And Then There Were Four
FTC Removes Final Hurdle To Merger Of Sony And BMG

BY ED CHRISTMAN

NEW YORK—The next seismic shift in the music industry is about to begin. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission gave its blessing July 26 to the union of Sony Music Entertainment and BMG. Coupled with the European Commission's green light (Billboard, July 31), the move clears the way for the merger to close as soon as early August.

The merger could ultimately result in the elimination of more than 2,000 jobs as the new Sony BMG looks to create at least $250 million in savings, sources suggest.

BMG and Sony Music task forces have been meeting regularly under the auspices of New York-based consultant Accenture since the deal was announced Nov. 6 and have already hammered out a structure for the new company.

As previously reported, BMG chairman/CEO fo! Schmidt-Holtz will be chairman of the new company, and Sony Music Entertainment chairman Andrew Lack will be

New Deal For Dance Acts
Licensing Pacts Now The Norm; Artists Enjoy Freedom As Labels Cut A&R Costs

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

In a world of tight label budgets and diminished sales, a growing number of dance and electronic acts have found a new road to artistic and economic freedom.

The artists are bypassing traditional label deals and licensing their full-length recordings directly to labels around the world. Among the new and established dance and electronic acts taking this route are Miss Kittin, Paul Van Dyk, Roger Sanchez, Christopher Lawrence, David Morales, Thomas Fehlmann, Ming-FS, Deep Dish, 4 Strings, D:Fuse, Ultra Nati, Amber, Alex Gold, the Scumfrog, Downtown, DJ Rap, the Freestylers and Roni Size.

The nonexclusive licensing deals such (Continued on page 67)

At Plug.In, Portability Carries Much Weight

BY BRIAN GARRITY and SCOTT BANERIEE

NEW YORK—Some of the biggest names in technology are seeking to solve digital music's primary stumbling block: portability.

At the July 26-27 Jupiter Plug-In Conference & Expo here, label executives and online service operators alike positioned portability—as the key to digital music sales to consumers. Jupiter Research expects the number of portable music players in the U.S. market to grow from slightly more than 11 million units in 2004 to a "critical mass" of about 26 million devices by 2006.

During the same period, Jupiter forecasts U.S. digital music sales will grow from $271 million to more than $900 million.

But growth hinges on improved portability and compatibility options for devices, executives and analysts say.

"We need to get to a point where the music you get plays anywhere," said Ted Cohen, senior VP of digital development and distribution for EMI.

But amid signs of portability breakthroughs come clear indications of reduced expectations for digital music revenue.

In his opening address at the conference, Jupiter VP David Card warned attendees that adoption of digital music will not represent a significant revenue shift for the industry in the short-term. (Continued on page 69)
The Advantage of Member-Ownership...

"ASCAP was there for me when nobody knew my name. I don't forget that."
ASCAP Member/Owner Beyonce Knowles

"We attract music's biggest names based on our reputation, not with discretionary payments. I'm proud of that."
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CHARLES GOLDSUCK

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Red, Hot And Global
New WMI Team Works Chili Peppers' First Live Set

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAN

LONDON—Outside America, the world’s album charts are about to become redder, hotter—and live.
The latest album by Red Hot Chili Peppers reflects their status as one of the most successful rock attractions on live stages internationally. But despite the set’s global chart-topping capability, it is not for U.S. consumption.
The band played to more than 900,000 people during an international tour covering a mere 14 dates in May and June. That jaunt took in many major cities in Europe and Japan.
The highlight of the Clear Channel Entertainment-promoted tour was a three-night stint at a specially built outdoor venue in London’s Hyde Park, where the group attracted a total of 225,000 people for the June 19, 20 and 22 gigs (On the Road, Billboard, July 10).

(Continued on page 55)

Agents Tell Arena Managers: Be Visible

BY RAY WADDELL

RENO, Nev.—Given the recent downturn in the concert business, it is no surprise that the state of the touring industry was a priority for many attendees at the 79th annual International Association of Assembly Managers Convention and Trade Show, held here July 23-27.

And with the increasing possibility that the upcoming National Hockey League season will be a no-go due to a labor dispute, arenas are facing the prospect of more dark nights to add to the mix.

Although amphitheaters have taken the brunt of the blow this summer, arenas are also experiencing a soft year. Many of the arena managers, promoters, producers and agents with whom Billboard spoke during the convention related disappointing business from not only concerts but also family shows, Broadway shows, comedy, motorsports events and other attractions.

Concern over the state of live entertainment likely contributed to a packed house at the IAAM panel “Buy Talent… And Still Sleep at Night.” The panel featured reps from the major booking agencies discussing how venue managers can help themselves when it comes to securing dates, by staying aware and by offering to share the risk.

“One of the things I always ask building managers that call me is if they're interested in co-promoting or promoting a show themselves,” said Ray Sheiled of Monterey Peninsula Artists. “The other thing I'm interested in is traffic. What else is coming through this market?”

Panelist Scott Pang of International Creative Management said it is crucial for building managers to stay visible with the agents. “Road trips out to see the agencies really makes a difference,” Pang said. “I used to see 15 or 20 building managers a year come to L.A., New York or Nashville to visit our agencies…but don’t be shy that anymore. I haven’t had a building manager in my office in five years.”

Pang stressed that face time can make a big difference in getting a date. “When I’m figuring out how to route something and make it work, I think of the guy who came to visit me.”

Agents agree that building managers should stay informed of routing and possible availabilities. “If you see an open date, call the agent to quantify why that date is open,” Sheiled said. “It may be a Tuesday night, and if your research as a building shows you’ve had success on a Tuesday, you’ll have a better shot.”

William Morris agent Zach Radksi said he still has to do a lot of “hand-holding” with offers from buildings. “The biggest part of my

(Continued on page 55)

R&B Acts Find Sanctuary

Knowles’ Division Is Surging

BY GAIL MITCHELL

De La Soul; Earth, Wind & Fire; and Ray J are the first acts signed to the roster at Sanctuary Urban Records Group, headed by president Mathew Knowles.

The SURG deals represent U.K.-based parent Sanctuary Group’s latest steps in further fortifying its urban music presence.

Earlier this year, Knowles signed veteran R&B/Pop act the O’Jays to Music World Music (Billboard, March 6).

Sanctuary’s urban management division, which Knowles also oversees, recently acquired Philadelphia-based entertainment management group Erving Wonder (billboard.biz, June 18).

Knowles continues to serve as president of his management firm, Music World Entertainment, which Sanctuary acquired last year.

ALBUMS ARRIVE IN THE FALL

SURG’s first release will be rap trio De La Soul’s “The Grind Date.” Due Sept. 28, the set is being released through a joint venture with the group’s own AOI Records. It has been 15 years since the debut of De La Soul’s pioneering Tommy Boy album, “3 Feet High and Rising.” Its last album was the 2001 project “AOI: Bionic.”

Earth, Wind & Fire’s as-yet-un titled SURG album is due in the fall. Last year, the veteran act’s RED distributed independent label, Kalimba Records, released “The Promise.” It was EWF’s first new studio album in six years.

The SURG slate also includes fourth-quarter releases by the O’Jays, former Atlantic artist Ray J (brother of recording artist Brandy), Destiny’s Child member Michelle Williams and a third “Spirit Rising” gospel compilation.

Working alongside Knowles at SURG is GM Demmette Guidry. The veteran black music executive’s background includes senior VP stints with Columbia and Warner Bros.

By absorbing 3-year-old Erving Wonder into the Sanctuary fold, the company also brings in Erving Wonder founders Troy Carter and J. Erving, son of former basketball star Julius “Dr. J” Erving, as executive VPs.

Erving Wonder’s management roster includes Eve, Jada-Liss, Snappy (Continued on page 14)
MTV Takes VMAs To Fla.
Jay-Z, Beyoncé, No Doubt, OutKast Get Most Noms

BY LEILA COBO
MIAMI—With six nominations for his music video “99 Problems,” rapper Jay-Z tops the list of nominees for the 2004 MTV Video Music Awards. Beyoncé, No Doubt and OutKast are close behind, with five nominations each.

Beyoncé, last year’s big winner, earned four nods for her clip “Naughty Girl” and one for “Me, Myself and I.” No Doubt was nominated for “It’s My Life,” and OutKast scored a nom for “Hey Ya!”

MTV announced the nominations at a press conference here July 27.

The awards will be broadcast live Aug. 29 at 8 p.m. EST from Miami’s American Airlines Arena.

A FEW FIRSTS
This marks the first time in the VMAs’ 20-year history that the event will take place outside New York or Los Angeles.

This year’s awards will mark other firsts as well. Chieftly, these will be the first unfiltered VMAs. Instead of a host, MTV/MTV Films/MTV2 president Van Toffler said, producers will “creatively pair performers and presenters.”

Additionally, American Airlines Arena is larger than any previous VMAs venue. Its size will allow MTV to work with an unprecedented five stages.

Dave Sirulnick, the event’s executive producer, said he plans to use “all available space, going all the way up to the ceiling and into the audience.”

As a result, Toffler told Billboard, the production costs for this year’s VMAs may surpass those of previous shows.

