Cambria on Equal Vision Records and Switchfoot on Columbia Records.

Although Sony Music has fully owned the company since 1996, RED counts as an independent distributor in Nielsen SoundScan’s calculations of the music market.

Last year, independent distributors accounted (Continued on page 54)
RED's Antonelli Has Golden Rule

‘Our Success Record Is Strong In Every Area Of Music’

BY STEVE TRAUMAN

On the occasion of his company’s 25th anniversary, RED Distribution president/CEO Ken Antonelli spoke with Billboard to discuss RED’s past, present and future.

How has RED Distribution evolved through its history?

The company started out 25 years ago as a label, actually, and it evolved like any indie label back then. We had a difficult time because most were regional, not national, so we didn’t have much importance outside of New York.

As we started to distribute ourselves on a national basis, we started to evolve into a distribution entity as well. We asked, “If we’re doing this for ourselves, why can’t we do this for other people?”

As RED grew, it started picking up other labels for distribution, primarily in the rock and metal field. As we became a successful operation, we grabbed the eye of some of the bigger companies, and Sony became interested. To their credit, they realized there were lots of different ways they could integrate RED into their music operations, and Sony bought 50% of RED in 1993.

What genres were you working with then?

At that point, we were a lot more involved in rap and urban, as well as rock and metal, but other aspects of the company were starting to grow as well, such as Broadway scores with “Les Miserables.”

Urban started to dominate as the genre crossed over into the white suburban demographic. RED responded by concentrating on the label side, with the idea of having more street-oriented urban acts.

Bone Thugs-N-Harmony came out of that era, as well as Fat Joe, Common and M.O.P. All were signed to Relativity. Then Sony bought the other 50% of the company in 1995.

“We’ll continue to be a leader in the independent business.”

—KEN ANTONELLI

How have RED’s partners influenced the growth of the company?

RED, the distribution arm, has continued to evolve and diversify, especially when I came onboard in 1996. Sony decided they wanted to do business with Loud Records, and they came onboard. We created an in-house marketing arm called RED Ink, which evolved into RED Dance and RUMM [RED Urban Music Marketing]. We also expanded heavily and very early on into the DVD business.

We had tremendous success with “Up In Smoke” early on with Eaglevision, and this has evolved into all genres of DVD product, including anime, martial arts, special interest, public domain movies, Steve-O from MTV’s “Jackass,” as well as music titles. Eddel bought RED in 1999 and held the company for about a year and a half until Sony took the company back 100%.

In the last five years we’ve had a hugely successful joint cooperative with the act Train. Since Sony took the company back, they’ve given us all the tools we’ve needed to continue to expand and become a No. 1 distribution business. We opened RED Canada in 2002, and that is flourishing as well.

What are some of your recent successes?

We put out the Switchfoot record [“The Beautiful Letdown”] for Sony, and it is now at almost 1 million sold. It was a great team effort by both companies, and we’re very proud of that. We helped break Victory Records [band] Taking Back Sunday, and two years later it’s building into one of rock’s most important emerging acts.

Other successes include Equal Vision’s Coaded and Cambria, Epic’s Los Lonely Boys, The Hieroglyphics’ [single featuring] Goapele, Rendezvous, Pratul, Mark Antoine and Michael Longton, among others.

The Dualtone June Carter Cash series won two Grammys this year, and New West’s Delbert McClinton won the 2001 Grammy for best contemporary blues album. [RED also distributes] New West artist John Hiatt. And the Steven-O DVD was a great success.

By RED Red on their own label had two singles go top five and top 10, respectively, and Hall & Oates on their own U-Watch label had three singles go top five, both solid accomplishments with breakthrough songs on the highly competitive AC radio format.

Four of our bands have been recognized by two of the biggest summer tour packages. Ozzfest and the Warped tour. Taking Back Sunday and Coaded and Cambria are two headliners on the Warped lineup, and at Ozzfest, Atreyu on Victory and Everytime I Die on Ferret Music are headlining the second stage, a great springboard of future success.

Our success record is very diversified and strong in each area of music, and these examples are just a sampling of our recent highlights.

What are the challenges for RED in the digital entertainment environment?

There are two parts to this problem. We’ve already announced to our label base and we’ll be asking others to look at RED as a one-stop to be competitive with any [company] that’s out there. We have deals with all of the digital music sales entities like iTunes and offer a wonderful system of digital rights management where we can provide services for everyone across the board.

Often, the labels don’t have the manpower or the staff to handle the numerous facets of each digital rights deal, and we can act as an aggregator for that vital area. It just adds one more dimension to RED as a company that provides a number of services, and we’ll have more details on this later.

What discussions about the digital future are you having with your brick-and-mortar clients?

The other aspect of the challenge is to continually impress upon our retail partners that the digital environment will not go away. I don’t think a lot of the people in the retail community understand that, because our product falls into the ‘slow turning’ category. If a record is good and word-of-mouth is strong, kids will go out and buy it. They have to own it, the complete package.

The problem is when they don’t find it in the store, especially in a secondary or tertiary market. Then they go home to find a way to own it, and download it—another lost retail sale.

The challenge is to find a way to work with the retail community to solve this problem, which is complicated because those records customers really want are often not available in the store.

What is your perspective of RED’s business today?

I’m very optimistic today, and I say that in a humble way. I think the indie business has really started to blossom. Market share has gained a point, and indie have the second-largest share in the U.S. and the U.K. and the No. 1 spot in the rest of the world. The main reason for this success is that some of the executives will come out of these larger companies and start their own labels. They will figure out how this new business model can work for them and will create more opportunities for us to diversify and grow.

About 75% of our labels were up in the last fiscal year, at least half had a record four or five months financially, and 90% were profitable. In the second and third releases, you could see that quality remained, and they were growing their businesses successfully. You could see the A&R and career-oriented, artist-development philosophies are more focused, with the result that the indie music scene is much more vibrant than it has ever been.

I’m really confident that because of the way we’ve positioned ourselves in

(Continued on page 39)
Few things in life are better than a 25-year old red.

Congratulations to RED Distribution for 25 great years, from all your friends at Sony Music Entertainment.

© 2004 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.
Red Hot

Continued from page 51

for 109.6 million in album sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Indie distributors collectively ranked second in album market share with 16.7% (up from 16.4% in 2002). They ranked first in distribution of classical, jazz, gospel and new age titles and second in catalog and music video.

OLD-SCHOOL RED

RED has won the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers’ distributor of the year award four times, most recently in 2003. The Trans World Entertainment retail chain has twice named RED independent music vendor of the year, with RED's salesperson earning rep of the year two times as well.

"What makes these awards so special to us is that they are acknowledgments by our customers of what we were able to achieve for them," RED president/CEO Ken Antonelli says.

Even RED's competitors praise the company. Ryko Distribution president Jim Cuomo worked at RED's original incarnation, Important Record Distributors, for several years (Continued on page 58).

The RED Distribution team includes, standing from left: national senior director of urban marketing Wardell Mahone, VP of finance and administration Gregory Bell, senior VP of product development Alan Becker, VP of business and legal affairs Tony Timpano, RED Ink senior VP/GM Howard Gabriel, president/CEO Ken Antonelli, VP of sales Dean Tabac, VP of field sales Lou Tatulli, VP of marketing Laura G. Marques and senior VP of finance and administration Mitchell Wolk. Sitting from left: VP of international marketing Marla Shatz, senior director of new media Russell Fink, manager of national singles sales Paul Reitz and director of the Northeast/Central region Frank Falkow.

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Thank You For 25 Years Of
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RED Partners Roll In Green

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—After 25 years in business, RED Distribution's ability to help its labels achieve sales growth still gets high marks from its partners.

"The only problem we have with RED is they sold too many records," quips Steve Kerry, owner of Equal Vision Records in Hudson, N.Y. "We weren't ready for how many they can get out—and sell-through."

Kerry has run Equal Vision for 12 years. But until he signed on with RED about a year ago, he says, "I didn't know what the Billboard chart was."

For example, on Oct. 7, 2003, Equal Vision released Coheed and Cambria's album "In Keeping Secrets of Silent Earth: 3." Kerry hoped for an initial shipment of 30,000 units. RED delivered orders for 70,000.

By the first week of May, the album's shipments stood at 200,000.

"I am completely confident," Kerry says, "that I made the right choice in coming to RED."

Larry Miller, CEO at Or Records, a 1-year-old label based in New York, knows exactly what Kerry is talking about.

"We are so thrilled with this relationship," he says of his distribution deal with RED.

The company has helped Or Records take Los Lonely Boys from a small regional band to 200,000 in sales, with its self-titled album now breaking out nationally (see sidebar, below).

The sales results RED delivers have also impressed Mike Carden, North American president of operations for Eagle Rock Entertainment. Eagle Rock shipped 125,000 copies of "Hangover Music Vol. VI" by Zack Wyide's Black Label Society project. That is "pretty wild in this day and age," Carden says.

Prior to signing with RED several months ago, Eagle Rock moved its product through a number of different distributors.

"We had some of our video with Pioneer and some with Warner Home Video, we had our Spitfire label with [Alternative Distribution Alliance] and we had a little bit with RED unit RED Ink," which provides marketing and promotion services for labels.

But Eagle Rock "pulled it all back in and give it all to RED, and they have really turned it around for us. They are doing a fantastic job," Carden says.

Victory Records, now one of the labels anchoring the RED portfolio, has been with the distributor for nearly eight years and is pleased with the growth that the relationship has produced for both companies, label leader Tony Brummel says. For the first time in the label's history, thanks in part to its RED partnership, Victory is within striking distance of three gold albums, according to Brummel.

New albums from Atreyu and Taking Back Sunday "will blow up this summer, and [Victory and RED] have worked together really well on these projects," Brummel says. The albums arrive June 29 and July 27, respectively. "RED is 100% behind the plans we have and the units we want to ship. This is going to separate us from all the other indie albums out there."

Brummel says he is also aiming for gold sales for the Straylight Run album due in September.

A key ingredient in RED's success, according to its distributed labels, is its staff and how it works with partner labels.

"This business is about music, but it's also about people, and some..." (Continued on page 59)

Not So Lonely Now

RED Distribution's marketing process and prowess has clearly worked for Los Lonely Boys and the group's self-titled album on Or Records.

"When we first were talking about signing and putting out Los Lonely Boys, we met with them and talked about our setup strategy, which [was] to issue an EP in Texas and work it regionally," Or CEO Larry Miller says.

He recalls that Ken Antonelli, president/CEO of RED Distribution, told him: "You might not be aware of it, but we pride ourselves on starting things really

and then rolling it out nationally."

Miller concedes that Or was a bit skeptical of that claim. But a year later the album "is a barn-burner. RED staged the regional rollout, and now it's up to national and international markets and moving over to Epic and Sony Music Distribution."

The move to Epic and Sony Music Distribution is "another instance where our trust in Ken and the RED team over rode any concerns we had about putting Los Lonely Boys in that structure."

ED CHRISTMAN

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From the Psychopathic Family of Labels

Our Blood Runs RED

Red Hot
Continued from page 54

years in the late ‘80s. “RED has always had a sound base with veteran experience,” Cuomo says. “They are professional, knowledgeable and intimate with all the workings of domestic retail to this day. They’ve had the resiliency in the face of adversity to come back and thrive, and I’m proud to know them as friends and colleagues.”

RED Distribution, then known as Important Record Distributors (IRD), opened its doors in May 1979. Its focus was selling recordings imported from the United Kingdom, Europe and Japan.

RED’S DEN MOTHER

Tova Hoffman, now with Sony Music, worked at RED for more than 20 years. Aside from being VP of human resources and accounting services, she was RED’s self-styled den mother.

“Our first office was in the back of Rick’s Restaurant [in Jamaica, N.Y.] near the airport,” Hoffman says. “The inside wall was unpainted cinder blocks, and there were bars on the windows—you would have thought you were in jail.

“I was one of a five-person staff, and we had three desks, a coffee machine, a copier and a fax,” Hoffman continues. “And no computers; everything was done manually. In the beginning, I did everything—billing, collections, monitoring the warehouse, all the financial transactions. And I’m proud to say we never borrowed a penny from the bank to operate.”

Within a year, the business moved to larger quarters nearby and became the first national independent distributor to “regionalize” with a network of offices, according to RED Ink VP/GM Howard Gabriel, who was IRD marketing VP at the time.

The launch of Relativity Records, the company’s first in-house label, coincided with the growth of its distribution system, says Alan Becker, a 24-year veteran of RED and now senior VP of product development.

As for the other distribution arms, Sony/IRL (continued on page 60)

Among Relativity’s earliest releases were licensed products by such U.K. acts as The Cure and Robyn Hitchcock; homegrown efforts from the Beastie Boys and Talas; many English releases from the 4AD and Beggars Banquet labels; the London original cast recording of “Les Miserables” and Joan Jett’s first album on Blackheart Records.

Becker credits John Zazula—whose IRD-distributed Megadeth label released early albums by Metallica and Anthrax—with shaping the direction of Combat Records, the company’s second in-house imprint.