In a bow to Florida’s warm climate and the arena’s location at the foot of Biscayne Bay, red-carpet guests will arrive by boat instead of limousine.

“I got a sexy boat,” three-time nominee Usher said at the press conference, which took place outside in sweltering heat.

“If I stay a bit longer, I’ll drop to a size two or three,” Missy Elliot joked.

MTV has confirmed several performances (Continued on page 14).

DVDs Now Showing At Your Local Kiosk

BY JILL KIPNIS
LAS VEGAS—The kiosk is trying to find a niche in DVD retailing.

Kiosk companies including FlickStation, DVD-Station and Moviebank USA are striving to attract DVD fans by boasting better selection and lower prices than brick-and-mortar stores and greater convenience than online subscription plans.

Also seeing a foothold in the DVD market are a number of new direct-mail clubs, which hope to cater to consumers who are tired of trips to the local video store.

The Video Software Dealers Assn.’s Home Entertainment Conference, July 14-16 at the Venetian Hotel, was abuzz with talk of these alternative distribution channels.

“There’s clearly a demand for expanded distribution,” says Amy Jo Bonner, executive director of the Digital Entertainment Group, an industry association. “It’s really becoming about convenience for the consumer.”

Meanwhile, traditional video chains, many of which are experimenting with their own online DVD rental services and vending machines, say consumers will not stop visiting their stores any time soon.

All parties agree that the rental business has witnessed a downturn, with rental spending in the first half of the year down 13% compared with the same six-month period last year, according to trade magazine Video Store.

Yet the DVD sell-through business is continuing to rise. Sell-through accounted for $12 billion in consumer purchases in 2003, up 46% from 2002 according to the VSDA.

The new kiosk entrepreneurs are seeking a cut of the sell-through and rental business by placing DVD vending machines in convenient locations around the country.

FlickStation, for example, has placed its initial kiosks in two Atlanta high rises and in office buildings in Atlanta and Pasadena, Calif.

The kiosks, which hold up to 2,000 new releases, offer three-day rentals for about $3.69. Returns are made to the machine. Late fees are charged on a per-day basis.

“People are paying for movie tickets online, people are paying for gas at the pump,” says Dean Gebert, president/COO of Atlanta-based FlickStation. “This will be the next thing” (Continued on page 46).

Suit Claims Netflix Misled Investors

BY CHRIS MORRIS
LOS ANGELES—Investor Eugene Rausch has filed a federal class action against Internet DVD rental firm Netflix and its top executives, claiming the company pumped up its stock price by hiding from shareholders that its subscriber base was shrinking.

Rausch’s suit was filed July 27 in U.S. District Court of the Northern District of California, on behalf of all those who purchased Netflix securities between Oct. 1, 2003, and July 15, 2004. Netflix is traded on Nasdaq.

Netflix chairman/president/CEO Reed Hastings and CFO Secretary W. Barry McCarthy Jr. are named as co-defendants.

The action alleges that while Los Gatos, Calif.-based Netflix claimed robust growth and subscriber figures in quarterly shareholder reports between October 2003 and April 2004, Hastings and McCarthy “knew or recklessly disregarded the fact that adverse facts... had not been disclosed to and were being concealed from the investing public.”

The suit notes that after a substantial decline in subscriptions and an anticipated increase in subscription rates were revealed in a second-quarter report released July 15, Netflix shares plunged 28%.

The action claims that previous quarterly reports contained “false and misleading statements,” which led to Netflix stock trading “at artificially inflated prices.”

A Netflix representative says the company does not comment on pending litigation.
Mario Monti will not be renounced commissioner in charge of competition issues when the 25 new European Commission members are appointed in November. Monti has served two five-year terms, but Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi chose current European Affairs minister Rosco Buttiglione for the position. One of Monti’s last high-profile cases was the Sony BMG merger proposal, which was approved last month despite strong reservations from his department. Monti was also in charge when the proposed Warner/EMI merger failed to get the EC’s approval in 2001.

EMMANUEL LEGRAND

The president of Viacom’s Paramount Enterprises will leave the company as Viacom prepares a reorganization of some operations under newly appointed co-president/co-CEO Tom Freston.

New York-based Viacom said July 29 that Tom McGrath would leave the company as a result of the shuffle, which has the head of the company’s book business Simon & Schuster reporting to Freston and puts MTV Networks Group president Herb Scannell in charge of parks and consumer products, among other changes.

Bob Bakish, who led MTV Networks’ ad sales efforts, was appointed as the new executive VP of operations, reporting to Freston. He will oversee the theatrical exhibition businesses, including the Famous Players Canadian theater circuit and music-publishing unit Famous Music. Among those now reporting to Bakish is Famous Music president Irwin Robinson.

The moves are another episode in a series of events following the abrupt resignation of Viacom president Mel Karmazin, whose lengthy tussle with Viacom CEO Sumner Redstone led to his departure in June.

Redstone promoted MTV Networks chief Freston and CBS overseer Les Moonves to co-president spots and anointed the two as potential successors to the top executive position after he is expected to retire in three years.

Judy McGrath was promoted to the CEO spot at MTV Networks, replacing Freston, in July.

A judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York has ruled in favor of the Recording Industry Assn. of America in a case filed by Cablevision that challenges the RIAA’s “John Doe” lawsuits.

On July 26, Judge Denny Chin denied a motion to quash subpoenas in Sony Music Entertainment et al. v. Does 1-40. He ruled that Cablevision, which provides broadband access in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, must continue to provide RIAA with the identities of subscribers the trade group is suing for peer-to-peer copyright infringement.

The RIAA subpoenaed Cablevision in February to turn over the names; the Internet service provider complied but brought the motion to quash. Chin considered the First Amendment defense—a first—but found that the RIAA’s claim of infringement was enough to override First Amendment privacy protections. BILL HOLLAND

A new study prepared for the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers by research firm Ipsos-Insight says a growing number of American consumers are willing to pay for music downloads.

According to the survey, conducted with more than 1,100 interviewees this spring, nearly twice as many Americans paid a fee to download digital music in first-quarter 2004 than in the fourth quarter of last year. The future of fee-based downloading also looks positive: 44% of downloaders and 21% of active music buyers said they are at least somewhat likely to pay for downloads in the next 12 months. One out of 10 respondents reported downloading music off the Internet during the past 30 days.

The most popular fee-based sites are Apple Computer’s iTunes (21%) and Napster 2.0 (13%). No other site accounted for more than 5% of the paid download business. CDs remain the preferred format, accounting for 56% of consumers’ collections; CD-Rs and MP3 files accounted for 10% and 5%, according to the study. CHRIS MORRIS

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### Billboard Buzz

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**Usher, Maroon 5 Have Buzz**

**BY BOB SMITH**

This month’s Buzz Chart is a testament to the power of a strong radio hit. The 13-50 and 12-39 charts feature big leaps from artists that have recently found themselves atop the Billboard singles charts.

The 13-29 chart is particularly active. Six new artists crack the top 25. Britney Spears returns to the list, thanks to the success of her single “Everytime.” It will be interesting to see if she maintains that.

(Continued on page 14)

**Kobalt Takes 8 Mile Road**

**British Indie Will Administer Hits By Resto, King**

**BY LARS BRANDLE**

LONDON—Independent British-based publisher Kobalt Music Group has inked an exclusive administration deal with Detroit’s 8 Mile Style Music for its hitmaking songwriters Luis Resto and Steve King.

Through the exclusive agreement, Kobalt will administer the publishing rights to the songsmiths’ works for the world outside North America and Japan.

Among the hits included in the deal are the Eminem-performed “Lose Yourself”—for which co-writer Resto earned an Academy Award and a Grammy Award—and D12’s “My Band.”

Resto also recently received an ASCAP Recognition Award for “his contributions as a pioneering keyboardist, songwriter and extraordinary creative force in contemporary music.”

Financial details of the pact have not been made public.

The administration agreement represents something of a triumph for Kobalt, which opened for business from its London headquarters in January 2001.

**EXCLUSIVE**

to achieve this is extremely significant for us,” says London-based Kobalt managing director Bruce Lampcov, who engineered the deal.

Kobalt co-founder/CEO Willard Ahdrizt says the agreement with 8 Mile Style Music represents recognition of the new model Kobalt is trying to implement.

At the core of the company’s business model is a technology platform that enables faster, more accurate and more transparent royalty collection.

Kobalt’s centralized collecting infrastructure is based on a dedicated online system and direct relationships with collecting societies. The relevant societies pay royalties directly to Kobalt’s central office for distribution.

“We found Kobalt’s administration offering most impressive,” Sanctuary Music Publishing president/CEO Deke Arlon says. In July 2003, Sanctuary completed a world ex-United Kingdom/Ireland administration agreement with Kobalt.

“They are a unique company,” Arlon says, “with a fresh, modern and innovative approach to the international administration of copyrights and the subsequent collection of income.”

Ahdrizt heims Kobalt’s management team, with Lampcov its chief deal-maker and A&R director Sas Metcalfe heading its creative depart-

(Continued on page 69)
Key Issues Remain In Path Of Digital Market

‘Challenges Still Ahead’

The following is an excerpt adapted from a keynote address by Charles Goldstuck, president/COO of BMG North America, delivered July 26 at the Jupiter Plug In Conference & Expo in New York.

When I participated in Plug In last year, the outlook for the recorded music industry appeared bleak. Music sales were down significantly for the third consecutive year, and physical and digital piracy were rampant and growing. While Apple had launched the iTunes music store three months earlier, digital downloads had yet to show their promise as a viable commercial format.

One year later, I’m still standing, my company is still standing, and the landscape, at least in the U.S., has shifted quite a bit, and for the better, even though the international marketplace continues to struggle.

Interaction among content owners and tech companies, music publishers and the retail and distribution community has moved from hostility and confrontation to what seems to be a desire for collaboration driven by the realization among all interested constituents that solutions need to be found.

However, there are many major challenges ahead. As an industry, we are still far from the economic position of a number of years ago. We also have not yet taken full advantage of the potential of digital distribution.

From a technological perspective, we are almost at the point where music can be consumed in an “anytime, anywhere” manner.

Whether consumers are using cell phones, iPods, other portable devices or laptop computers, they will soon be able to purchase and consume music immediately and from virtually anywhere.

In order for this marketplace to work seamlessly, and in order to ensure that growth in digital markets remains viable and that the proper infrastructure is created to help them flourish, there are three primary issues that have to be dealt with.

This means that the efforts at stimulating legitimate activity will continue to be our No. 1 priority. I was very pleased to see the RIAA announcement last week that iMesh was settling the infringement suit against them. Under that court-approved settlement, they also agreed to change their service going forward to prevent illegal downloading.

We need all for the [peer-to-peer] services to move to a legitimate business model. This is a question of whether or not piracy is an illegitimate market. It’s not about being for or against P2P technology, or any other technology for that matter. The iMesh settlement makes that clear. For the music business to recognize new distribution technologies, the technology operators have to demonstrate a legitimate basis for commerce—just like there is in every single marketplace in this country.

This view is gaining broader acceptance throughout society. Consumers are accepting reasonable limitations on “personal use” of music. A powerful illustration of this is the use of copyright-management technology on physical CDs.

At BMG, we have released several albums incorporating this technology—most notably the No. 1 album from Velvet Revolver—which have all met with commercial success. So far, if anything, we are seeing a positive effect on sales from copy protection, with virtually no unfavorable consumer response.

We have also seen that the legislators in Washington, D.C., accept and recognize that copyright owners are entitled to protection, (Continued on page 67)

(Continued from page 66)

PD Reissues OK For Pre-Rock Heroes

Nigel Parker’s unguarded comment that “many performers live out their lives in penury” [“Clock Ticking on Elvis Hits,” Billboard, July 24] seems to suggest that in addition to not being paid by public domain reissue companies, the performers also haven’t been paid by the actual sound recording copyright holders while their recordings were under copyright protection—until the intervention of such bodies as the Rhythm & Blues Foundation.

Elvis’ memory may have been blessed with a good reissue program instigated by BMG in recent years, but he is the exception to the rule. In the main, the early heroes of rock ’n’ roll have not been so well-served by the major record companies that possess their recordings, and [these companies have] universally failed to either maintain a sensible reissue schedule or to set a realistic rate to allow third parties to legally license tracks relating to the more obscure artists that will not be big sellers.

Most of the PD reissue labels I know are run by “fast buck” merchants, but by enthusiastic music lovers who have provided a real service to collectors of jazz, blues, country and most other pre-rock ’n’ roll music by reissuing recordings that the former sound recording copyright owners would have absolutely no interest in reissuing and probably do not even know that they own.

I, for one, sincerely hope there is no change in the current European Union law, for what would happen to the recordings of the more obscure artists if their copyright is extended to 95 years? Attractive to only a minority market that can’t hope to make the sort of sales target a BMG or a Sony would demand, they would simply be buried for yet a further 45 years—and that ain’t right, mama!

Dave Penny
Freelance reissue consultant
London

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Carlos Vives mixes contemporary sounds with the folk music of his native Colombia.

(Continued on page 11)
Foes Seek To Narrow Target Of ‘Induce’ Bill

This issue’s column was written by Billboard Washington, D.C., bureau chief Bill Holland.

Gary Shapiro, the veteran spokesman and lobbyist for the consumer electronics industry, has “a problem” with the Senate’s pending Induce Act.

The bill—the Inducing Infringement of Copyrights Act—would allow artists and labels to sue companies that profit from encouraging minors and others to commit copyright infringement.

The bill states that whomever “intentionally induces” or “intentionally aids, abets, counsels or procures” any violation of copyright “shall be liable as an infringer.”

But Shapiro, CEO of the Consumer Electronics Assn., told Billboard, “This whole ‘induce’ concept is a non-starter. If you want to go after peer-to-peer, you have to come up with a way to do that. You define ‘peer-to-peer’ somehow, and say that kind of [profiting from infringement] activity is illegal. It’s going to be very difficult—the whole Internet is about file sharing.”

Shapiro’s comments followed a hearing on the bill July 22 in Washington, D.C. The legislation, S. 2560, was authored by Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and co-sponsored by Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and four other Republican and Democratic lawmakers.

At the hearing, Hatch and Leahy told witnesses that if they do not like the draft language of the bill, then they better hit the books rather than the beach in August.

“I intend to move this legislation this session,” Hatch said, “and I want to protect both the copyright and technology communities.”

Mary Beth Peters, the Register of Copyrights, testified in favor of the bill, stating that it would “allow courts to examine the circumstances behind infringing activity to find those truly responsible, such as the operators of the current peer-to-peer networks who depend upon infringement for their commercial viability.”

Recording Industry Assn. of America chairman/CEO Mitch Bainwol also spoke in favor of the measure.

However, at the hearing Shapiro said, “I do not know of one consumer electronics or computer company in favor of this bill.”

Shapiro characterized the Induce Act as “the biggest threat to our industry in more than 20 years. It rewinds the Betamax case ruling and paints a massive liability bull’s-eye on companies.”

Hatch replied, “We need your help in [redrafting] this bill. So far, there has not been much forthcoming from you in the way of suggestions.”

Interviewed by Billboard following the hearing, Shapiro joked that Hatch’s request “might mess up my vacation.”

On a serious note, Shapiro said CEAs intention is not to protect illegal file sharing.

“If a bill can be drafted that is very narrow and only affects the really bad actors in file sharing, I don’t think we would oppose that,” Shapiro said. “I’ve spent four days thinking about that—now the smoothest—and frankly, I don’t think legislation will solve the problem.”

“The big problem with the bill as it is written is that it never mentions peer-to-peer; it mentions ‘any technology.’ You have no idea what that scares people [in the technology community], how chilling that is,” he said.

Andrew Greenberg, vice chairman of the Intellectual Property Committee at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, had prepared some alternative language for the bill and presented the committee with a substitute on the day of the hearing.

“I’m going to be OK in August,” Greenberg quipped. “I already lost billable hours in July working on the substitute language.”

IEEES’s version uses the induce concept but with tighter secondary liability restrictions. Its substitute language can be viewed on the last page of Greenberg’s testimony at http://www.ieeeusa.org/forum/policy/2004/072204.pdf.

Bainwol and Peters have said they would be amenable to any draft changes approved by Hatch and his staff.

NetCoalition executive director/general counsel Kevin McGuinness also said his group will be working on alternate language.

Does McGuinness think he’ll be able to squeeze in some vacation time? “I sure as hell hope so,” he said.

Big Idea Replants Veggie Biz

The past couple of years have been something of a roller coaster ride for Big Idea, but the company now seems to be on even keel.

The organization that created the best-selling Veggie Tales line of children’s products has relocated to Tennessee, setting up new offices in Franklin, south of Nashville, in a historic building known as the Factory. “Nashville is a real entertainment base,” says Mike Nawrocki, writer/director and the voice of Veggie Tales character Larry the Cucumber.

“There are a lot of [Nashville-based] songwriters we’ve worked with in the past, and we thought it was a really good place to be.”

Previously based in Chicago, the company was founded in 1993 by Nawrocki and Phil Vischer (the voice of Bob the Tomato). The company previously had a satellite office in Nashville that handled marketing, but the founders built the company from the Windy City.

Big Idea’s trajectory, however, has not been smooth.

“The company has been incredibly successful,” COO Terry Pefanis says.

“It has sold over 35 million videos and over 5 million records, and it has generated a tremendous amount of revenue, but the revenue generated there was sort of a one-two punch.”

Pefanis says the blow that knocked the company off-kilter was “Jonah,” a theatrical Veggie Tales release that overextended the company, and a lawsuit filed by Dallas-based Lyric in a dispute over a distribution agreement.

“We lost the lawsuit,” Pefanis says. “When that verdict [came in, we were in the process of] trying to refinance the company and recapitalize it, but the judgment was for $11 million, and that sort of sealed our fate. So we went to our lenders and laid out this plan. What we agreed to do with our bank to allow the company to continue was to find a buyer.”

Enter Classic Media, which purchased Big Idea in December 2003. The creative team remained onboard through the bankruptcy and the sale, Pefanis says, “so the essence of the creative storytelling and the music is really the same, and we are much more focused on what really made the company so successful.