Combat released pioneering albums by future metal icons Megadeth (“Killing Is My Business”) and Slayer (“Hell Awaits”). The similarly minded Shrapnel and Metal Blade labels joined the fold shortly after. RED still distributes

(Continued on page 60)

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Partners
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times that gets forgotten,” Brummel says. “We have been with RED for almost eight years, and they have the best staff in independent distribution. The people that work there have been there for a long time, and that says a lot about the company. Also, they have a lot of music people there, and for Victory that makes all the difference in the world.”

Eagle Rock’s Carden also feels that RED’s staff distinguishes it from the competition. “From [RED president] Ken Antonelli all the way down, they have great people and are passionate about what they do.”

An essential element of RED’s philosophy that allows it to super- serve its labels is having integral RED personnel sitting in on all of its label marketing meetings as possible, according to RED VP of marketing Laura G. Marques.

“That way RED doesn’t have to wait for labels to tell them what they need,” she explains. “RED’s own staff gets that information firsthand.”

RED also holds regularly scheduled meetings with labels to make sure they are further abreast of all marketing plans and priorities, she adds.

“I personally work with many labels well in advance of a new release to help them develop marketing plans and help with media contact and materials they need in setting up marketing plans,” Marques says.

Then, RED itself has meetings to make sure various departments are up to speed on what needs to be done. RED builds marketing plans so the company “can deliver quality campaigns to the sales department with the ultimate goal of selling records,” she says.

**BLENDING IN WITH SONY**
RED Distribution, now fully owned by Sony Music Entertainment, has become a much more integral part of the Sony structure. The parent finally has hit its stride in using RED to help launch some new bands on its big labels before moving the albums back to the parent companies.

Sony and RED also have aggressively offered that arrangement, where appropriate, to RED-distributed labels. In addition to Or, Equal Vision says it has just done a joint venture with Columbia on Coheed and Cambria. The album is still at RED, but at some point it could switch to Sony Music Distribution.

(Continued on page 64)

Antonelli
Continued from page 52

the marketplace and the infrastructure we’ve created that we’ll be able to continue to offer labels a wide variety of services and continue to be a leader in the independent business. If you look at our track record, it’s very diverse in its successes, and we’re adding value to what our labels do.

**What are your goals for the future?**

Long term, it’s to be more broad-based, to upgrade our services and infrastructure so that we can shorten the time that a label success occurs, making it less expensive for them to break a new band while maintaining artist development and career-oriented strategies.

In the short term, the most recent, notable turnaround for success I can point to is Los Lonely Boys. This was a testament to the fact that we were able to capitalize on the buzz and bring success to fruition faster. We see with some of the new labels we’re signing that they recognize the importance of that approach.

We will continue to look for the most cutting edge and high-quality people as business partners. That’s always been a part of our mission statement and will continue to be a key to RED’s success. At the same time, we’re focused on making sure our customers understand that what we’re giving them is what people want, and we will draw customers into their stores.

---

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Red Hot
Continued from page 58
the latter imprint.
In the '80s, the number of U.S. indie labels specializing in what would become alternative rock exploded. RED, now located in a two-story building in Hollis, N.Y., distributed releases from influential indie labels, including Sub Pop, SST, Twin/Tone, Enigma and DB, which issued R.E.M.'s first single.

ALIEN SURFING
By the late '80s, such punk-oriented labels as Epitaph joined the mix. At one point, RED distributed as many as 150 labels. Other factors influencing the company's growth included Relativity's multi-platinum success with guitar hero Joe Satriani's "Surfing With the Alien" album and, on a broader scale, the emerging CD market.

"The '80s were when all the pieces starting falling into place," Becker says. "We put together our label base, our customer base and our sales staff with our whole attitude about marketing, which was to educate buyers and provide better service than our indie competitors. But music retailing hit hard times in the early '90s. "Of course, indies are always the last to get paid," Becker says. "There also was this mass defection of labels and artists to major-label deals, so we really had to reinvent ourselves."

With Sony providing the capital, IRD co-founder Barry Kobrin bought out his U.K. partner, Steve Mason, in 1991. Under Sony's financial oversight, IRD became RED (an acronym for Relativity Entertainment Distribution) and relocated to its current office on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. When Sony purchased Kobrin's share of the company in 1994, RED evolved further.

"We decided to concentrate on labels with which we had exclusive distribution deals," Gabriel explains. "By cutting back, we actually drove volume up," says Dean Tabac, RED VP of sales and a 16-year company veteran. "We could focus more and actually work a project for two years, if warranted. By 1999, we had four regional and 15 sales offices and 25 account service reps—who visited 300 stores a week—all linked with an incredible computer system."

RED increased its sales of electronic, dance and urban music. The

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Red Hot

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company set up the RED Ink Group to assist developing acts on Sony imprints and other young, entre-
preneurial labels like Emmylou Harris’ Eminent, roots-rock- oriented New West and guitarist Steve Val’s Favorited Nations.

RED Ink claimed an early home- grown success with Train’s debut album, which it nurtured from first-week sales of 3,000 to plat- inum certification. “Train started in one of our artist- development programs,” says VP of field sales Lou Tatulli, an 11-year RED veteran. “With our high-tech systems and [account service rep] feedback, we can spot trends better and react even faster than ever.”

In November 1999, Edel Music, one of Germany’s leading independ- ent music companies, purchased an 80% stake in RED. But when Edel defaulted on a $25 million payment on the purchase, Sony regained full ownership of the company.

Antonelli joined RED in 1996. During his tenure, the company has expanded into Canada, forged new international partnerships and entered the digital rights manage- ment (DRM) sector. “We started RED Canada in 2002 more like a marketing services company,” Antonelli says. “The response was overwhelming, and RED has distribution deals for North Amer- ica with most of our U.S.-distributed labels, and [we have] picked up sev- eral Canadian labels for the U.S. The business has been growing faster than anticipated.”

To bolster its international partners- ships, RED attends MIDEM every year. “We are always on the lookout for opportunities,” Antonelli says. “Anyplace in the world we can go for business, we’ll be there.”

Antonelli continues to champion bands on RED labels, recently citing the arrival of Pepper Ghost, a new group on Hybrid Recordings.

DRM represents another oppor- tunity for the company. “We have the ability to add value with RED’s digital service to all of the existing resources and services we provide,” Antonelli says. “We already have deals done with all of the major [digital music service providers] like iTunes, Real Networks and Napster.

“With many small labels unable to provide the manpower for man- aging digital rights,” he adds, “it’s an important service to offer both our [distributed] labels and other labels, as well.”

Offering the perspective of a 19- year company veteran, Gabriel says, “We’ve learned a lot. We’ve adapted to the needs of the marketplace. All of us—our labels and our staff—are like a family that has grown together.

“We have incredible detail in communication and share this information with our labels and retailers,” he continues. “We mar- ket smartly and already know we’re the best indie distributor in America. Now we’re expanding our role as a truly global company in the digital age of music.”

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RED Alert:
Albums To Watch

BY CHRIS MORRIS

Country singer Joe Diffie bowed on Nashville’s Broken Bow Records June 1 with “Tougher Than Nails.” The set marks Diffie’s arrival on the independent side, after nearly 15 years with Epic, Columbia and Monument. The title track from the new album has already hit the top 20 on the Billboard Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart. Broken Bow co-founder Jim Yerger says “Tougher Than Nails” represents “a more mature Joe Diffie . . . We think there’s a minimum of five singles on this album.” Yerger says Diffie has some 50 dates lined up for a summer tour.

Pop-punk band Taking Back Sunday, which hails from Amityville, N.Y., will release its sophomore album, “Where You Want To Be,” July 27. It follows debut “Tell All Your Friends,” for Chicago’s Victory Records. The group has been on tour with Blink-182 and Cypress Hill and will headline the Vans Warped tour. Victory VP of sales Ramsey Dean says the label will engage in a full-scale direct-marketing campaign for the new album, especially on the Internet. “Their main strength is their fan base,” Dean says.

Detroit’s manic rap duo Insane Clown Posse returns Aug. 31 with “The Wraith: Hell’s Pit,” the sequel to 2002’s “The Wraith: Shangri-La” on the hyper-theatrical group’s own Psychopathic Records. “This album is the culmination of the ‘Joker’s Card’ series, which fans have really devoted themselves to,” says Steve Furay, Psychopathic sales and mar- keting director. The duo’s Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope will launch a

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Al Cafaro & John Scher
In the past, when it became clear that Sony was going to use RED to its advantage more often for its own acts, a few of the bigger labels at RED worried that Sony’s artists might become priorities at the expense of the distributed labels. But RED’s partners say nothing of the sort has occurred. In fact, if anything, the opposite has happened, according to Equal Vision’s Kerry.

“I feel the word is coming down from Sony to pay more attention to the indie labels and how they do it, and that is helping us and them.”

RED’s video distribution also benefits from its Sony relationship. As labels issue more music videos on DVD and break into other video genres, independent distributors have scrambled to keep up.

As a result, RED has emerged as a leading independent video distributor. Carden notes that RED has helped Eagle Vision ship 500,000 units of its “Up in Smoke” movie featuring Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre. In addition to its own three-person staff, RED can draw on Sony Wonder to help it market special-interest DVDs.

“RED has definitely improved their video side,” Carden says. “Between RED and Sony, they have nine people devoted to working my product. And they are trying to break into accounts that we never sold to before, and also libraries.”

TARGETED CAMPAIGNS
RED also serves its partners by pooling marketing resources. “One of the most important jobs we do,” RED’s Marques says, “is successfully set up marketing campaigns integrated with accounts, labels and media partners.

For instance, RED might create a campaign for rock acts on six to 10 of its labels in the same campaign. By pooling the labels’ resources, the campaigns can be multipronged and include exposure via radio, online, TV and other media. This gives the labels marketing opportunities that they couldn’t obtain as economically on their own.

RED’s labels are diverse so that the company can plan upcoming initiatives for specific genres. For example, RED has a campaign under way for such veteran acts on its labels as Rick Springfield, Hall & Oates and Simply Red. Each has had huge sales in the past and has new albums out on RED-distributed labels.

Marques says other future initiatives include creating more genre-based campaigns, as well as continuing the rock campaign to support 30-plus RED-distributed acts on the summer festival circuit.

Or Records is a label that takes advantage of all of RED’s capabilities, including working with RED Ink and RUMM, the marketing and promotion arms of RED. So Or’s Miller has become very familiar with the company in the past year.

He measures RED against other independent distributors from the perspective of his previous work as a private equity consultant, advising investment firms on potential music companies to purchase.

After doing due diligence on a number of companies, including some independent distributors, Miller is convinced that “nobody can touch RED’s management, their systems or their ability to deliver.”

The ever-smooth Daryl Hall & John Oates return to their R&B roots on “Our Kind of Soul.” The new album contains classic soul covers from such acts as the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, the Spinners, Al Green and the Dramatics as well as new original material. It is due in September on the duo’s U-Watch imprint, which Doyle-Kos Entertainment distributes through RED. “It’s a perfect extension of their career,” says Brian Doyle, the duo’s co-manager/label head. “They’re covering songs that they love.” Appropriately, the release will coincide with this fall’s Rock and Soul 2004 tour, which will feature Hall & Oates, Michael McDonald and the Average White Band.

The Roots took on executive-producer chores for “True Notes Vol. 1,” the first release on their imprint, Okayplayer Records. Among the top rap and hip-hop talents contributing to the album are Dilated Peoples, Blackalicous, Aesop Rock and Madlib. The album arrived at retail May 18. The Okayplayer brand—which has been used on a popular Web site—was used for a Roots-headlined tour that preceded the album’s release. Peter Bittenbender, president of label partner/distributor Decon, says: “The Roots will be promoting their own album this summer, and they’ll bring some of the Okayplayer artists on the road to support the project.”

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Thank New Pricing Schemes For Rising Sales

One positive result of the sales downturn of the past three years is that it forced the majors to set more dynamic pricing policies.

Sales are once again healthy, and I’m sure pricing is a factor in that.

Sony Music Distribution and its labels appear to be the most aggressive in implementing variable pricing schemes incredibly, they do this almost on a release-by-release basis.

EMI Marketing has taken a performance-based approach with its You Recommend and Z-2 Money sales programs.

WEA just lowered the price on 1,700 titles, and sources say BMG Distribution is contemplating some new pricing strategies.

And, of course, Universal Music Video Distribution launched JUMP-Start, the most talked-about pricing program in the industry during the past year.

When UMG revamped JUMP-Start (جامعس, بيل), it allowed buy-in discounts for catalog sales programs. The revisions also allowed the company to use discounts to spur sales on newly released albums still finding their way in the market.

For example, Universal Records/Motown recently announced various discounts for six titles: Kern’s “Kernistry,” 8-Ball & MJG’s “Living Legend,” Toa Maris’ “La Dona,” HLM’s “Razorblade Romance,” Flaw’s “Endangered Species” and Murphy Lee’s “Murphy’s Law.”

A source familiar with JUMP-Start explains that in revising the program, UMG labels wanted to create a tool to get retailers excited if an album looked like it was going to break. Another UMG source adds, “In some cases we felt we needed more levers to pull to help move our records at retail. We want retailers to get excited and support our records, but we still want to be fiscally responsible.”