Veggie Tales video product is now distributed by Word. Veggie audio and interactive product is distributed via EMI Christian Music Distribution. Sony executive is the new general-market distributor, effective Aug. 1.

Pefanis says that the company is “trying to make the best shortform videos we can make. We do plan to make features . . . Next time we won’t take all the risk.”

While Pefanis notes that “Jonah” was commercially successful, earning more than $25 million at the box office and selling more than 2.5 million videos in the first year after it was released, he says the company still lost about $14 million on the film.

Nawrocki says the company’s executives do not regret releasing “Jonah,” but they are planning to do things differently next time.

“We’ve been through it and learned and now know what works for us and how we should make a feature film,” he says.

In the meantime, the next Veggie Tales video is due Aug. 28 for the Christian market and Aug. 31 in the general market. Nawrocki describes “Sumo of the Opera” as “a story about perservance. It’s sort of ‘Rocky’ meets ‘The Mikado.’”

“The nice thing about what is happening now is we’re really been able to concentrate on home video again,” Nawrocki adds. “The last few shows we’ve done have been strong, and we have some great stuff coming up. We are really excited about the future.”
Sánchez Keeps Columbia in the Jazz Mainstream

As part of the Umbria Jazz Festival in Perugia, Italy, vocalist Dee Dee Bridgewater performed July 14 at the 5,000-seat outdoor Arena Santa Giuliana with a band that spotlighted tenor saxophonist David Sánchez. Her new work-in-progress was called “Latin Landscapes.” She told the crowd, “This is a big departure for me, coming into David’s world.”

Earlier backstage, Bridgewater told me she was not only widening her song vocabulary but also wanted to draw attention to 35-year-old, Puerto Rican-born, New York-based Sánchez. She said enthusiastically, “More people need to know how great David is.”

A prime example of Sánchez’s talent is his lush new hybrid jazz/Latin/symphonic CD, “Corál,” out Aug. 3 on Columbia Records. It is a tender, sensitive collaboration between his sextet, featuring alto saxophonist Miguel Zénón and pianist Edel Gomez, and the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sánchez and company cover relatively unknown classical works by Brazilians Heitor Villa-Lobos and Antonio Carlos Jobim and Argentine Alberto Ginastera. “My concept was to do works by Latin American composers who have been influenced by the French Impressionist period,” Sánchez says.

The tenor saxophonist delivers two originals, includes the buoyant tune “The Elements II,” and string arranger/conductor Carlos Franzetti contributes the ballistic beauty “Vexilla Regis.” Throughout the disc—recorded during two years in Prague—Sánchez swings into lyrical tenor lines imaginatively embellished by woodwinds and strings.

“Corál” is Sánchez’s seventh Columbia CD. “This could be a break-out record for him,” Columbia VP of jazz marketing Mark Feldman says. “He’s a mature veteran who is musically sophisticated and engaging.”

Sánchez is the sole mainstream jazz artist on Columbia. The label has scaled back straight-ahead jazz artists while expanding the jazz-oriented styles represented in its roster. Under the jazz umbrella is the label’s new hybrid jazz/Latin/world “Samba” series.

Currently there aren’t any A&R moves at the label working exclusively on jazz. That doesn’t mean Columbia has thrown in the towel on the genre, says Jeff Jones, senior VP of Columbia Legacy and Columbia Jazz. “If the right artists come along and make sense, we’ll sign them,” he says. “We’ll keep looking at trends in clubs and through managers and agents. I want to make it clear we’re not out of the jazz business. We’re just being very selective and focused and not wanting to be diluted with size.”

In the meantime, the straight-ahead jazz style will be serviced by Japanese label 88s. Its next CD released in the United States by Columbia will be “Someday My Prince Will Come” by the Great Jazz Trio, featuring pianist Hank Jones, the late drummer Elvin Jones (his brother) and bassist Richard Davis. It streets Sept. 14.

Vives

Continued from page 9

was released in the States in April 1994 on PolyGram Latino. The album peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart and remained on the list for 86 weeks.

Vives’ two subsequent albums peaked at No. 3 and No. 12 on the chart, respectively. He returned to No. 2 in 2000 with “El Amor de Mi Tierra” (EMI Latin), which spawned the No. 1 radio hit “Prisma Fresca.”

A year later, “Dame Entra” made it to No. 1 and won Vives a Grammy Award and two Latin Grammys.

“El Rock de Mi Pueblo” is his first set since then and the last album on his contract with Colombian label Sonolux (EMI has exclusive rights to Vives’ recordings outside Colombia).

Vives has not announced if he plans to renew his deals with either Sonolux or EMI. However, EMI has already stated it will release a greatest-hits set on Vives following this project.

Expectations for the new album, which has been moved back from February, remain high, according to Alberto Uribe, head buyer for the Ritmo Latino chain.

Despite the artist’s Colombian roots, Uribe says, Vives sells equally well in the United States, and the new album may well be EMI’s most important release this year.

Like “Dame Entra,” “El Rock de Mi Pueblo” was produced by Vives in conjunction with Emilio Estefan, Andrés Castro and Sebastian Krys, who is nominated for a Latin Grammy for producer of the year.

AN ARTISTIC EVOLUTION

More adventurous and more colloquial than its predecessors, the album features a mix of rock, pop, vallenato and cumbia.

“Think it captures what he has been going after all this time, which is the fusion of all those elements and keeping the roots alive,” Krys says.

In order to capture the feel of Vives’ shows, Krys recorded all the instruments live, including Vives’ vocals.

The first single, “Como Tú,” went to radio the week of July 19 and debuted at No. 7 on the Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart.

“It’s an evolutionary track. I loved it,” says Pio Ferro, national programming director for radio network Spanish Broadcasting System. He expects the track to play on pop and tropical stations, as Vives’ prior songs have done.

“El Rock de Mi Pueblo” is the product of an evolution of a great artist,” says Jorge Pino, president/CEO of EMI Music U.S. Latin.

Pino calls the new street date “ideal, since all the attention will be focused on Latin music during this time due to the Latin Grammy Awards.” The ceremony takes place Sept. 1.

EMI is preparing for the release with a series of events in the United States with key partners, from iTunes and AOL to unvision.com and Yahoo’s Launch en Español. Two remixes of “Como Tú”—by Paul Oakenfold and Robbie Rivera—have been recorded and will “expand Carlos fan base,” according to David Alvarado, senior director of marketing for EMI Music U.S. Latin.

The remixes will be an added-value item for buyers in key outlets. Other offers include such merchandise as Colombian bracelets, sandals and T-shirts whose design is similar to that of the album’s artwork.

Vives says the clothes, instruments and music all come together as one package that blends traditional and modern elements. “People are worried that the album title will displace the

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BY STEVE McCLURE

TOKYO—Ray Hearn, president of concert promotion company Beat Ink, is not one to mince words.

“There are too many artists coming to Japan and too many promoters—the market is completely glutted,” the outspoken Australian says.

Massy Hayashi, president of concert promotion company H.I.P., agrees that the Japanese concert business is experiencing what he terms “overcapacity” but doesn’t see this as a problem.

“This is capitalism, so they’re welcome to come—we need more promoters, many shows,” Hayashi says with a laugh. “Some are winners, and some are losers. That makes things more exciting.”

“Exciting” is an apt word to describe the extraordinarily active and diverse Japanese concert business. In addition to a profusion of shows by domestic acts, artists of all genres from all over the world include Japan in their tour schedules.

That makes sense, since Japan is the world’s second-biggest music market after the United States. And despite Japan’s decade-long recession, many Japanese are prepared to shell out their hard-earned yen to see their favorite acts play live.

Many promoters agree that the concert market, reflecting the changes in Japanese society, is becoming more “mature,” with more opportunities for acts that cater to a 30-plus demographic. The market is also becoming more diverse, as Japanese music fans have developed a wider knowledge of non-Japanese music through the years.

Although precise statistics are hard to come by, industry sources estimate that shows by non-Japanese acts account for roughly 10% of the concert business in Japan. Despite that perhaps surprisingly low ratio, overseas artists performing in Japan enjoy a high profile in the mass media.

One reason for that is the increasing popularity of large-scale summer festivals featuring many big-name foreign acts. Since Smash launched the Fuji Rock festival in 1997, such events have become an essential part of the Japanese music scene.

This year includes plans for four such festivals: Fuji Rock, Creativeman’s Summer Sonic, Udo Artists’ Rock Odyssey and Rock in Japan, which is organized by Tokyo-based music magazine Rockin’ On. (Unlike the other three festivals, Rock in Japan features only domestic acts.)

Big-name overseas acts playing festival dates in Japan this summer include the Chemical Brothers, the White Stripes and the Pixies at Fuji Rock; the Beastie Boys, Avril Lavigne and Green Day at Summer Sonic; and Aerosmith and Kiss at the Rock Odyssey.

“I don’t think anybody [among the promoters] will make money from these festivals,” Hayashi says.

Naoki Shimizu is president of Creativeman, a Tokyo-based promotion company that organizes the Summer Sonic events in Tokyo and Osaka during the first week of August. He notes that compared with other countries, the window for summer festivals in Japan is rather narrow.

“In Japan, the summer holiday season starts around July 20,” Shimizu says. “And then the typhoon season starts in the middle of August. So there’s a limited period for outdoor summer festivals.”