That’s why the company designed parameters for pulling those levers, but also put limits on how much sales volume can be given up in deals, sources say.

Meanwhile, Sony Music Distribution and Columbia Records raised competitors’ eyebrows by offering a 36% discount on the “Spider-Man 2” soundtrack to retailers agreeing to company figures Sony could have spent much less in cooperative funds to get the album price-and-positioning through its usual methods.

“I don’t know how they are going to make money that way,” he said. “To me, pricing is a poor man’s marketing strategy.”

Sony would not comment on the strategy. But one source familiar with Sony’s plan says: “There are different ways to skin a cat.”

Under normal industry practice, the “Spider-Man 2” soundtrack would likely street with about 500,000 units, priced between $11 and $18, and it would be lucky to match the first album’s sales total, the source says.

“But if the consumer walks into retail and sees the album priced somewhere between $7 and $10, what will happen then? With the album the focal point of retail everywhere, will the sales velocity and the re-order turnaround become dramatically different?”

Let’s do the math. If Sony sold the album the normal way—spending, say, $2 per unit for a buy-in discount and cooperative advertising—it would probably sell only 500,000 copies in the first month. Its billing would be about $5 million.

If Sony hits a home run with its experiment and sells, say, 1.5 million copies of “Spider-Man 2,” it would be giving up $6.7 million in billing. But its total billing would be about $11.6 million, or more than double the amount the normal marketing effort would generate.

And what happens if they can blow the album up into the next “Titanic?”

SAD Partings: Elektra Records alumni gathered at the Bohemian Hall Beer Garden in Astoria, N.Y., June 4 for “The Last Meet and Greet.” The gathering celebrated the label’s history in the wake of its closure by the Atlantic Group.

Fifteen-year Elektra veteran Brian Cohen put together the event. He was senior VP of marketing when the label folded; in fact, he held the party on his last day at the company. About 250 former staffers attended the emotionally charged evening. Some flew in just for the event. Founder Jac Holzman couldn’t make it, but he taped an audio message for attendees.

Holzman told former staffers they were integral to the specialness of Elektra. “Some of you have e-mailed me expressing your regrets, and I do understand the sadness of your feelings,” he said. “You have lost a love, but the music is still there. And in the end, the music is all that counts.”

He added: “I was talking recently with the new heads of WMG and said that, like an orchard, maybe this is the time for Elektra to lay dormant until it is ready naturally to bloom again. And I believe it will.”

Martin
Continued from page 50

“There is a need to have special greatest-hits variations because [that] provides a diversity of pricing, which is a good thing because it targets different audiences,” he says. “Also, re-packaging an artist’s repertoire in a new album refreshes the market.

EMM’s Agner says consumers who bought previous Martin collections “couldn’t get this breadth of songs on one CD; now they’re getting almost 80 minutes. This year we have a more compelling product offer.”

Besides, Agner says, EMM felt it undermarketed the previous collection. The TV campaign is the ‘key to reaching the adult buyer, which is the core audience. That tool was really not used the first time.”

“Dino: The Essential Dean Martin” also benefits from more elaborate packaging. Agner adds, “Two of Martin’s children, Deana Martin and Gail Martin Downey, offered their recollections and Stevie Van Zandt wrote the liner notes. This ‘really frames Dean in his place in the entertainment world.’”

EMM also paid extra attention to the package’s imaging.

“The feedback that we have on the packaging from previous releases is that the imaging was not timeless,” Agner says. “Nor was it of the caliber of other heritage-artist packages that we have put out. It wasn’t as compelling as it could be.”

So for this album, Agner says Capitol/EMM chose “timeless Rat Pack-era imagery that will capture the consumer’s attention.”
LOS ANGELES—What keeps most home video executives up at night? Piracy and the form of illegally copied discs and illegal downloading of films from the Internet—continues to cause headaches for most of the home video execs who attended the DVD Lucky 7 conference June 7 and 8 at the Wyndham Bel Air.

Henry McGee, president of HBO Video, estimated the rate of illegal DVD duplication by legitimate duplication exceeds that of legitimate duplication by 10 times.

“Piracy needs a coordinated legislative and enforcement policy,” Warner Home Video president James Cardwell said. “We are being delinquent. We should be in China and Russia with low-priced discs. We should be making product available quicker overseas.”

David Bishop, president/COO of MGM Home Entertainment, said international theatrical windows should more closely mirror domestic release dates to curb illegal international piracy.

Bishop also believes prices of CDs and other music product are too high.

“We need to make it worth it for pirates not to pirate,” he said.

SEEN THROUGH WINDOWS
Not all of the studies are interested in changing their window policies.

“Long windows are good; they prolong revenue streams,” Buena Vista Home Entertainment president Bob Chapek said.

Studios may be choosing long or short theatrical-to-DVD windows based largely on when their competitors are releasing big titles.

“You don’t want to compete with whom you beat you traditionally” when you release a title on DVD, said Mike Dunn, president of Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment.

Studios sometimes decide on a shorter window because DVD production is starting at the film’s green-light date, DreamWorks Home Entertainment president Kelly Souter said.

“What is most important is finding the right date for that [specific] title,” he said.

Indeed, Craig Kornblau, president of Universal Studios Home Video said, “Setting release dates is the most difficult, most important thing that we do.”

Promotion budgets were another topic of debate at the conference.

“What we spend on releasing DVDs dwarfs what we used to spend with the VHS rental model,” New Line Home Entertainment president Stephen Einhorn said. “We’re learning as we go along about how much to spend to launch a DVD.”

Cardwell agreed that, on the whole, the video industry is spending more on DVD marketing campaigns. “The risks are greater because we are spending more, but the rewards are also greater,” he said.

BEING DIRECT
More studios could consider looking into direct-response campaigns like those used by companies such as Respond2Entertainment and Razor & Tie.

A direct-response campaign typically consists of one- or two-minute TV commercials—with a toll-free phone number for ordering—or a half-hour infomercial featuring the product. These promotions cost a fraction of typical TV ads because stations place them on a much broader rotation and studios usually cannot book them far in advance.

Cliff Chenfeld, co-founder of Razor & Tie, said a direct-response push easily dovetails with a retail campaign.

“You can use DR to create demand for something no one knows about right before the title’s street date.”

Chenfeld said direct response was an “unloved stepchild” compared with retail marketing campaigns just five or six years ago. “Now, more people understand that DR is inexpensive advertising. Consumers may not buy through the TV, but then they see [the title] later in Wal-Mart and make that connection.”

Respond2 CEO Tim O’Leary said DVDs of classic TV series do particularly well with direct response.

“DR spots allow consumers to experience the program again,” he said. “Networks like infomercials for classic-TV sets because it looks just like regular entertainment programming.”

RETAIL CONCERNS
Studios remain concerned about retail sell-through prices and the ramifications of DVD-trading programs.

“Retail continues to be incredibly aggressive with sell-through price,” Souter said. “That may be devaluing movies.”

Blockbuster will introduce a DVD-trading program by year’s end, and smaller chains have already been experimenting with such programs.

“The trading business could be potentially harmful to the industry,” Cardwell said. “We don’t yet know the impact. And the future switch from standard to high-definition DVD (Billboard, June 19) may increase consumer interest in DVD trading.

“I don’t know if I will buy a movie on HD when I already have it on DVD,” said Bo Lloyd, senior VP of video purchasing for Dutton, Ala.-based rental chain Movie Gallery. “There will likely be a strong trade business.”

Increased DVD trading will heighten the need to look out for defective product.

“Each store should have a DR-polishing machine, especially when they are trading used discs,” Lloyd noted. He also said rural consumers are unlikely to support a switch to HD any time soon.

“Most DVD houses won’t buy another box,” he said. “Customers can get disenchanted with all of these changes.”

Video Store magazine produced the DVD Lucky 7 conference in cooperation with the Digital Entertainment Group and Billboard sister publication The Hollywood Reporter.

Playoffs still plan to field 12 teams

The playoffs still plan to field 12 teams this year, but the NFL says it will add significantly to our children’s programming, appealing to boys and girls from their pre-school to pre-teen years.

TAKING OUT: Baseball fans have only weeks to wait before the 75th All-Star Game takes place July 13 at Houston’s Minute Maid Park.

On July 6, Q Video and MLB Productions will release “Awesome All-Star Action” ($19.95), a commemoration of the game’s greatest moments. In addition to highlights through the years, the DVD-only product includes bonus interviews with famed athletes, the best of the Home Run Derby and a rundown of every winning All-Star team.

Stephen Hamlin, VP of Q Video, says a baseball-themed QV show airing the night before the All-Star game’s year’s game will feature the DVD. The All-Star Game program will also highlight the title.
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**BILBOARD JUNE 26, 2004**

**TOP DVD SALES**

* Sales data compiled by Nielsen VideoScan.

**TOP VIDEO GAME RENTALS**

* Provided by Home Video Essentials, Inc. Reprints are permitted only with prior written consent.
For the second consecutive year, MG Sound played a leading role in presenting two of Vienna’s major annual events: Wiener Festwochen and Life Ball. The company is one of Europe’s largest and most successful postproduction and recording facilities.

Wiener Festwochen, or Vienna Festival Weeks, was held May 7–June 20. Both the Festival’s opening ceremony and Life Ball, an AIDS charity event held May 15, were staged in front of Vienna’s City Hall, each with an attendance of around 40,000.

The principals of MG Sound, celebrating the facility’s 15th anniversary in 2004, were instrumental in staging both events. Producer/engineer Martin Böhm, project coordinator Eva Böhm and composer Ludwig Bossi provided musical direction, composition and production at MG Sound, as well as live mixing at Festwochen.

“It’s a multimedia show, not just a festival concert,” Böhm says, “with a very complicated, three-interactive-screen setup and a stage in front of it. We provided the musical concept, which means we decided on the artists and songs to be performed. We did the arrangements, all the preproduction and the live coordination.”

Key to this year’s opening ceremonies was the InnovaSON Sy80 digital console. The console, along with sound reinforcement equipment including a Meyer M3 speaker system, was provided by AS Audio, based in Köln, Germany. AS Audio owner Alex Schlösser also contributed to the production.

“Alex provided the equipment and gave me the technical backup,” says Böhm, who acted as front-of-house engineer for the opening ceremonies. “The turnaround between acts was very quick because of the course of the video. It was just one go—no breaks between the acts—and every act performed just one or two songs. So we had to have a fully programmable digital console.”

For the Life Ball’s theme song, Coss composed “Immer Lauter.” A demo was recorded at MG Sound with a Nina Hagen sound-alike—the artist Böhm and Coss had envisioned performing it—and sent to Hagen.

“She liked it and came over and performed the song,” Böhm says. “We did the preproduction and the final production as well.”

Hagen performed “Immer Lauter” at the Life Ball, but the collaboration is yielding additional rewards for all parties: A video produced for the song has been prominent on Austrian music video channel GoTv. The recording was also released on MG Sound’s label, Hitsquad.

“We are very proud to have Nina Hagen on our label,” Böhm says. "It’s just one song at the moment, but we’ll see. I think we will go on working with her."

Many of Hitsquad’s albums and singles have been hits in the Austrian market. The label, Böhm reports, continues to grow.

“We are getting more and more artists in our pool and also artists that are not produced by us, or on our label, for distribution. We proved that we can more or less achieve the same result as a major distribution company.”

The legacy of Ray Charles is manifested in his Los Angeles recording studio, RPM International. Despite his passing, the studio, which became a historic cultural landmark at an April 30 dedication ceremony, will likely live on as testament to the artist’s genius.

Charles’ swan song, “Genius Loves Company,” a collection of duets due Aug. 31 on Artemis, was recorded primarily at RPM, according to the artist’s longtime personal producer/engineer, Terry Howard.

“I tried to do as much as I could there,” Howard says. As Charles’ health deteriorated, he adds, “I knew the best thing for Ray to be comfortable was for him to be home. I did my best so that when artists came in to be with Ray, they had a one-on-one experience with him, being next to him when he sang.

“I kept the isolation to a minimum—to me, the experience was more important than capturing a perfect sound.” Howard adds.

As Howard explains, "We still kept the isolation correct so we could get a good recording, but having the contact—like Willie Nelson being able to put his hand on Ray’s shoulder and talk to him as they worked on the song—was great.”

RPM’s history mirrors that of modern recording. When it was built in 1960, Howard explains, RPM featured a console built by recording pioneer Bill Putnam, founder of Universal Audio and Universal Recording. In the late ‘60s, Howard says, Atlantic/free lance engineer/producer Tom Dowd built a console for RPM.

“In the ‘70s, it got changed again to a 24-track tape machine and 24-track-style board,” Howard says. "In ’82, we had the biggest renovation, when we changed to 48-track digital. That’s how the studio is today, but we still have some of the original microphones from 1960."

“With it being a landmark, it should endure and hopefully be something the public will be able to enjoy,” he says. "Just like Motown in Detroit, this building is a significant landmark, not just to the community but to the music industry itself.”

THE Q LINE: Quincy Jones, a contemporary of Ray Charles, has lent his name and expertise to a line of speakers for home theater systems that SLS International manufactures.

The Q Line, which will include headphones, is expected to launch in fourth-quarter 2004. It is targeted for distribution in mass-market retail outlets.

“The process of orchestrating and arranging has always intrigued me,” Jones says. “After you’ve figured out these things, the next step is to have it make a trip through something that’s going to expose it to other ears. That process is a serious one—transforming signals and sounds through another instrument after they’re created.”

SLS International president John Gott says, “We got some speakers to Jones, and he fell in love with them and said he wanted to get involved. The Q Line is going to be products targeted to the $1,000 to $5,000 range. Right now, we’ve got products designed, engineered and ready for production in the $1,000 to $3,000 range of home theater surround sound systems.”
Charts See Double In Battle Of Yodelers

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—This summer's novelty hit across Europe has arrived early and in double measure, as the continent's singles sales charts host a battle of the yodelers.

Rival versions of the Romanian-language song "Dragostea Din Tei," with its distinctive yodeling vocal line, have been racing each other up the region's charts. The contest also heralds the first Pan-European chart breakout originating in Romania.

The original version of "Dragostea Din Tei" was recorded by boy band O-Zone, which hails from the Eastern European republic Moldova. Band member Dan Balan wrote the song; EMI publishes it. Released on Romanian independent Media Services and licensed internationally to Italian indie Time, O-Zone's song stood at No. 3 on the Eurochart Hot 100 Singles dated June 19. Brescia-based Time sub-licensed the song to an array of local distributors.

"First we did a deal [with Time] for Italy, then we extended it to Europe, and recently the world," Media Services managing director/head of A&R Dan Popi says. The O-Zone original has shipped approximately 500,000 units in Europe to date, according to Popi. The single has topped charts in Germany, Spain, France and Belgium. Jive sub-licensed the track in the United Kingdom and retitled it "Ma-A Hii (Dragostea Din Tei)." It debuted at No. 3 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. top 75 dated June 19.

ITALIAN MODEL

Meanwhile, Italian indie Universo released Haiducii's cover of "Dragostea" in Italy. Haiducii is the alias of Romanian-born, southern Italy-based TV star/model/singer Paula Nitrache.

Her version sat right next to the original at No. 4 on the June 19 Eurochart.

(Continued on page 75)

IFPI Ups Legal Action Against Euro File Sharers

BY JULIANA KORANTENG and EMANUEL LEGRAND

LONDON—The international record business is stepping up its activities against illegal file sharers in Europe.

In March, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry unveiled details of a campaign against file sharers, while its national affiliates initiated more than 200 criminal and civil actions in Denmark, Germany and Italy.

The trade group has also launched campaigns to warn file sharers in Sweden, the United Kingdom and France about the possibility of litigation.

"On the strength of the developments in Denmark, Germany and Italy," IFPI chairman/CEO Jay Bern
tman says, "we can confirm that there will be more legal actions in other countries in the near future."

The IFPI announced June 8 that several "serial" illegal file sharers had agreed to settle out of court and pay compensation for copyright infringement.

"The message is definitely getting out there: Litigation works," IFPI general counsel/executive director Allen Dixon says. "People are not anonymous on the Internet," he adds. "They risk being caught and paying damages and fines."

Denmark has seen the highest response to legal threats of any European country. More than 17 people have paid or agreed to pay penalties of about 3,000 euros ($3,696) each to Denmark's IFPI affiliate. Another 23 are negotiating payments.

Prosecutors brought a new round of cases against 24 Danish suspects June 8.

PRICY PENALTIES

"If you look at the prices of tracks on most [legal] download services, 3,000 euros each is a lot of money for (Continued on page 74)
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**Hits of the World** is compiled at Billboard/London.
U.K.'s Oi-Va-Voi Rocks Israel

U.K.-based Jewish band Oi-Va-Voi made a groundbreaking first visit to Israel June 7-12 in support of debut album "Laughter Through Tears." The six-piece group played five sold-out dates in Tel Aviv. The visit was front-page news in a country where few overseas musicians have been prepared to tour recently. "We were overwhelmed by the reaction," singer/violinist Sophie Solomon says. Oi-Va-Voi combines Klezmer and Eastern European gypsy influences with contemporary rock and dance beats. "Audiences recognized the strong Jewish element in the music," Solomon says. "But they also seemed pleasantly surprised at how hard we rock." "Laughter Through Tears" arrived last September in the United Kingdom on Outcaste, NMC subsequently released it in the U.S.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

ITALIAN DOOR: Piero Pelù, former lead singer of EMIGRE, Italy's signed rock band Litifa, peaked at No. 5 on the May 6 FM1 album sales chart with his third solo album, "Suoi, Smarriti." (WEA) But Warner

Music Italy president/CEO Massimo Segre says the album has plenty of life. "Pelù will tour in the summer and the fall, and our aim is to reach double-platinum [200,000 shipments] by the end of the year," he says. Litifa emerged from Florence in the early 1980s to become one of Italy's biggest domestic rock acts. Pelù left the band in 1999. "Pelù's career, both with Litifa and as a soloist, has been a key chapter in the story of Italian rock music," Guatine says. "He's the Italian Jim Morrison." MARK WORDEN

RETURN OF THE KINGS: After the success of 2001 debut album "Quiet is the New Loud" (Source/Virgin), Norwegian duo Kings of Convenience reached a fork in the road. While Erlend Oye (also a guest vocalist with countryman Röyksopp) released a solo album, worked as a DJ and moved to Berlin, partner Eirik Glambek Boe went off to study psychology. "For me, it was never an option to be a full-time musician," Boe says. "I'm happy doing different things." The duo has reunited tours Europe until September, then plans live dates in Asia and the United States.

ELLE WEINERT

JE TAIME, JANE: Jane Birkin has underlined her stellar status in France with the release of "Rendez-Vous" (Capitol). The latest album from the former wife and muse of iconic French singer/songwriter Serge Gainsbourg has been in the top 30 of the IFOP/Tite Live sales chart since its March release. It peaked at No. 5 on the April 10 chart. "Rendez-Vous" features Birkin singing with Bryan Ferry, Portishead's Beth Gibbons and Placebo's Brian Molko, plus French stars Alain Souchon, Eddi Gourmelon and Manu Chao. France's favorite Brit says she drew inspiration from the fact that "young people took the project, and my future, in hand." Birkin's last album, 2003's "Arabesque" (Capitol), comprised covers of the late Gainsbourg's songs. It shipped 192,000 copies worldwide, including 72,000 outside France, according to the label.

JAMES MARTIN
Bachman Aims To Reclaim 'High' Chart Position

BY LARRY LeBLANC

Tal Bachman wants another chance. The Canadian pop-rocker's sophomore album, "Standing Down the Sun," arrives July 20 in his home country from Sextant Records, distributed nationally by EMI Music Canada.

The set comes five years after Bachman's Columbia Records single "She's So High" topped the Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems rock radio chart in Canada for four weeks. The single also hit No. 1 on the Billboard Adult Top 40 chart, No. 14 on the Billboard Hot 100 and No. 30 on the U.K. singles chart.

Bachman took home the 2000 Juno Award in Canada for top song. He won a second Juno for album production, along with Bob Rock. The two co-produced Bachman's self-titled Columbia album.

Bachman wasn't surprised "She's So High" became a hit. "It was written because I thought that if I put my mind to it, I could write a No. 1 smash. After it was recorded, Bob Rock and I looked at each other and said, 'We've cracked the code.'"

But it took Bachman a career fall after his eponymous album sold a disappointing 220,000 copies in the United States and 34,000 in Canada, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Eighteen months ago, with no further Bachman recordings slated, Columbia let him go. Bachman also split from EMI Publishing and from his Los Angeles-based management.

"Within two weeks I found myself where I had been a few years earlier," Bachman says. "I kept hearing there was no smash like 'She's So High.' But I thought about songs with big hooks that people would like to hear on the radio and would buy." Toronto-based manager Steve Warden, who also handles Renny Shand, agreed. Warden took on Bachman's management.

"One of the things that attracted me was Tal was a free agent," Warden says. "I saw potential to go forward as a performer and songwriter.

Warden distributed a five-track sampler of Bachman's new recordings last year but found little interest at U.S. or Canadian majors. However, the sampler drew offers from several Canadian-based independents.

Sextant Records president Jeff Burns is delighted that the Markham, Ontario-based label was able to pick up the album's rights for Canada with options for other territories.

"I thought the songs were great," Burns says. "Also, how Steve and I saw Tal developing was almost identical."

Their immediate goal is to establish Bachman's artistic identity. "I don't think Tal has one," Warden says candidly. "He's an artist who had a huge song, but there's an anonymity about him. We need to let people see who he is."

But there are signs of Bachman's re-entry in the pop world. Before signing with Sextant, he released "Jerome Lane," the first single from the new album, in Canada. It reached No. 23 on Nielsen BDS's hot AC chart there.

Bachman shipped a new single, "I'ma Ken," to Canadian radio May 17, though it has yet to chart.

Then there's the recent successful return of "She's So High." Kurt Nilsen released his rendition of the song two weeks after bringing the "Norwegian Idol" competition to the top of the Norwegian singles charts, where it stayed for a record-breaking nine weeks.

The track appears on Nilsen's debut BMG album, "I," which debuted at No. 1 in Norway.

"I didn't imagine the song would snowball again," Bachman says. "I got lucky."

REBELLING AGAINST ROCK

Bachman acknowledges his upbringing initially dissuaded him from pursuing music as a vocation. His father, Larry Bachman, is one of Canada's most famous musicians, a co-founder of the Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Overdrive. Tal grew up in New Westminster, British Columbia, and punk was split up when he was 11, and after that he lived with his father.

"My father's life is about rock 'n roll. 24 hours a day," Bachman says. "The words 'Have you finished your homework?' were never spoken in our house while I was growing up. I resisted being a professional musician largely because it wasn't a way for me to rebel. The way to rebel was buy a suit, go to college."

In fact, Bachman enrolled at a college in Utah to study philosophy. But he dropped out within a year and returned to his dad's house. For nearly three years, he worked toward a music career. He played drums in his dad's post-BTO bands and wrote songs and recorded demos in his father's studio.

"Most people don't record until they've written 100 songs," he says. "In my case, I was able to record the first song I wrote. I spent a lot of time trying to learn to write while on the road with Dad. I got passed by every record company in the world. Some of the rejection notices were brutal."

Bachman's new album, Bachman constructed his own studio in a barn on his property on Salt Spring Island, off Canada's west coast. He produced, played all the instruments and sang his own songs. His cousin Scott Speno engineered the record.

"We worked hard," Bachman says. "Between mice and birds living in the barn and a flooding, the album came out really well.

IFPI

Continued from page 71

settlements," says Charles Law, a partner specializing in music at Denton Wilde Sapte, a law firm here. "But [they] have to pay, because if IFPI goes to court and they don't obey the court order, then their peer-to-peer files构成 illegal downloads, is paying a settlement of $8,000 (€5,850).

A 57-year-old Stuttgart, Germany, teacher pay a similar penalty. "The fact that they are willing to pay means they must have been proving their illegal in peer-to-peer download activities," Law says.

Dickson adds that out-of-court settlements "save everyone time and expenses." IFPI calculates penalties based on the number of files the individual uploaded and the number of times those files were copied online. It uses the payments to cover litigation expenses and disburses the remainder to copyright organizations and rights-holders.

FEEWER FILES

The IFPI says it monitors 800 illegal peer-to-peer music sites, a 27% drop from the 1.1 billion files it monitored one year ago. The number of illegal files on peer-to-peer services fell 30%, to 700 million, during the same period.

"In Italy," Dixon says, "we're seeing a decline in particular kind of P2P, especially those using WinMX and OpenNap [programs]. At the beginning of the year, there were about 60 WinMX and OpenNap servers trading millions of files. Now, [Italian regulators] have closed down 58 of the 60." In France, trade body SNÉP has received government support for its campaign against illegal file sharing. SNÉP representatives met recently with Minister of Industry Patrick Devedjian, who confirmed the launch of a national anti-piracy strategy in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture.

The French government's action plans aim to combat illegal file sharing by supporting information and education initiatives, promoting legal download services and encouraging legal action against cyber theft.

"The French government has been very keen to be supportive," Dixon says.

The British Phonographic Industry here launched an instant messaging campaign in March to alert to those trading unauthorized files that they face legal action. To date, the body has sent 175,000 warnings to U.K. uploaders.

"UK pirates chair Peter Jameson welcomes the results of an IFPI survey indicating that seven out of 10 people in France, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Germany know that sharing copyrighted music without permission is illegal."

"The public recognizes that there's no such thing as a free lunch," Jameson says. "Creators and the people who invest in them are due to be paid for their work. People who steal music are damaging the music of the future."
Japanese authors' society JASRAC's copyright fee collections for the year ended March 31 rose 3.2% from the previous year to 109.5 billion yen ($959 million).