Smash found out the hard way about the risks involved in holding summer outdoor music festivals in Japan when a typhoon struck the inaugural Fuji Rock festival, shutting down the event.

But that didn’t dampen Smash’s determination to continue Fuji Rock, and since 1997’s inauspicious start, the festival has become an institution, setting the template for outdoor summer music events in Japan.

“I want kids to have a good experience at Fuji Rock,” Smash president Masahiro Hidaka says. “They can experience different kinds of food, different cultures and ways of life, and of course music from overseas.”

Smash’s dedication to bringing foreign acts, especially British ones, to play at Fuji Rock as well as for regular Japan concert tours has brought significant recognition to Hidaka. He became a member of the Order of the British Empire at a ceremony in March at the British Embassy in Tokyo.

“It’s OK that there are so many summer music festivals,” Hidaka says. “We need good competition, because that helps the overall music market. And it’s good for the audiences.”

There’s more to the Japanese concert business than summer festivals, of course. In the past few years, an increasing number of venues designed for concerts have opened in Japan. One example is the nationwide network of midsize Zepp halls that a Sony subsidiary operates.

ADVICE FROM PROMOTERS

So what advice do Japanese promoters have for overseas acts hoping to tour Japan?

Shimizu says that timing is crucial. “The best time to tour is three to four months after an album release,” he says.

He also points out that it’s important to reserve venues well ahead of tour dates, since domestic acts often book halls as much as one year in advance.

Hidaka says a little homework on the part of foreign artists and their managers can help mitigate the culture shock that many of them feel when touring Japan for the first time. He recalls when one American act’s manager expressed a desire to visit Hong Kong.

“I asked him if he had bought his plane ticket,” Hidaka says with a grin, “and he said he hadn’t because he was planning to go from Japan to Hong Kong by train.”

Hayashi says that marketing is the most important factor in whether an act’s tour of Japan is successful. “You have to analyze the market,” he says, offering as an example that because of a relative dearth of FM stations, radio is not as important a promotional medium in Japan as it is in the United States.

Shimizu says it’s important for acts planning to tour Japan to work closely with their Japanese licensees in developing a promotional strategy.

“In Japan, there’s less emphasis than in other countries in using billboards and posters to promote shows,” he says, explaining that arranging in-store promotions is more important in building a buzz for a band about to tour.

There is one compensation for touring here that has nothing to do with venue size or CD sales.

Foreign acts can expect to be treated well during their jaunt. The country’s concert promoters are known for their attention to detail and their genuine enthusiasm for music, and Japanese fans are known for their loyalty and well-mannered behavior.

HAYASHI: 'OVERCAPACITY’ NOT A PROBLEM

HIDAKA: COMPETITION HELPS THE MUSIC MARKET

SHIMIZU: TIMING IS CRUCIAL FOR OVERSEAS ACTS

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WIDE NET IS CAST IN STATION SUIT

Attorneys for the Plaintiff Steering Committee that represents 226 victims and families of the Station club fire in West Warwick, R.I., cast a wide net in their 70-count civil lawsuit in Rhode Island state court last week (billboard.biz, July 22).

The Fed. 20, 2003, fire killed 100 people and injured a number of others during a performance by the band Great White. In a clear quest for the deepest pockets, the suit names 46 defendants, including the band, singer Jack Russell, former tour manager Paul Woolnough, Knight Records, tour manager Dan Biechele, club owners Michael and Jeffrey Derderian, pyro firm Luna Tech, foam manufacturer Legget & Platt, Powerpak International and American Foam, speaker manufacturer JBL, Providence radio station WHY and its owner Clear Channel, Anheuser-Busch, Lloyd's of London, bus company Four Seasons, state and local officials and a camera man.

Most charges cite negligence, as in the case of Anheuser-Busch, Clear Channel, the radio station and others —of whom the suit says “knew or should have known” that Great White “customarily utilized pyrotechnics” in its shows and “had repeatedly, openly and illegally used them on tours prior to the Station show. Four Seasons was named for leasing the bus hauling the band and gear, including the pyro.

Some of the claims are questionable, but all will have to be addressed legally by those charged. No one would deny that victims and survivors of this horrific event are entitled to have something—a lack of a lot—coming to them. But creating a financial drain for those who were on the periphery of the incident only creates more victims of this tragedy.

NOT JUST KENNY: Kenny Chesney and Toby Keith are not the only country acts doing big business on the road this summer. Tim McGraw & the DanceHall Doctors are racking up some strong numbers on their summer Out Loud amphitheater tour, and more dates have been added for arenas heading into the fall.

On July 17 McGraw drew an over-capacity crowd of more than 22,000 and grossed more than $1 million at the Gorge amphitheater in George, Wash., according to his agent, Rod Essig at Creative Artists Agency.

For the shed run, McGaw has averaged 14,000 per night in attendance and has grossed about $600,000-$700,000 per show, Essig says.

McGraw wraps the outdoor leg Aug. 1 at Starwood Amphitheatre near Nashville and begins an indoor leg Aug. 19 at the Centreport in Baton Rouge, La. Dates at the Resch Center in Green Bay, Wis., on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 will be taped for an NBC TV special, The Warren Brothers and Big & Rich provide support on all dates.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, George Strait is notching some impressive numbers of his own in a run through the western United States and Canada.

According to promoter Ron Sakamoto, Strait sold more than 80,000 tickets in Canada in just one day. In Alberta, the tour added an extra date at the Rexall Place in Edmonton and two extra shows at the Pengrowth Saddledome in Calgary to fill the demand. Strait also sold out the Cheyenne (Wyo.) Frontier Days in less than a week for his July 23 performance, and he set a record at Omaha’s Qwest Center for the most tickets sold during the on-sale for his July 24 show.

HONKY-TONK HERO: Billy Joe Shaver will celebrate his 65th birthday in Austin with a show at the Paramount Theater. Signed on to appear are Guy Clark, Todd Snider, Bruce Robison, Jessi Colter, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Joe Ely, Kinky Friedman, Robert Duval, Jack Ingram and Dale Watson.
Brown, Angie Stone and Floetry.

Carter notes that while his and Ewing's management roles have not changed, the move under the Sanctuary umbrella "gives us a bigger reach into the international market. It's also a great opportunity for us to learn from industry veterans like (Sanctuary Group CEO) Merc Mercuriadis and Mathew."

In other recent moves, SURG now lists Mary J. Blige's management company, MJB Management, under its banner.

While building SURG's artist and management arms, Knowles is concurrently developing several other departments. A new urban booking division is handled by Blige and the majority of the Sanctuary urban management division's clients, and a book publishing division is in the works. Another SURG division, URBANE, oversees merchandising for tours and corporate entities. Clients include Beyoncé and Destiny's Child. The MMO/Columbia trio, which Knowles manages, is set to release its next studio album Nov. 16. All of these divisions fall under the Music World Music/Sanctuary Urban Group umbrella.

Sanctuary Group signaled its emergence in the urban arena with its purchase last year of Knowles' Houston-based management firm, Music World Entertainment, for $10 million. NWDE's roster at that time included Destiny's Child, Knowles' daughters Beyoncé and Solange, Williams, Kelly Rowland and Blaque.

In his various roles, Knowles diverts his time between offices in New York, Houston and Los Angeles. But he will take time out to be the keynote at the fifth annual Billboard/ American Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference, slated for Aug. 4-6 in Miami Beach.

Noting that he is almost at the limit on the management side, Knowles plans to continue "growing out" his division. I'm particularly excited about the roster we have and launching our foray into hip-hop with veterans such as De La Soul.

"When I entered the music industry, I found this is one industry that's really based on relationships," he adds. "And that's what I'm trying to do: cultivate and grow professional relationships."
Life Isn’t A Beach For Son Latinos Fest

BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN

MADRID—The sun has gone down on this year’s edition of Europe’s biggest Latin music festival, Son Latinos. Spanish officials banned this year’s event, which was set for Aug. 28, because of alleged ecological harm suffered by a giant artificial beach where the 12-hour concert is held.

Organizer Martin Rivero of Guaguas Producciones says 1.5 million people, or 250,000 each year, have enjoyed the events on the Las Vistas beach on the south side of Tenerife in the Canary Islands for the past six years.

Tickets are not sold for the concert; admission is free.

Last year’s edition, which included several Latin jazz performances, had marked the beginning of what was supposed to be a heightened Latin jazz presence at future festivals.

International acts that have performed at Son Latinos include Manu, Paulina Rubio, Chayanne, Juanes, Los Van Van, José Feliciano, Carlos Vives, Manu Chao and Camps Segundo. Scores of Spanish acts have appeared, among them Rosario, La Oreja de Van Gogh and Ketama.

“We have thrown in the towel for this year against the injustice and discriminatory decision of the all-powerful central administration, which has committed an outrage against the distant Canary Islands,” Rivero says. “I cannot hide a sense of suppressed rage and impotence.”

Calls to Spanish officials were not returned by press time.

Rivero says plans are already under way for next year’s festival. Among the interested parties, he says, is Miami-based producer Emilio Estefan, who has expressed an interest in staging Son Latinos in Miami.

In addition, Rivero says, “we’ve had offers from [the capital city of] Las Palmas on the neighboring island of Gran Canaria.”

The mega-concert is the culmination of a month of activities in southern Tenerife that include cultural debates, art and photographic exhibitions, digital technology presentations and associated events.

“Son Latinos had become in six years a business and cultural project of great depth, recognized internationally and recorded for TV by the Galavision Network in the United States and supported by Latin music industry agents in Spain and elsewhere,” Rivero says.

But the Tenerife coastal department, dependent on the environment ministry millions of miles away in Madrid, agreed with ecology groups that said Son Latinos had a “negative environmental impact.” It said 51 tons of garbage had been cleared from the beach last year, compared with 35 tons the year before, “indicating the increase in waste.”

The report said that in 2002 some 52,000 liters of disinfected water were necessary to clean the beach. “Such a fragile space as this beach cannot put up with the intense pressure of a human agglomeration such as the Son Latinos macro-concert,” the report concludes.

Rivero says the cleanup—which used biodegradable products on the sand, the marine floor and surrounding areas—was successfully completed within hours of the concert each year. He adds that last year, Guaguas Producciones had to pay a 400,000 euros ($480,000) cleaning guarantee fee before the event was approved.

Artists had not been confirmed for this year’s event, although talks had been under way with Alejandro Sanz, Marc Anthony and Juan Luis Guerra.

Versaly Puts The World In Wireless Hands

Content from the Telemundo Network Group will be available to cell phone users in the United States and Canada through an agreement with Versaly Entertainment.

On July 21, the Seattle-based new-media company signed a deal with NBC Universal Television Distribution and sister company Telemundo that allows it to create, produce and distribute music, images and sounds culled from Telemundo programs.

Initially, Versaly plans to concentrate on ring tones and wallpaper, which will be made available within the next one to three months. Spirit, T-Mobile and Nextel will likely be the first carriers to offer the content, with AT&T and Cingular following. All have deals with Versaly.

Users will be able to download any piece of content for $2, of which Telemundo will receive a percentage. Versaly already has selected some 200 pieces of content that will be available to carriers following final approval from Telemundo, Versaly president/CEO Matthew Feldman says.

Versaly’s deal with Telemundo, Feldman says, is the company’s latest foray in the Latin marketplace.

“We actually had the very first Spanish voice-mail ringtone available in the United States, through Sprint,” Feldman says. “So we’ve been focused on the Latino market.”

Telemundo and Versaly are not alone in bringing Spanish TV content to wireless devices. Earlier this year AnMobile signed a multiyear agreement with Univision Mobile to develop and distribute content from the Univision network.

CACHAO SAYS ‘FINALLY!’: Latin jazz and Cuban music are not genres one usually associates with Univesion Records, which is best-known for regional Mexican, pop and urban music. But the label now boasts legendarry bass player Cachao as an exclusive artist.

The 85-year-old’s latest release, “Ahora Sí!”, came out June 15. It will be marketed and promoted to Latin audiences through traditional Latin channels, which include a campaign on the Univision network. At the same time, Univision is working the project to mainstream audiences of noncommercial and satellite radio and to the Internet.

The album was produced by actor Andy Garcia—Cachao’s long-time friend and supporter—through his CineSon Productions. The release includes a 60-minute DVD with footage of the recording process.

The same goes for the title track, “Ahora Sí!” (which roughly translates to “Finally”), which was written with Garcia in mind.

“Andy has four children, and the last one was a boy,” Cachao says. “It was definitely a big deal.

Even the title, he says, was conceived at the moment of recording. “Music is like medicine,” says Cachao, who is touring in Europe. “Not because it’s a science, but because you always discover something new.”

ERRATA: Apologies to paisanos Superlitio for misspelling the name of its hometown, Calli, Colombia.

Superlitio is nominated for a Latin Grammy Award in the best new artist category for “Trippeing Tropicana,” an out on indie Cielo Music.

The group is being worked in the United States to mainstream and alternative outlets.

CACHAO: WORKED WITH ANGY GARCIA

—FELDMAN FOCUSED ON LATINOS

—Latin Notas

—By Leila Cobo

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Polito Vega

New York DJ Celebrates 45 Big Ones At La Mega

BY ROBERT DOMINGUEZ

Polito Vega loves to talk. Talk fast and talk loud.

Even when he's sitting in an empty conference room at the midtown Manhattan headquarters of WSKQ (La Mega 97.9) New York, Vega's unmistakable voice sounds just like it does when he's in front of a mic during his weekend radio programs.

It's a constant booming chatter often punctuated by a deep hearty laugh. All that's missing are the commercial announcements.

Vega has reason to be happy these days. At 66, he's enjoying his 45th year as a New York radio icon and his 15th with La Mega.

While his career began before the advent of what would come to be known as salsa, Vega has long been considered a champion of the music.

By all accounts, he was the first Spanish-language DJ to spin records from the fledgling Fania label in the early 1960s. To this day, his "Salsa Con Polito" programs, particularly the Sunday edition from noon to 8 p.m., continue to be a nostalgic bridge to the music's glorious past.

On Aug. 7, the Fania All-Stars will perform in what is billed as an anniversary celebration of Vega at the Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J. "He's a true salsa guy who has really helped me and all the other Fania guys over..." (Continued on page 50)
Continued from page 1

the years.” says bandleader Larry Harlow, one of the original Fania All-Stars.

“If it weren’t for him, our music wouldn’t even be on the air now. He’s really the one who’s kept the old music alive all these years. He’s always been there for us.”

Speaking mostly in Spanish, Vega recently sat with Billboard to talk about his long career and his place in salsa history:

You are celebrating your 45th anniversary in radio this year. How did it all begin?

I started in 1959 officially, but I had my first radio show in 1960. All the radio I’ve done has been in New York. I’m Puerto Rican, I was born there, but I never spoke on the radio in Puerto Rico.

‘He’s really the one who’s kept the old music alive.’

—LARRY HARLOW, FANIA ALL-STARS

What was the show?

The program was called “Fiesta Time.” It was only half an hour long, on radio station WEVD-AM. From there I went to WWR, spent a short time there, and then came a big break for me, a good opportunity, when I went to WBNX.

I was doing a radio show from 12 a.m. to 6 a.m. in the morning, the midnight shift. I spent two years there and they put me on the daytime shift, and I spent many years working alongside [Spanish Broadcasting System founder] Raul Aralcon [Sr.], who is now the owner of this place. At that time he was the senior program director [at WBNX]. We became good friends, and I learned a lot from him.

Weren’t you also on TV for a while?

In 1967, [Telemedio] gave me a contract to do a show on TV, like “American Bandstand,” called “Club de la Juventud.” I was there for three years, and then I went back to radio. I’ve been constantly on the radio all that time, and I’ve received lots of awards, so many that I forget.

I was the first DJ to be a godfather of the Puerto Rican Day parade, the mayor [Edward Koch] named a day after me and gave me a ceremony at Gracie Mansion, and people [in the Latin industry] gave me a huge event at Roseland and coronated me “king of the radio.”

I always had good ratings, and that’s the name of the game. Without ratings, you’re nothing on the radio. And after all these years, I’m very lucky that I still have good ratings.

You were born in Ponce, Puerto Rico. What was your upbringing like?

We were kind of poor. Actually, we were middle-class, more or less. What I really wanted to do was to be a singer. That was my dream. In my town, I had a trio and sang on the radio, but never in my life did I think I would be an announcer on the radio. I never expected that to happen.

How did it happen?

It was by pure chance. A friend who worked on “Fiesta Time” was from my town, and I came to New York from Puerto Rico and went to say hello to him at the station. He greeted me on the radio and then asked me to come on-air and answer calls from listeners. The producer heard me, asked who I was and told me I sounded good.

I went back the next day. I was working for them for free, because they didn’t pay me [anything]. But I knew that working as a musician was going to be very hard to do, so my enthusiasm for being on the radio was so big I started practicing and practicing.

Practicing how?

In those days I bought the newspaper every day and read it aloud to myself, and I listened to other DJs on the radio. When one begins a career, you don’t have your own style. You have to emulate someone.

On one occasion I was listening to WABC, and they had a disc jockey named Bob Lewis—“Babula.” I borrowed a lot from his style, He would talk very fast, so I’d talk very fast. And I took some of his catchphrases and said them in Spanish. They were stupid things to say, but people listening to me didn’t realize it.

You have no choice when you’re just starting out. You’re young, and you don’t know better. One has to learn from a teacher, and he was my teacher without him even knowing it.

Did you ever meet him?

Oh, yeah, I was crazy to meet the guy. And one day I did, and he invited me to watch him work. And so I watched how he worked, listened to his style and I said, “Damn, someday I’ll like to be like him.” And finally, thank God, I am.

He gave me a lot of support. He told me to keep on going, that I was young and I would [be successful]. Because at that time, there were only two Latin stations, WHOM and WBNX. That’s it. And the music they played wasn’t salsa, either.

What type of music was it?

In those days, music was played by people like Felipe Rodriguez. Tito Puente was around, Tito Rodriguez was around, and Machito, but the Latin stations didn’t play their music. They played tritos, boleros. The only ones who played that music were DJs like “Ricardo” Sugar and Symphony Sid, who played it at night on the American stations. They bought the radio time. Salsa came later.