The society's performance right royalties collections rose 4.5% to 43.4 million yen ($380.2 million); a 9.8% increase from broadcasting boosted this figure.

Mechanical royalties rose 2.6% to 46 million yen ($402.9 million). Collections from booming sales of music DVDs offset an 8.4% decline in collections from CD sales. This marks the fifth straight year mechanical royalties from CDs decreased.

Collections from rental of CDs and videos fell 5.3% to 3.7 billion yen ($32.7 million), while "compound-use" income from online karaoke service operators and downloadable ringtones rose 4.2% to 13.8 billion yen ($121 million).

**Yodelers Continued from page 71**

Sony distributes (but does not market) Universal in Italy. U.K. indie Hit Mania will release the Haiducii recording "July 5 through a licensing deal with Universal, which has an international network of licensees and distributors for Trad.

Since Lo Presti, Hit Mania had of international licensing and business development, says the company has shipped 200,000 copies in France, 180,000 in Germany and 50,000 in Italy.

**IT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE**

The "Dragostea" race recalls the chart battles of the 1950s, when rival recordings of the same song—usually of originals from the United States—would regularly spar for sales in Europe.

During June 1955, for example, the NME British weekly top 10 simultaneously contained three competing versions of "Unchained Melody," two of "Cherry Pink & Apple Blossom White" and two of "Stranger in Paradise."

O-Zone had its first major domestic success in 2002 after moving from Moldova to Romania's capital, Bucharest, and signing with Media Services. The trio had local hits that year on the company's Cat Music imprint with the singles "Numa Nu" and "Despere Time."

O-Zone saw Romanian success with "Dragostea," but Popi acknowledges it was the popularity of the Haiducii cover in Italy early this year that reawakened interest in the original.

Neither Haiducii nor Universal asked for permission to cover the song, Popi says. But "almost instantly, after the Italian industry realized Haiducii was just a cover, I got dozens of requests from various labels to license the original."

"We already [chose] Time," he continues. "They had to work hard to compete with the Haiducii project, but finally I think they succeeded." Lo Presti says, "Competition has been neck and neck in all the territories where both singles have been released, apart from Italy—where this yodeling craze was started—where [O-Zone] barely entered the chart at No. 20."

Haiducii's version reached No. 1 in Italy the week of March 11. Paolo Caputo, head of promotion at Time, says the label's Italian licensing deal for O-Zone "took a long time due to bureaucratic problems and Universo essentially beat us to it with the Haiducii cover. That has done better in Italy basically because it came out first."

Mr. Pandini is music selector at Milan-based top 40 broadcaster Hit Channel, which functions as a satellite video channel and FM/Internet radio station. "We liked the O-Zone video more," he says, "so we played that. But when it came to the music, we actually preferred the Haiducii version. In the end we simply alternated them."

Popi would like to see the popular- ity of "Dragostea" widen Romania's creative influence. "I can only hope," he says, "that the success of O-Zone will be the trigger for other Romanian projects to be released in Europe."

Additional reporting by Mark Wodden in Milan.
**HELP WANTED**

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PBK Gives Its Regards to Broadway

PBS is preparing what may be its most ambitious programming about music of the Great White Way, a six-part documentary titled "Broadway: The American Musical.”

Academy Award-winning actress and Broadway legend Julie Andrews hosts the series, which premieres Oct. 19 (PBS air times vary; check local listings).

"Musical theater means so much to me," Andrews said in a statement. "There's nothing quite like a Broadway show to make our spirits soar and give us insight into America's culture and history. It will be a pleasure to serve as the PBS ambassador for the Broadway musical."

The documentary will cover the years 1893 to the present. The series is a co-production of Ghost Light Films. Thirteen/WNET-TV New York, Japan's NHK and the BBC in association with Carlton International. Michael Kantor is the series' producer/director. David Horn and Jack Venza are executive producers. A companion book and home video (from PBS Home Video) will be released in conjunction with the series. A five-CD boxed set is also in the works, according to the producers, with the record label to be announced.

CHUCK D ON TRIO: Public Enemy co-founder/frontman Chuck D has signed a three-year network-trio to choose programming that will air July 2-10. Chuck D will provide commentary on his selections, which consist mostly of films, including "Biggie & Tupac," "Panther," "Cooly High," "A Rage in Harlem" and "Nothing But a Man."

As part of the special programming, Trio will air July 3 the world premiere of "Public Enemy Live at the House of Blues," a 1999 concert taped at Los Angeles nightclub.

In Brief: Mark Burnett, the executive producer behind reality shows "Survivor" and "The Apprentice," is developing a new reality series, "Rock Star." A talent contest that Burnett is pitching to U.S. TV networks, will choose a new lead singer for INXS. According to Burnett, the band members, viewing audience and a music expert (to be announced) will all have a say in the selection process.

NBC is developing a 12-hour dramatic series about the history of Motown Records andMotown founder Berry Gordy. Suzanne de Passe, a former Motown employee who has been a TV producer for several years, will executive-produce. The series will most likely hit the air during the 2005-2006 season.

New MTV shows in development include "Dedicated," a music-video dedications program hosted by former B2K member Omarion, and "Zombie Chronicles," a horror-themed series with Rob Zombie. In addition, MTV and Jay-Z are developing the series "Ultimate Mash-Ups," which will feature different genres performing together to create new versions of their songs.

Blue Man Group is scoring the music to the new Fox drama "The 7th" which airs Tuesdays at 9 p.m. ET/PT... Culver City, Calif., based production company Anonymous has signed director Jeremy Rall. He was previously with Black Dog Films.
** Charts **

** SALES / AIRPLAY / TRENDS / ANALYSIS **

** Velvet No Chart Softie **

It has been a full year since a rock band stood at No. 1 on the Billboard 200. All of a sudden rock bands own half of the top 10, with supergroup Velvet Revolver leading the charge.

The band contains three former Guns N' Roses members and one Stone Temple Pilots alumnus delivers an echo of those earlier groups' chart histories, as Velvet Revolver draws first weekly sales of 256,000, a higher sum than was hitherto by its opening-day numbers.

As mentioned here last week, the total by Scott Weiland, Slash and crew leaks with the best week of either former band's last studio album: STP's 98,000-unit start in 2003 or Guns' 190,000 copies in 1993. The start for Revolver's "Contraband" also tops STP's best week but falls shy of Guns' glory days.

Guns blew through 1.4 million copies in one week when its simultaneously released "Use Your Illusion" albums bowed in the chart's first two slots, with the chart-topping "Use Your Illusion II" piling up 720,000 of those. STP's highest sum came in 1994, when "Purple" bowed at No. 1 with 282,000 sold.

---

** Market Watch **

** A Weekly National Music Sales Report **

** WEEKLY ALBUM SALES **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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** WEEKLY UNIT SALES **

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** YEAR-TO-DATE ALBUM SALES **

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<tr>
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** YEAR-TO-DATE UNIT SALES **

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** YEAR-TO-DATE SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT **

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<td>255,255,000</td>
<td>275,662,000</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>8,685,000</td>
<td>5,445,000</td>
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** Market Watch **

** A Weekly National Music Sales Report **

** WEEKLY ALBUM SALES **

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<th>Week</th>
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<td>2003</td>
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** YEAR-TO-DATE ALBUM SALES BY STORE TYPE **

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<td>14,143</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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** Usher Owns Top Two **

For the second time this year, one artist has a lock on the top two positions on The Billboard Hot 100. Usher's "Burn" (LaFace) has enough heat to remain at No. 1 for a sixth week, while follow-up "Confessions Part II" leaps 5-2.

Usher's monopoly on the top two spots comes 19 weeks after labelmate OutKast did the same. For an eight-week period that began Dec. 20, 2003, and ended Feb. 7, "Hey Ya!" was No. 1 and "The Way You Move" was No. 2.

With "Confessions" occupying the runner-up spot, it's more likely than ever that Usher will succeed himself in pole position—again. "Burn" replaced "Yeah," so Usher would have three back-to-back No. 1 hits on the Hot 100.

The only other act to have three adjacent chart-toppers was the Beatles. In 1964, "I Want to Hold Your Hand," "She Loves You" and "Can't Buy Me Love" kept the Fab Four at No. 1 for 14 consecutive weeks.

Usher has already gone beyond that 14-week mark. This issue, he is No. 1 for the 18th week in a row (12 weeks for "Yeah!" and six weeks for "Burn!). That is the longest any artist has been No. 1 on a Billboard pop singles chart in one run.

In the rock era, the record is held by Boyz II Men, with two 16-week runs. In 1994, "I'll Make Love to You" was on top for 14 weeks, followed by the first two weeks of the reign of "On Bended Knee." In 1995, "One Sweet Day," recorded with Mariah Carey, ruled for 16 weeks.

---

** Counting back to the introduction of charts in 1940, hand- leader Francis Craig was No. 1 for 17 weeks in 1947 on the airplay chart of the day with "Near You."

There's more Usher chart news: "Confessions Part II" moves 2-1 on Rhythmic Top 40, displacing "Burn" after four weeks. Usher now has six No. 1s on this chart, more than any other artist. Knocked down to second place are Mariah Carey, Nelly, P. Diddy and TLC with five each.

Usher is the first lead male artist to succeed himself at No. 1 on the Rhythmic chart. The last time an act knocked itself out of pole position was when Carey's "Fantasy" gave way to "One Sweet Day" the week of Dec. 16, 1995.

"SOMEBODY TO LOVE" Reba McEntire collects her first top 10 hit on Hot Country Singles & Tracks since "I'm a Survivor" peaked at No. 3 in 2001. The 13-10 shift of "Somebody" (MCA) is significant, as it moves McEntire into the top 10 among artists with the most top 10 songs on this chart. She now has 53, which ties her with Waylon Jennings for 10th place. The only female artist with more country top 10s is Dolly Parton, with 55.

GENE THERAPY: It has been a little more than a quarter-century since Gene Simmons' first solo album peaked at No. 22. It was one of four solo LPs that each individual member of Kiss released at the same time. Simmons returns this issue with his second solo effort, "*Hole*" (Simmons/Sanctuary) opens at No. 86 on The Billboard 200.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST IMPRINT &amp; NUMBER DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NEW 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1/HOT SHOT DEBUT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>VELVET REVOLVER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DEAN MARTIN</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE CORRS</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>KEITH URBAN</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>THE CALLING</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>LIL’ FLIP</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>PRINCE</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>JOSH GROBAN</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>BRITNEY SPEARS</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THE SPAGHETTI WESTERN</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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<td>KANYE WEST</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>THE SPAGHETTI WESTERN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECIAL PRICE IMPRINTS**

**NEW 1** | **HOT SHOT DEBUT** | **1 Week At Number 1** |
| 1 | FRED HAMMOND | **Somethin’ ‘Bout Love** |
| 2 | DON OMAR | **The Last Don Live: Vol. 1** |
| 3 | WILSON PHILLIPS | **California** |
| 4 | GENE SIMMONS | **†Tele** |

**HEATSEEKER IMPACT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST IMPRINT &amp; NUMBER DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>SUGARCULT</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>GODSMACK</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GODSMACK</td>
</tr>
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**PACEMAKER**

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**NEW 1** | **HOT SHOT DEBUT** | **1 Week At Number 1** |
| 1 | FRED HAMMOND | **Somethin’ ‘Bout Love** |
| 2 | DON OMAR | **The Last Don Live: Vol. 1** |
| 3 | WILSON PHILLIPS | **California** |
| 4 | GENE SIMMONS | **†Tele** |

**HEATSEEKER IMPACT**

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Chingy

www.americanradiohistory.com

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113.98 CD

Elvis Presley \*3

Love Me Tender

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I Love You

Elvis's 30 #1 Hits

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As Time Goes By...The Great American Songbook Vol. II

10

To Know the World Is Not Enough

Elvis & Romina Power - Love At First Sight

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By the Grace of God

Elvis & Mary Tyler Moore - It's Now or Never

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Elvis & Johnny Cash - Unchained Melody

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Let's Talk About

Elvis Costello & The Attractions - My Aim Is True

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My Aim Is True (Deluxe Edition)

Elvis Costello - My Aim Is True

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1956-1977: The sun Never Sets

Elvis Costello - 1956-1977: The Sun Never Sets

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Elvis Costello - 1950's Hits

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Elvis Costello - Sides Of Elvis

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Bennie and the Jets

Elton John - Bennie and the Jets

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The Best Of Live in LA

Elton John - The Best Of Live in LA

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Goodnight - Good morning

Elton John - Goodnight - Good Morning

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Stayin' Alive

Elton John - Stayin' Alive

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Elton John - The Very Best Of

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Can You Feel The Love Tonight

Elton John - Can You Feel The Love Tonight

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Elton John & Kiki Dee - The Commercial Album

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The Long And Winding Road

Elton John & Elton John - The Long and Winding Road

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The Commercial Album

Elton John & Elton John - The Commercial Album

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The Best Of

Elton John & Elton John - The Best Of
FONDLY REMEMBERED: More than an entertainer. Ray Charles was an American institution (see Rhythm & Blues, page 19, and Opinion, page 10). There seems an eerie appropriateness that news of Charles’ death came on the eve of Ronald Reagan’s funeral, as music linked the two of them. “America the Beautiful” was one of Reagan’s favorite songs, and Charles made that anthem his own soulful invention. In fact, he performed it at Reagan’s second inauguration.