Were you around when salsa first became popular?

The first record ever played on the radio by a Fania artist, I played it. It was called “El Campeon,” by Johnny Pacheco.

[Continued on page 32]
45 Years in Radio
Congratulations
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Vega Tribute A Salsa Celebration

Fania All-Stars Concert Will Fete Veteran DJ And Genre He Trumpeted

BY KARL ROSS

When the Fania All-Stars gather Aug. 7 to perform in tribute to veteran DJ Polito Vega of WSQK (La Mega 97.9) New York, they will flash back to salsa's rich past as well as look ahead.

The concert at the Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J., will honor Vega and also introduce younger artists who have joined the Fania fraternity.

Promoter Ralph Mercado, the man who coined the Fania All-Stars name in the 1960s, says he is seeking to appeal to an audience that wasn't around for Fania's glory years.

"The idea is to do a recording that will bring some of the younger guys into the Fania tradition so they can give it some legs and keep it going," says Mercado, whose Cheetah Club served as the backdrop to Fania's first major event in 1971.

FROM CLUBS TO YANKEE STADIUM

Throughout the 1970s, the Fania All-Stars, the mainstays of Fania Records, propelled salsa music from clubs to Yankee Stadium.

"I consider the Fania All-Stars like a bottle of wine," says Johnny Pacheco, veteran band member and co-founder, with Jerry Masucci, of Fania Records, the dominant salsa label. "We get better with age. The secret is, there's no egos. We're very good friends."

Pacheco is happy to pay tribute to Vega. "He's been supportive to salsa since we started," he says. "He always had the best music on the air, and from the beginning we always used him as an MC. When

(Continued on page 28)
PRESENTS
POLITO VEGA’S
45TH ANNIVERSARY IN RADIO
IN CONCERT

THE KING OF RADIO
Johnny Pacheco • Cheo Feliciano • Bobby Valentin
Papo Lucca • Roberto Roena • Larry Harlow
Adalberto Santiago • Ismael Miranda
Junior González • Alfredo De La Fe • Yomo Toro
Leopoldo Pineda • Rey Viera • Reynaldo Jorge
Jimmy Bosch • Héctor Casanova • Jerry Medina
Ismael Quintana • Wiche Camacho • Nicky Marrero
Eddie Montalvo • Bombino Zarzueta
Pino Rodriguez • Jorge Torres
Ray Barretto • Richie Ray • Bobby Cruz
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Polito Vega: The First, The Best

"Polito has every legitimate claim to the title 'the king of Spanish radio' for his service and dedication to the Hispanic radio audience of New York City during the last 45 years. On a personal level, Polito has enriched the lives of all of us lucky enough to know him."

"I am honored to be his colleague, and I join the entire Spanish radio and music industry in recognizing his various achievements throughout these many years. Most of all, in addition to his enormous contribution to SBS, I consider myself fortunate to be able to call Polito my friend."

Raul Alarcon Jr.
Chairman/CEO, Spanish Broadcasting System

“Polito has always been there for us. He was the pioneer of Latin music in the United States. People take it for granted now, but when he started out, it was a very small business. He had a lot passion. Few people believed Latin music would grow the way it has. Gloria and I love him and are proud of him. He is someone who will never be forgotten for what he has done for us. We're happy to still be playing and happy he's still promoting.

"I hope the new generation will learn a lot about him. Polito deserves to be recognized and thanked for everything he has done... He's close to a lot of famous people who love him. And he's still good-looking too!"

Emilio Estefan
Producer/Manager/Songwriter
CEO, Estefan Television Productions
Chairman, Crescent Moon Records

"Polito is a dear friend who also has the best repertoire there is in radio. He sets the trend."

"I started Fania Records in 1964, and he was just starting on radio. We grew together and have been friends for many years. The first time I met him was in a barbershop. He was telling the barbers that he could be a disc jockey with his voice. And they told him, 'With that voice, you're going to starve to death. You better change it.' Every time we have a Fania concert, we always use him as an announcer.

"Polito has always been a frustrated singer. So we gave him a chance. He recorded a bolero album. Not long after, a guy came over to him and said, 'I bought your record,' and he said, 'Ah... you were the one! He wasn't a bad singer.

"But most of all, Polito has kept our music alive, even when salsa was under the weather because of la salsa monga [watered-down salsa]. He kept playing the music we do, which is the true salsa... not complicated but very danceable.

"I love Polito. He will be the first to play my new album. He always plays my music and he deserves to be first."

Johnny Pacheco
Fania All-Stars
Co-founder, Fania Records

Reporting by Debbie Galante Block.
To The King Of Radio!!!

Congratulations on your 45th Anniversary and the many years of continued success in Latin Radio.

Your Friends at Universal Music Latino
Sepulveda Just Doing His Job For Vega

BY KARL ROSS

The Spanish Broadcasting System may consider John Sepulveda its secret weapon.

Sepulveda, a longtime concert promoter, had been filling South American venues for 20 years when in 2001 SBS chairman Raul Alarcon Jr. recruited him to head the SBS Entertainment division and rev up the Latin radio chain's promotional machine.

Sepulveda's task: boost the profile of SBS properties in major markets including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Puerto Rico.

SBS "wanted to solidify the promotional value of events," Sepulveda says. "They wanted me to develop bigger events that will help promote the radio station."

As SBS-owned station WSKQ (La Mega 97.9) New York marks the 45th anniversary of its veteran DJ Polito Vega, Sepulveda worked with famed salsa promoter Ralph Merca-do to stage a tribute concert Aug. 7 featuring the Fania All-Stars at Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J.

Vega "is the company's biggest personality—and, I think I can say, the biggest personality] in the Latin radio industry," Sepulveda says. "He's the key to redemption, and they were more willing to give me the resources to develop the event."

SBS "wanted to put a bigger machine in place of the chain. They didn't want to have to look into having it work as a standalone event," Sepulveda says. "They were putting more money into it, and we were able to start promoting the radio station as the main event."

A key element of the event was the "smashing success" of the Selena tribute concert. "We had the first big concert here in New York," Sepulveda says. "Although it was a smaller concert, the event was very well received."

Sepulveda has produced events with top Latin stars including, from left, Juan Gabriel, Paulina Rubio and Luis Miguel.

SEMPULVEDA HAS PRODUCED EVENTS WITH TOP LATIN STARS INCLUDING, FROM LEFT, JUAN GABRIEL, PAULINA RUBIO AND LUIS MIGUEL

Thanks!!

For your outstanding professionalism, for your continuous dedication to the Hispanic radio industry in the USA, for your loyalty to the Latin Community.

We congratulate you and thank you for these 45 successful years! All the best!

Y SIGUE ANDANDO !!!

- Henry Cardenas & Jorge Naranjo
Por 45 Años

Andando...

Polito

LA MÚSICA LATINA HOY, TE DEBE ESTE TRIBUTO

Admiramos tu espíritu que ha transcendido todas las generaciones. Tu talento y tu calidad humana te hacen merecedor de este homenaje.

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Con mucho cariño,
Emilio y Gloria

estefan enterprises inc.
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We Salute Polito Vega for his outstanding contributions to the Latin Music Industry.

From your friends at SBS/Interrep

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'El Vacilon'

Continued from page 20

ic media. The Spanish-speaking population are avid consumers of radio. They tend to listen longer than other demographics, and when they find something they like, they remain loyal listeners."

Much of La Mega's success has certainly hinged on the popularity of its morning show—to the extent that an hour-long "Best of El Vacilon," consisting of highlights of that morning's program, is broadcast daily at 5 p.m. Another two-hour highlight program airs Saturday morning from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

But when Jimenez and company aren't up to their usual breakfast-time hijinks, the rest of the airtime is taken up by such DJ personalities as Raymond Reinoso (aka El Boy From Bocco), Janiero Matos, Alex Sensation and Rudy "Rudisimo," all spinning salsa, merengue and other types of Latin music.

On weekends, veteran DJ Polito Vega hosts day-long shows featuring a mix of new and classic salsa.

Keeping up with shifting tastes in Latin music has as much to do with the station's rise as the city's increasing Hispanic demographic, says Sean Ross, VP of music and programming at Edison Media Research.

"Given the diversity of New York, it makes sense that a Spanish-language station would become No. 1," Ross says. "It probably could have happened a lot sooner. But it wasn't until the early '90s—when Latin stations stopped being 'international ballad' stations and started playing the music that people wanted to hear—that Latin radio exploded."

Davis, who joined La Mega in 1987, credits the station with originating the salsa and merengue format common today on Spanish-language stations—and which consequently boosted the careers of such local Latin stars as Marc Anthony, Tito Nieves and La India, while offering early support to Jennifer Lopez.

(Continued on page 14)
Felícita a
POLITO VEGA
por su contribución
a la industria
y a nuestra familia
de artistas
en su 45°
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the Aragon Entertainment Center & Juan Fernandez
is proud to salute you on your
many years of success.

Spotlight

‘El Vacilon’
(Continued from page 30)

“We played Marc Anthony when no one else played his records,”
Davis says. “The format was in large part developed by Polito Vega and
the records played by the station. We helped create the salsa and
merengue format, because a lot of that music came from New York.”