Although Charles’ June 10 death occurred late in the tracking week, enough consumers reacted to launch the artist’s first appearances on the Billboard Top Pop Catalog (Nos. 30 and 35), Top Blues Albums (No. 5) and Top Independent Albums (No. 33) lists. Combined, the three titles that generate that chart ink—“Anthology,” “The Very Best of Ray Charles” and “Ray’s Blues”—accounted for 13,000 copies.

With stores and labels catching up on stock, there might be more ripples on next week’s charts. We’ll keep an eye on how well these titles do.

Concord has resisted the temptation to move up the release date for Charles’ forthcoming duets album, “Genius Loves Company” and “Columbia”.

Keeping Secrets of Silent Earth: 3 charted for three weeks last fall, peaking at No. 52.

BOOM TO GLOOM: This is the first truly ugly week we’ve seen this year, with album sales down almost 15% from the same week of 2003.

With three albums starting in this top’s 10, this year’s June 8 slate could not compete with the frame when Luther Vandross bowed at No. 1 with 442,000 copies, while top 10 debuts by Radiohead, Eminem and Bon Jovi topped the charts.

The Beatboys’ new “To the 5 Boroughs” could lead a rebound. It appears on course to bow at No. 10 with a start of around 400,000 copies, according to retailers’ first-day numbers. That would more than double what Monica’s “After the Storm” did a year ago when it entered at No. 1.
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- **TOP POP CATALOG**
- **TOP HEATSEEKERS**
- **TOP INDEPENDENT**
Twitty ‘Cheats’ His Way Onto Chart

Conway Twitty, the man Music Row affectionately dubbed the “High Priest of Country Music,” returns to Hot Country Singles & Tracks for the first time in more than a decade as the duet partner of Anita Cochran on “I Wanna Hear A Cheatin’ Song.”

The track, which comes in at No. 60, uses snippets of Twitty’s Warner Bros. hits to create the posthumous duet. That production trick has met with a mixed reception at country radio through the years, with such songs becoming either major hits or total chart disappointments.

The country list hasn’t hosted a deceased star since John Berry and Patsy Cline’s vocal on “There He Goes,” which charted one week on the chart in October 1999. The last such top 10 track came out 15 years ago, when Hank Williams Jr.’s “Isn’t She Somethin’” rose to No. 7 in the April 8, 1999, issue.

Twitty died June 5, 1999, of an abdominal aneurysm. He last appeared on the chart later that summer with “I’m The Only Thing I’ll Hold Against You.”

Meanwhile, Reba McEntire fattens her collection of top 10 singles (see Chart Beat, page 79), as “Somebody” rises 13-10, her slowest trek to that area of the chart. “Somebody” made top 10 in 24 weeks, easily surpassing the 15 weeks it took “I’ll Be” to do so in the June 24, 2000, issue.

Through Hops: “Let’s Get It Started” by Black Eyed Peas shoots up the Hot Digital Tracks chart 27-3 with a total of 8,580 paid downloads, a gain of 5,000 since last week.

The track is a rerecorded version of the group’s album cut “Let’s Get It Started (Remixed)” by Black Eyed Peas has been featured performing “Started” in promos for the NBA playoffs since April on ABC, ESPN and TNT, with an updated spot during the recently concluded NBA finals. The airplay audience just barely tops 4 million impressions, suggesting the NBA exposure, rather than radio, is driving sales.

The album version spent one week at No. 50 on Hot Digital Tracks last month. It currently resides just below the list, selling 1,900 downloads.

Juvenile Attention: Juvenile enters the top 5 of the Hot R&B/ Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart for the first time in almost five years, as “Slow Motion,” featuring Soulja Slim, climbs 8-5. The single matches the peak position of “Back That Thang Up” from September 1999. “Slow Motion” posts a gain of 13 million in audience to earn Greatest Gainer/Airplay honors. A likely factor in the positive response to the record is the pairing of Juvenile with Slim, a former No Limit soldier who was shot to death last November. It is Slim’s first time on any Billboard singles chart.


Signed to Bad Boy, this latest incarnation consists of original members Ricky Bell, Michael Bivins, Ronnie DeVoe and Ralph Tresvant, as well as Johnboy Gill, who replaced Bobby Brown in 1996.

Three’s Company: With 4.4 million audience impressions, Seals’ entry to No. 1 on billboard.com’s Hot Christian Adult Contemporary chart, as “You Raise Me Up” moves 3-1. The track marks the first Christian chart topper Curb has issued, although the first imprint Word-Curb has achieved No. 1 singles by Point of Grace and Building 429. On Hot Christian Singles & Tracks, “Raise” moves 4-2.

“Raise” is from the trio’s latest album, “Hiding Place.” Each member of the group is rerecording a solo release, with the three scheduled to hit outlets Aug. 10 (see Higher Ground, page 14).

Late Bloomer: After peaking at No. 23 in early May, “Who Knows” rebounds 10 positions to No. 40 in its 22nd week on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks.

The boost is primarily from airplay at some Clear Channel stations, which placed the song in higher rotation after it landed in the top 10 of the radio group’s callout research. The increase in detections at those outlets translates into an improvement of 6.6 million listener impressions, much greater than the 2.5 million gain detected across all R&B stations.
UJA-Federation of New York Entertainment, Media & Communications Division and the Music for Youth Foundation invite you to the

Music Visionary of the Year Awards Luncheon

honoring

David Munns
Vice Chairman, EMI Music worldwide
Chairman and CEO, EMI Music North America

and

Rob Glaser
Chairman and CEO, RealNetworks, Inc.

Wednesday, July 14, 2004, at 11:30 a.m.

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Special performances by EMI’s S-Curve Recording Artist Joss Stone and other guests

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Daniel Glass
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Monte Lipman
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Ian Ralfini
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East Coast Chairs
Fred Davis
Jason Flom
Michael Guido

West Coast Chairs
Jim Breyer
Phil Quaritararo
Andy Slater

Journal Chairs
Charles Goldstuck
Joel Katz

For further information, please contact Steven Singer at 1.212.836.1452 or at singers@ujafedny.org, or Eytan Bar-Chama at 1.212.836.1419 or at eytan@musicforyouth.org.
Bonnaroo Deaths A First

MANCHESTER, Tenn.—Bonnaroo 2004 was a huge success operationally, musically and financially. But the deaths of a young man and an older woman at Bonnaroo ranged a giant man attending the concert temper other appearances.

Both attendees were taken from the festival grounds to Manchester Medical Center, where they died. Authorities initially suspected drugs as a possible contributing factor in both cases. But the medical examiner found that the man's death was due to a congenital heart condition and that drugs were not a factor. No official word on the woman was available at press time.

These were the first deaths at the 3-year-old Bonnaroo festival, and producers say they have made every attempt to be prepared for such emergencies.

"I would say we have one of the best EMT staffs out there," says Jonathan Mayers, co-owner of New Orlean's Superfly Productions, which produces Bonnaroo and other festivals. "Our medical director has been on a lot of these types, events, including Woodstock and the Phish events," Mayers says. "He knows how to handle these situations and how to react carefully. People's safety is the No. 1 concern."

"I think the production plan record in terms of safety has been good, Mayers points out. "When you have this many people out here, the percentages are that there will be some incident," he says. "We've been fortunate so far that it has been a small percentage. It's a big responsibility when you're out here."

NEW LEADERS TO EMERGE

Last year's candidates for the new leaders in jam music are Moe, String Cheese Incident, Gov't Mule and, when it returns, Widespread Panic.

Dave Matthews Band is among those that don't know. Williams says, "It's kind of like going to a football game, with all the tailgating."

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Dead's members remain the godfathers of this music, and many of the fans are loyal to the group. They can even be as loyal as many bands have been to their own fans. The band's tour is considered one of the mainstays of the music scene, and they've been known to play sold-out shows.

"These bands are diverse musically, but there are some of social similarities," Williams says. "It's kind of like going to a football game, with all the tailgating."

Even with the Dead's ongoing influence, including a full slate of touring this year, many with a stake in this scene agree that the genre is at a crossroads.

"With Phish calling it quits it certainly opens up a gap, because obviously they have a tremendous audience," Mayers says. "But I think there are always new artists coming up and others growing."

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Clearly something affected sales for Bonnaroo this year when, after two bleachers were added to Superfly Productions' lineup, the box office took it until the week of the show to go clean. Some feel the absence of Widespread Panic, a major headliner the first two years, slowed sales.

"Panic definitely says," Mayers says. "We're ready to invest in this year for, because Panic is so big in the South.

Mayers says Bonnaroo had its biggest on-sale date, "but we never had those 5,000-6,000 sales days. It took us three months to sell out, and I don't know if it had to do with the economy or the event getting a little more maturity to it."

NEW LEADERS TO EMERGE

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"We're happy with the lineup," Mayers says. "And other bands doing the same sort of thing can all step it up and bring up the whole scene," Derhak says. "Obviously, I would love it if our fans base grows and we could start doing bigger shows. Then maybe we could afford to put up better PA, with bigger production and cool light shows and other multimedia stuff to make our live show much cooler."

"You're kind of pushing to do that," Williams says. "That's how the fans are and how the shows are. The way fans are now, that's the way it is."

Mayers says that Widespread Panic is on hiatus, not out to pasture. "We're coming back in March," he says. "We're just taking an 18-month break."

"Even if it does return, Williams feels Widespread Panic's fan base will be intact. "As far as the jam scene goes, I feel pretty secure," he says. "But I never take ticket sales for granted."

Williams does not think Phish heads will morph into Spreadheads. "I don't think if we necessarily have the same fan base as Phish," he says. "Obviously, Phish has a lot more of them, and they're not all fans of Panics. We try to stay in our own little world and maybe learn from other people's mistakes."

Bonnaroo will tour with the Dead and the Grateful Dead Brothers before hitting the road in support of a new Mule release on Mattheus' ATO Records in September. "At that point, we'll be full-time boogie," he says.

ROCKY ROAD

In general, the jam band scene faces some of the same gremlins other parts of the business see, including market saturation. Ticket pricing becomes an even more important issue, given that jam band fans are known for attending clusters of shows.

"We watch our ticket prices. Not that people won't pay a high price to go to our shows, but we're not going to allow them to go to multiple shows," Williams says. "Of course, that affects our guar- antee. It costs us short-term money, but it makes us long-term money."

Saturating pervades the festival business, where small jam band festi- vals seem to crop up like mushrooms, sometimes disappearing just as quickly. The festival business is always tough, Mayers says. "We kind of feel like our event is on a different level than other festivals. We also invest quite a bit into it. We've built an amazing team, and I hope we have some longevity."

Few would argue Bonnaroo is indeed a breed apart.

"The year before last I tried to re-create 70s and 80s feel of those week- end festivals," Williams says of Wide- spread Panic. "Outside of Bonnaroo, a lot of them didn't make it. Some of them, the bands didn't get paid, and some of them didn't get booked."

Bonnaroo producers seem hesitant to take the festival into other regions after an attempt at Bonnaroo North- east derailed last year.

"I don't think if we will take Bonnaro- o into other markets, but we will do other projects," Mayers says. "I don't think we want to dilute the Bonnaroo brand, but it's a great launching pad to get other projects." For his part, Haynes relishes the robustness of the scene.

"It's refreshing from my point of view to see these bands do so well in the face of the piracy mainstream," he says. "Bands that only sell a few thousand records sell more tick- ets than bands that go platinum."

Haynes feels the downturn in the recording industry will be made much of an impact on these bands.

"A lot of people feel live performance will be the real art form in the future," he says. "It's getting real easy to make and art form and a way to make a living, and people can tell the difference and are drawn to bands that can really play."

Piracy

Continued from page 8

As a result, the Brazilian congress is then expected to vote on actions to be taken on the committee's recommendations. "It's the first time piracy was seri- ously discussed here in Brazil," says Paulo Rosa, general director of the country's Assn. of Record Producers. "The attitude of the Brazilian congress was very positive."

Although the committee's scope includes all types of piracy, music was a major component.

Among those the committee identi- fied as being involved in music piracy was Kim Chong, who owns building in Sao Paulo that are popu- lated with pirated-product stands. According to Vazquez, the committee ordered raids on the buildings. To avoid further trouble, Kim Chong allegley sent Lindolo de Medeiros to offer the bribe.

Roberto de Lindolo are in jail awaiting criminal proceedings on charges of attempted bribery.

"This type of case makes it very clear, once again, that the pirates are really had guys and that it requires strong government action to deal with piracy," IPPF chairman/CEO Jason Berman says. "With the exception of the work of the commission, we have not had a coherent government response in Brazil—and the tragedy of that is that it has dramatically affected the state of the Brazilian music industry."

According to IPPF numbers, approxi- mately 50% of all music sold in Brazil is pirated.
Merger
Continued from page 1
anti-trust chief—concluded that the evidence of price collusion and market domination among music’s five exist-
ing majors was not solid enough to jus-
tify blocking the merger. The go-ahead was given without any concessions by either Sony or BMG, officials added.

The deal still needs regulatory approval in the United States. But that has not been seen as being at high a hur-
dle as EU clearance.

Officials said that the two days of hearings, which earlier in the week had failed to unearth any “smoking gun” that would show the majors con-
trolled prices of CDs on the market.

This despite the European Commis-
sion’s own Statement of Objections (SO), which last month accused the five of colluding in a tacit cartel.

“The commission has to act on the evidence before it, and there simply wasn’t enough on the table,” one com-
mission source said. “The burden of proof is much stronger now. And the proof wasn’t there.”

In 2000, Warner Music Group and EMI attempted to merge, but abandoned it in the face of a commission SO that also warned of collusion.

Two years later, the commission lost an EU Court of Justice case over an earlier call for collection in the package tour sector and was warned that any future actions had to be fully justified. This appears to have chastened the EU executive branch, forcing it to clear the major cases.

Representatives for Sony and BMG declined comment on the latest development.

Senior executives at Sony Music and BMG had spent most of the last week trying to convince the European Com-
mision competition department that the merger of the two companies remained dominant and did not violate the EU anti-trust rules.

After a closed-door hearing June 14-
15, Sony Music Entertainment chair-
man/CEO Andrew Lack and his coun-
terpart at BMG, Rolf Schmidt-Holtz, met June 17 with Moni. The assault on the majors and the widespread opposition to the merger during the hearing were not enough for the commission to block the deal, participants at the hearing say.

NO BOMBS DROPPED
Sony and BMG used the hearings to try to argue the case for themer-
mission. They argued that their merger was an answer to today’s cri-
sis in the music industry. Sources present at the hearing say there was no knock-out blow on alleged price collusion and market dominance that might have unequivocally derailed the merger proposals.

“They insisted that the market was
transparent, that the majors competed against one another and that it was not possible to fix the market,” a source who attended the hearing says.

Both Sony Music and BMG parent Bertelsmann released statements following the hearings saying they had been constructive and highly productive.

OPPOSING VOICES
At the hearings, Apple Computer, European independent label body Impala, European consumer group BEUC and retail group GERA Europe attacked the merger plans. Sony and BMG also had to deal with questions from of-
cials from many commission serv-
ces and national competition regu-
lators, including the United States’ Federal Trade Commission.

Sources at the hearing say that GERA presented evidence of alleged price collusion among record compa-
nies and complained that the five majors control the market. GERA urged the commission to block the merger, warning that it would
reduce consumer choice and limit artistic innovation.

The group also denied Sony and BMG’s claims that retailers deter-
mined product visibility rather than rec-
tab
At the end of the day, the record labels produce the content and produce the CDs,” the GERA’s general secretary told Billboard. “The shots are called by the labels rather than by retailers.”

Representatives of Apple, whose
iTunes service is a rival to Sony’s Connect, testified that Sony would be able to control the market through the combined catalog of Sony-BMG artists.

Impala told the hearing that a major would have further restrict com-
petition and appealed to the commis-
ion to ensure the market offered consumer choice and cul-
tural diversity. The group rebutted Sony and BMG’s argument that the merger was the only way to address a declining music market ravished by piracy.

A BEUC representative said con-
sumers would suffer if the merger went ahead, as choice of artists would be restricted and prices would rise.

“If the majors fell from five to four, it would only make collusion easier, in particular on prices,” BEUC eco-
nomic advisor Dominique Forest told the hearing.

In his closing remarks, the secretary general of the International Music Managers Forum, gave an impassioned

opinion of the obstacles that have developed during the past two decades to emerging labels and artists.

Paul Saunders, director of down-
load service PlayLouder, said he had run into a variety of difficulties as he applied for blanket licenses for songs and artists. He had so far been granted a preliminary license from indie group Impala, but not from any of the majors.

One insider said of the hearings, “There were many unspecified alle-
gations, but no solid evidence of price collusion was produced. . . . There was no smoking gun.”

Continued from page 5
IFPI

North America, where its share grew from 8.9% in 2002 to 10.5% in 2003. It also posted growth in Europe, Japan, Asia and Australasia. Contributing to EMI’s share growth in 2003 were albums from Coldplay, the Beatles and Norah Jones.

And the company was pleased with social progress,” an IFPI representative says.

A representative for Universal Music International says the decline in 2003 figures does not come as a surprise, since 2002 was the company’s best-ever year. During that time frame, such
major acts as Eminem, U2, Shania
Twain, Andrea Bocelli and Elton John, among others, released new albums.

“Not was the case in 2003,” says the Universal rep, who points to a strong 2004. The rep added that the company has had a good year so far, and albums are expected from U2, John, Black Eyed Peas, 50 Cent and Bocelli before year’s end.

A spokesperson for Warner Music attributes the company’s gain to “tremendous A&R successes” during the year, such as Michael Bublé and Sean Paul, as well as ongoing hits from Red Hot Chili Peppers and Madonna.

Sony and BMG declined to comment.

A string of international hits by acts including Aretha Franklin, Pink, Dido, Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake boosted BMG’s performance.

HOW FIGURES ARE CALCULATED
Independents still represent the largest share with 25.3% globally, down from 27.1% in 2002. IFPI head of research Keith Jopling says the indie share is calculated by subtracting the big three majors from the total market share. It does not include repertoire li-
censed to majors.

The IFPI first published market share figures for 2001. Jopling says the methodology has not changed. It is
based on the concept of “owned con-
tent,” which he says has become the accepted standard.

Sales qualifying as “owned content” are wholesale sales of finished music product by the record companies to retailers or to intermediate whole-
sales, net of returns and discounts, excluding exports.

Jopling says the figures are for sales of physical music products, which include music video formats (in VHS and DVD) and concert t-shirts.

The figures do not include digital downloads, but “we are working on that,” Jopling says.

In September, the IFPI will publish market share by individual territory.

iTunes
Continued from page 1
with the online service.

“iTunes really competes with piracy,” Apple CEO Steve Jobs declared at a gathering here for executives and media to announce the launch. “If someone is going to compete with piracy, you have to understand piracy and offer something better.”

Universal Music International sen-
or VP of marketing and A&R Max Herbert, who attended Jobs’ presenta-
tion, agrees that with the advent of
iTunes in Europe, “the music busi-
ness will now be able to compete with pirates with an irresistible prod-
uct. This is a win-win-win situation.”

EMI Music senior VP of digital dis-
tribution and development Ted
Cohen is confident iTunes will have the same impact in Europe as it has had in the United States.

“It raises the barrier for everybody,” Cohen says. “And with the Apple marketing machine behind, it will raise consumer awareness and make the idea of legal downloading very compelling.”

More than 700,000 titles are avail-
able through the new service. The
three stores will offer international repertoire as well as domestic talent for downloads.

In the United Kingdom, individual
tracks are priced at 79 pence ($1.43), and the majority of albums are priced at £7.99 ($14.50). In France and Germany, individual downloads cost 0.99 euros ($1.19) and albums cost 9.99 euros ($12).

“I think the price is challenge-
ning and very favorable to the consumer, and I hope that it will work for the industry. Time will tell,” says Peter Jamieson, chairman of trade body the British Phonog-
raphic Industry.

MORE TO COME
Another store that will offer

downloads on a Pan-European basis is in the works, according to Jobs.

Initially an English-language serv-
ice, the European store will be priced in line with the French and German ones. The service is expected to launch in October.

The lessons learned from last year’s U.S. bow made the June 14 launch easier.

“One of the things that is easy to forget is we’ve been at this business for 14 months now,” says Greg

Joswiak, Apple VP of hardware prod-
uct marketing. “When we started this thing, it was a grand experiment. We’ve made believers out of the record companies and the con-
sumers, and that has helped us bring this to Europe.

“There were certainly some initial obstacles and mind-sets that had to change to allow that experiment to go further,” he continues. “It’s out of all our mutual interests now to sell songs, and that certainly helped eliminate those barriers.”

SOME INDIES OPT OUT
Content from the five majors is available, including exclusive majors. However, because of ongoing licensing disputes with the inde-
pendent sector in Europe, the stores launched without the bulk of indie repertoire. This means that such acts as Francis Fernandez, the White Stripes and Carla Bruni are not avail-
able. Regardless, Jobs claims that “dozens” of individual Indies have licensed repertoire to the service.

Several sources close to the nego-
tiations tell Billboard that the indies were unhappy with the terms of the deal Apple proposed. Sources say Apple issued its contract to inde-
pendents just one week prior to the service’s launch.

Simon Wheeler, head of new media at London-based indie Beg-
gars Group, says, “We really do like the Apple service; it’s doing good business for us in the States. We’re very keen for them to launch over here and get the market going, but we can only be a part of it if the terms are acceptable to us.”

A representative for French indie body UPFI says the labels that have

contrasted with iTunes to license their repertoire, both in the United States and Europe, have been offered “lower fees than the ones negotiated with the majors.

“This shows contempt for artists and that indie labels matter to them,” the representative adds.

“Obviously, majors have licensing deals,” Jamieson adds. “I’m cautiously optimistic on behalf of my independent counterparts. Clearly, more work needs to be done.”

Apple declined to discuss the dead-
lock in negotiations with the inde-
pendent labels sector or when or how a stalemate could be resolved.

“When we launched in the United States in April 2003, we launched with zero independents,” Joswiak notes. “We quickly grew that. We’ve been able to bring 500 independents to the U.S. store. We’re today starting with dozens of Indies [in Europe], which is already a significant head start from where we started in the U.S., and we cer-
tainly anticipate that we will grow that over time.”

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Echo
Continued from page 5

strengths’ of each retailer.
But Echo was probably doomed from the start.

"You are bound to have it fail, par-
ticularly when the competitors are in a
free market," says Barry Sosnick, pres-
ident of Earful, a music and home
entertainment consultancy.

What the partners could not foresee
was the entry of a potent music retail
competitor just three months after
they announced Echo’s formation.

Apple Computer’s iTunes Music
Store forever changed the online
music landscape, setting a new stan-
dard for consumer friendliness and
brand identity.

Sources say the Echo partners com-
mited to a combined $1 million to $2
million of funding for the consortium,
with initial payments of $150,000 each.
The ultimate goal was to raise $10 mil-
lion to $12 million to build the store
infrastructure.

The plan, sources suggest, was to
nail down the licensing from the
majors and then look for additional
outside funding or a buyer.

But Apple jumped into the market
raised the bar. Building an itunes-like
music management service from the
ground up can cost $30 million to $100
million, according to industry sources.

That was far more than Echo’s part-
ners could foreseeably raise.

At the same time, Apple loosened
the labels’ licensing hold on their repor-
tere. The need for bargaining leverage
suddenly became moot.

With the market developing quickly
around them, several of the partners
began moving into the digital space on
their own. For the most part, this
meant hooking up with such estab-
lished digital service providers (DSPs)
as MusicNet, Loudeye and Liquid Digital
Media to provide back-end and
licensing support.

“The best thing for a music retailer
do right now is to make a strong
relationship with a [DSP],” Forrester
analyst Josh Bernoff says. “It doesn’t
make any sense for them to build stores
from scratch at this point.

Tower and TransWorld’s FYE have
gone the DSP route with Liquid
MusicDigital, which provides
300,000 tracks from the majors and
various independents.

Unlike iTunes and such other
digital music services as Napster,
MusicMatch, Rhapsody and the new
Sony Connect, the Tower and FYE
stores lack a custom media player or
music library function to compete
with the user’s download experience.

Ole Obermann, VP/GM of Liquid
Digital Media, compares DSP’s to
wholesalers in the traditional brick-
and-mortar world.

Tower senior VP Kevin Ertelt says
the chain has ambitious plans to
expand its digital music service in the
coming months. No details were
available.

FYE likely will increase its down-
load capabilities in fourth-quarter
2004 with the support of BuyServices,
a unit of radio, which this year
took over hosting and back-room
functions for the Fye.com store.

Virgin Ambitions
Among the Echo partners, Virgin
Entertainment Group is moving most
aggressively into the download world
through its Virgin Digital entertain-
ment platform.

Virgin plans to launch its download
store later this summer. MusicNet
will provide the bulk of the store’s
700,000-track music library, plus the
back-end infrastructure.

In addition to download, Virgin’s
custom store will include music man-
agement software, streaming radio
subscription services (Billboard,
March 20).

“Digital music is going to
eventually supplant hard goods, and
any retailer who is ignoring that fact
is doing so at their own peril,” Virgin
Digital president Zack Zalon says.

Best Buy had a limited download
offering as early as September 2002,
with support from Liquid Audio. But
that experiment was dropped.

Today, Best Buy does not offer
online downloads. Its physical stores
offer Rhapsody knock-offs and Napster
prepaid cards to educate customers
about digital music and promote the
sale of digital music players from
Apple, Sony and others.

“We need to carry an assortment of
services to make consumer experience
understandable,” Best Buy VP of
digital entertainment Scott Young says.

Two other Echo members, Borders
and Hootings, have yet to join the digi-
tal fray.

“We’re taking a look at what might
suit us,” Borders spokeswoman Anne
Roman says. She notes that the Bor-
ders’ Rhapsody knock-off has been
tent toward jazz and classical and likely
focuses less on music downloading.

Spin
Continued from page 5

using the time for repeated play of sin-
gles in their entirety—sometimes hun-
dreds of times in a given week.

These programs, or “spot buys,” are
legal. But they raise concerns about
manipulation of the hitmaking process
as measured by various single charts,
including those Billboard and Airplay
Monitor publish.

To date, the country’s largest radio
groups—which are more con-
cerned about their public images—
have not offered spot-buy opportu-
nities to the labels.

The SPIN CYCLE
Label promotion executives say
use of spot buys is necessitated by radio
competition with spins.

New singles not exhibiting over-
whelming chart momentum from the
outset are quickly discarded from radio
playlists, promotion executives say.
Further, any evidence of a single flat-
lining—or even worse, losing ground
on the chartscan mean the kiss of
death for a track.

As a result they say they have lit-
tle choice but to program singles they
feel radio is not giving a fair shake.

“Losing a bullet kills you,”
admits one label VP of promotion,
who acknowledges occasional use
of spin programs to “save” a slow-
developing hit.

However, programmers say their
spin-centric view of the world is a pro-
duct of the labels’ emphasis on spins.

“Programmers value spins because
spins have become the end-all and
be-all of record labels,” Oedipus says. “It’s
always about spins. Spin it more, spin
it more. The spins have done gone,
what’s wrong with the record?”

With R&B and hip-hop dominating
the top 40 charts for the past year,
labels are often using spot buys with
priority singles from rock and adult-
leaning artists, sources say. However,
spin programs are being used across all
music formats.

Programmers acknowledge that
whenever a label is facing tough ads
for a song, spot buys become tempting.

“Quite often in a song’s history
there’s that plateau that it hits,” says
Bob Quick, operations manager of top
WCQG Columbus Ga., an Archway
station that accepts spot buys.

“There are a certain number of sta-
tions that are willing to buy records
of the major label. There’s a cer-
tain number of stations that are always
tough ads. That’s the nature of the
business. What does this for the labels
is help them keep the forward mo-
momentum for a song until they can get
research back.”

However, critics of spot buys call the
system an ineffectual band-aid at best
and an addiction at worst.

“If it’s a waste of money for record
companies to think that they can use
these things to their advantage in that
way and buy their way onto the chart,”
one label promotion chief says. “My
experience is: Promotion band-aids don’t
hold.”

“It’s like heroin,” a rival promotion
VP says. “Once you’re on you have to
stay on it. You have to keep coming
back for more.”

FCC TAKES NOTE
Operators of spin programs and par-
ticipating stations point out that spon-
sorship does not violate Federal
Communications Commission payola
rules as long as the station runs a
disclaimer before or after the song stating
that the airplay was paid for. An exami-
in of these rules confirms the claim.

However, the practice is expected to
come under increasing scrutiny in
Washington, D.C., in the coming
weeks. The FCC is expected to launch
an inquiry next week looking at “local-
izing” in radio programming.

The probe is expected to examine such
practices as payola and play-for-pay and the
rules surrounding spot buys.

The FCC wants to find out if these
rules apply to “spot buying” and “sponsored
airplay,” says a spokesman for FCC
commissioner Michael Copps, one of the FCC’s two
Democratic commissioners.

Meanwhile, reaction from artist
advocacy groups has been mixed.

“RAC supports a system whereby
radio airplay is earned by merit,” says
Jay Rosenthal, counsel for the Record-
ing Artists Coalition. “But if this new
practice is legal and does not violate
localism” in radio unless they’re subsidized by these
large corporations buying airtime.”

Additional reporting by Bill Holland
in Washington, D.C., and Brian Te Velde in
New York.

Gaga control Concord’s ownership
through their ACT III Communica-
tion company.

Sources say Concord has been seek-
ing funding to pay for the acquisition
and is believed to have reached an
agreement in principle with the Tail-
wind Capital Partners fund run by
Brostor-Thomas Weisel Capital Man-
agement LLC.

Another source suggests that Con-
cord and Tailwind still have a way to go
before completing the deal, which
means that finalizing the Fantasy acqui-
sition could turn into a complex trans-
action. Even if Concord and Tailwind
fail to complete the deal, others
say Act III has the financial wherewith-
all to write a check for Fantasy.

Fantasy label chairman Saul Zaentz
leads the group—which includes some
Fantasy senior management—
that owns the label. In addition to consid-
erving price, the Fantasy overture is
said to have chosen Concord’s bid because
they believe it to be the best offer for
their employees.

Shapiro
Continued from page 5

Atlantic, I often felt like I was an
internal manager to certain acts
anyway, like Jewel, Brandy, P.O.D.
or Matchbox Twenty.

New York-based Shapiro is in final
negotiations to link with Nashville-
based manager Greg Hill to help him
co-manage Roberts.

Roberts’ self-titled Mercury
Nashville album is No. 11 on the
Billboard Top Country Albums chart this
issue.

You’ve Got AOL;
Shapiro is also consulting for AOL
Music at the request of Evan Harri-
son, VP/GM of the division.

“When Ron was at Atlantic, he was
one of the first to embrace the huge
reach of the online space,” Harrison
says. “I saw this as a huge opportu-
nity for him to evangelize what we
were doing so the [industry] can hear it
from another angle—from someone
who as president of a major label
embraced AOL as a major platform.”

With two anchor clients, Ron
Shapiro Management and Consulting
LLC was born. Shapiro wholly owns
the company.

He has added two new clients: Clear
Channel Entertainment and Artists
Den, a New York-based company that
includes Artists Den Performances
and Artists Den Records.

Shapiro is consulting with CCE on
its artist-development program,
which launched earlier this year with
the Killingtons (Billboard, Jan. 31).

He serves as president of Artists
Den. The company, started by venture
capitalist Mark Lieberman, showcases
acoustic-oriented artists around the
city who appeal to the 25- to 40-year-
old demographic. Artists Den Records
plans to sign some of the acts the company
showcases. Shapiro has an
equality stake in the label.

Shapiro is talking to other
potential and consulting
clients, but for now limiting his
staff to himself and an assistant.

Recognizing that a startup has its
share of adversity, Shapiro says he
wants to launch his new venture many
of the lessons he learned at Atlantic.

“You should always approach a
project with an attitude of changing
the marketplace or changing the
industry,” he says. “At Atlantic, the
minute the gatekeepers told us ‘no’
was the minute we started to have a
good time.”

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Phonographic Performance Ltd. celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, a senior citizen among international performing rights bodies.

Fran Nevrkla has been chairman/CEO of this sprightly septuagenarian since October 2000. In his brief tenure, he has revamped PPL’s management and royalty systems. This year, the London-based company is sending royalties to U.K. labels and performers five months earlier than it did three years ago. Meanwhile, costs have dropped from 28% of income to 17%.

But Nevrkla is no mere systems man. Born in the former Czechoslovakia, he studied music in Prague before moving here in 1986 to attend the Royal College of Music. He subsequently played violin with several major British orchestras. When an injury forced him to give up playing in 1976, he began a 23-year career with Warner Music U.K.

As the new millennium began, Nevrkla left Warner to join PPL, which has 3,000 record company members and 30,000 registered performers. Its revenue last year totaled $31 million ($149 million).

Securing overseas income for PPL members and performers has been one of Nevrkla’s priorities. PPL has 15 reciprocal deals for record company broadcasting and public performance rights, including one signed this year with the Recording Industry Assn. of Japan. Before it enlisted Nevrkla, PPL had only one such deal.

Nevrkla was a key broker in the April 1 video-licensing agreement between MTV Networks Europe and PPL sister company Video Performance Ltd. (Billboard, April 10), which Nevrkla also heads.

Jay Berman, chairman/CEO of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, worked with Nevrkla at Warner Music. “Fran’s greatest strength is that he likes to talk—and talk, and talk,” Berman jokes, then adds, “He’s a great colleague—easygoing and smart—and he listens to other people. Fran has great political and people skills.”

Nevrkla also lobbies U.K. and European Union politicians in music-industry matters. He spoke to Billboard on the eve of PPL’s June 11 annual general meeting.

Q: How did a classical violinist from Prague end up with a key role in the U.K. record business?

A: It was absolutely unintentional. My life’s dream was to be a classical fiddler in a string quartet; I trained for that from the age of 6. But an accident interfered, and I haven’t played since January 1976.

I missed playing terribly. But I desperately wanted a job close to music. A good friend of mine suggested calling Warner, who were opening up a new distribution center in Alpertown [West London]. I spoke to a charming lady in personnel, told her my history, and she said, “We love people who love music. Come over, and let’s take it from there.” And I stayed there 23 years. I’m not sure you could do that in today’s environment.

Q: How has your background as a musician helped you at PPL?

A: When I began playing with the Czechoslovak Chamber Orchestra, I traveled Europe a lot. I became the orchestra’s administrative director at the age of 16½! I negotiated with agents and promoters over venues, fees, accommodations and so on. I enjoyed that and became used to the administrative side of the business.

And training as a musician requires a phenomenal amount of focus and self-discipline. You can’t go out clubbing, for example, because you have the next engagement coming up.

Q: How has the industry’s perception of PPL changed in recent years?

A: Before, it was seen very much as the collecting arm of the labels. Now, across the major and indie sectors, people accept more willingly that working together with performers is pretty much essential.

Fran Nevrkla: Career Highlights

2004: Signs new three-year contract with PPL/VPL in January.
2000: Leaves Warner after 23 years; named chairman/CEO of PPL and VPL.
1997: Begins second term as chairman of BMI rights committee.
1985: Named board director of Phonographic Performance Ltd. and sister company Video Performance Ltd.
1985: Promoted to director of commercial and business affairs.
1983: Promoted to business affairs manager.
1977: Joins Warner Music U.K.’s distribution operation in customer service; becomes one of the company’s first two management trainees.

As a company, we have better methods, better systems and better management than before, so we can deliver better results.

Q: How important is performance revenue to labels in the digital age?

A: It will be fundamental to the industry’s survival. Years ago, PPL income was seen by a lot of people within the U.K. industry as the icing on the cake. Now independent labels and major companies alike budget for our income. We are fundamentally important to them, and that importance will grow.

Physical sales will continue to decline. It won’t be a dramatic process, but it will be fast enough to hurt. Other income will start to this year. Record companies must become disciplined as music publishers have been, looking to monetize every opportunity. Publishers and composers are used to selling music; the record industry is selling formats. That has to change.

Q: How big a priority is PPL getting royalties from the United States?

A: A huge priority. There has to be a proper arrangement between [Recording Industry Assn. of America-owned collecting body] SoundExchange and ourselves on a reciprocal basis.

Q: How can you develop that arrangement?

A: I have no illusions about how difficult it will be. In the U.S., they don’t have the same rights as we do. Neither record label nor performers get a performing right in the U.S., while publishers and composers do. But there are enough individuals in America who think it might be worth another shot at redressing that imbalance. I would like us to help them with our experiences and our knowledge of precedents and legislation.

Q: How satisfied are you with the outcome of the VPL/MTV negotiations?

A: The deal will do. MTV is simply paying a reasonable price. But it was fantastic to see the independent label sector here and in Europe standing together under pressure, despite having much less repertoire clout than the majors.

Companies saying to MTV, as independent labels [that] know [they] need [its] marketing support for a key release. “No, we shall not be marginalized; we shall not be humiliated. And if you don’t like that, stop broadcasting our videos,” helped us make a deal which reflected that unity.

Q: Are you looking to attract more performers to PPL?

A: Yes. It’s an ongoing process, although we’re not after hijacking anybody else’s members.

We do not charge a subscription fee. Our costs are what they are, and they are always being trimmed down. There is a cost in running the business, but other than that, there’s no cost to the performer. We have one set of services—no duplication. We license, we collect, we process, identify and pay out as quickly, cheaply, effectively and accurately as possible. How bad is that for the performers?

Q: How hard is it getting the industry’s points across to U.K. and European legislators?

A: We have not succeeded in demonstrating to government on a national or European level how important copyright is to the European economy. The music industry must do better at that. Manufacturing [industries] will be almost entirely gone from Europe within the next 10 years. How shall we survive? The entire creative sector is being written out of copyright.

We have to become more muscular, more disciplined, more cohesive. [Legislators] regret the music industry’s apparent lack of common strategy on key issues. We still tend to run around in lots of different directions with different objectives.

Q: You recently re-signed with PPL for three years. What do you hope to accomplish in that time?

A: I want PPL to be recognized as the best collecting society in Europe. To be the most effective, efficient, professionally run, modern, user-friendly—and reasonably cheap—service for the industry.
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The Billboard Dance Music Summit is a valuable networking opportunity, with the Big Apple as the backdrop. Michael Paoletta and company have created an intimate forum to discuss the pressing issues facing dance music today. It's more constructive than the Winter Music Conference—people are there to do business. It's about the state of the dance music industry.

JASON BENTLEY
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