VEGA FIRST HIRED
La Mega traces its roots to 1987, when SBS founder Raul Alarcon Sr. bought WEVD-FM and changed the call letters to WSQK.
The new station, known then as FM 98, was the first Spanish-lang-

age station on the FM dial in New York.
Alarcon’s first major hire was the popular Vega, who had
known Alarcon since the early 1960s when both worked for
AM station WBNX.
Headquartered in a nondescript brownstone on West 56th
Street in Manhattan, WSQK was soon the most listened to
Spanish station in the market. But what helped put it on the
mainstream map was the 1993 hiring of Jimenez, a little-
known radio personality from Orlando, Fla.
As host of “El Vacilon” (which translates roughly to “the morn-
ing party”), the Puerto Rico-born Jimenez soon attracted plenty of
attention by mixing a little raunchy humor into the mix—with a lot of
humor—most of it bawdy and stretching the limits of good taste in any language.
By 1998, when Jimenez was partnered with the late Junior Her-
nandez,” “El Vacilon” was consistently near the top of the ratings—
and consistently in the crosshairs of watchdog groups like the
National Hispanic Media Coalition for what the organization
deemed indecent, crass and vulgar content.
Ironically, Jimenez notes that the show’s recent ascent to No.
1 was the result of programming the sexually charged skits, song
parodies and other raunchy phone calls from listeners.
“By toning it down is what helped us reach No. 1, and we’ve
pretty much kept it at the same level,” Jimenez says.
With so much of La Mega’s fortunes riding on the success of
“El Vacilon,” the objective is for it to stay No. 1, Jimenez notes.
“We’re just going to keep going with the flow, feeling what
the vibe on the street is,” he says. “Going with the rhythm
of the city is what’s kept the show on the air for almost 11 years.”

Vega
(Continued from page 20)

Is that when salsa really started to grow?
Just a little. The music still wasn’t played on the radio. After that,
Masucci still didn’t have one hit, and the guy was frustrated. He
didn’t know what to do.
He recorded big orchestras with tropical Cuban rhythms—Larry
Harlow, Johnny Pacheco, Bobby Valentin, Ray Barretto—but none
of them stuck until Willie Colon came around with his first hit,
which was “Che Che Cole,” with Hector Lavoe. After “Che Che Cole,”
that’s when [salsa] started to stick.

How did you eventually get to WSQK?
I stayed for a lot of years at WBNX, until 1989. That’s when this
station began. But at that time it was called FM 98. Raul Alarcon Jr.
wanted to bring me here and we were talking, but WBNX didn’t
want to let me go. They offered me a new contract, but I wanted to
try FM radio, so I’ve been here ever since.

Many Latin music fans and musicians say that if it weren’t for
you, classic salsa would never be heard on the radio anymore. Do
you agree?
Well, I have a special show. I have my thing. But sometimes I play
new music too. I combine them, because I don’t want to seem too
old if I just stay with oldies after oldies after oldies.
I am an old man. My age is 66, but in my mind I’m 25, 26, and that’s what has helped me stay on the radio. Because all
the DJs who were around when I started either retired or they
died. I’m still here because if you think “old,” you’re screwed.
How long are you planning to keep this up?
I would like to have at least five more years and then get out.
I’ve been here so many years, so to do another five, it’s like,
what the hell?”
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Postal Service Delivers ‘Give Up’

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA

The Postal Service’s debut album, the ironically titled “Give Up,” is doing anything but.

In the July 17 issue, the Sub Pop Records album reached the No. 1 spot on the Billboard Top Electronic Albums chart.

This issue, the album spends its fourth week in the top spot—48 weeks after debuting on the chart at No. 11.

Earlier this year, “Give Up” peaked at No. 4 and No. 5 on the Top Heatseekers and Top Independent Albums charts, respectively.

With scant radio, club or video exposure and minimal touring (no more than 30 live shows), the Postal Service has, with much positive word-of-mouth, delivered Seattle-based independent Sub Pop’s second-best-selling album—after Nirvana’s “Nevermind.”

Scratching your head? You are not alone.

“It has surpassed our expectations,” says electronic producer Jimmy Tamborello who, along with Death Cab for Cutie’s Ben Gibbard, is the Postal Service.

Tamborello records under such aliases as Dntel and Figurine. He says he and Gibbard worked on the album as they would any other project. “We had no ambition to make a crossover album,” Tamborello says.

“We didn’t even have a plan for an overall sound; we just wanted to make a fun record,” he adds. “We just thought it would find a small audience for people that liked our other bands.”

In its first four months of release, “Give Up” sold between 2,000 and 3,000 units per week.

During Christmas week 2003, because of increased radio play of the single “Such Great Heights,” the album had its biggest sales week, with 9,000 copies sold. Since mid-December, the album has never sold less than 4,400 units in a week and has sold as many as 8,000.

Nearly 60% of the album’s sales have come from music chains, while 30% are from indie retailers. The remaining 10% comes from mass merchants and nontraditional sources.

According to Nielsen SoundScan, “Give Up” has sold 300,000 units. Nirvana’s “Bleach” has sold 1.6 million copies, while Hot Hot Heat’s “Make Up the Breakdown” is in third place among Sub Pop releases with 232,000 sold (Billboard, May 15).

“Sales of ‘Give Up’ have been consistently high,” says Andrew Kyger, pop/rock product manager/buyer for Virgin Entertainment Group North America.

The sales trend is consistent with the Postal Service’s performance, as there have been sold 25,000 and 22,000 copies, respectively.

This issue, “District” spends its 35th week on the Hot Dance Singles Sales chart, where it peaked at No. 5 in the Aug. 2, 2003, issue. The CD single includes such non-album tracks as a DJ Downfall remix of “District,” a John Tejada remix of “Such Great Heights” and a cover of the Flaming Lips’ “Suddenly Everything Has Changed.”

GREAT HEIGHTS ONLINE

At the iTunes Music Store, the Postal Service has consistently been in the top 100 albums and frequently hits the top 100 songs, notes Alex Luko, director of programming and label relations at iTunes.

The album and singles have topped iTunes’ electronic albums and singles charts, with the iTunes store selling “thousands” of “Such Great Heights” downloads.

While the album sells well, Luke says the iTunes store has sold “thousands” of “Such Great Heights” downloads.

This is music to the ears of Sub Pop A&R director Tony Kielw, especially since the label’s Web site (subpop.com) has offered free downloads of the track since day one. The song has been downloaded more than 700,000 times.

“This proves the promotional value of a free track,” Kielw says.

TIMING IS ALMOST EVERYTHING

For Sub Pop president and founder Jonathan Poneman, the Postal Service delivered the right album at the right time. “The album has that certain quality that lends itself to a fascination with retro culture—from one generation to another.”

Indeed, an older generation is responding to the Postal Service’s fondness for such synth-pop bands as the Human League and Pet Shop Boys. Conversely, today’s indie-centric youth, which vaguely remembers artists from the ’80s, finds the sounds fresh in a contemporary emo context.

“Ben has earned such good will with Death Cab for Cutie, and his voice is recognizable,” Poneman notes. “And Jimmy is very accomplished in the electronic world.”

Also, when “Give Up” debuted, a revisionist look at ’80s pop music was emerging. The ascendency of Tamborello and Gibbard’s separate careers—coinciding with the trendy macho guitar stylings of bands like the White Stripes and the Strokes—had many pining for less abrasive sounds.

In this way, “everything came together—it was like the perfect storm,” Poneman says.

Kyger acknowledges that “Give Up” has resonated with the dance audience, but he says that sales have come mainly from the indie crowd and the “ever-growing Death Cab fan base.”

MOVING UP ON MODERN ROCK RADIO

To be sure, “Such Great Heights” has received the bulk of its support from modern rock stations, including KROQ Los Angeles, XTRA San Diego and KNOD Los Angeles.

Two of the first stations to program the track were noncommercial KCRW Los Angeles and modern rock KITS San Francisco.

According to KCRW music director Nic Harcourt—who also hosts the influential daily show Morning Becomes Eclectic—the reaction from listeners was immediate.

“More than a year-and-a-half after we first played it, we still get calls for it,” Harcourt says. “Sub Pop music director Aaron Axelsen concurs. Adding, “I began playing ‘Such Great Heights’ on my Sunday-night new-music show Soundcheck’ in December of 2002. We added the record the following June.”

According to Axelsen, 900 spins later, the song remains huge at the station.

“The fusion of Ben’s indie rock and Jimmy’s [electronic dance] beats continues to strike a chord with people,” Harcourt says.

This is poised to continue as a third single, “We Will Become Silhouettes” (with remixes), is being readied for release later this year. Also being discussed is a Postal Service tour, which would likely occur before Gibbard and Tamborello begin work on the next Postal Service album.

Ultimately, Poneman says, “If I could bottle this magic, I would.”

New York dance/production duo Ming+FS recently performed at the outdoor music series Hudson River Rocks at Pier 54. In the course of their hour-long DJ set, Ming+FS (Aaron Albano and Fred Sargolini) mashed up a variety of beats and rhythms to create a very cool, seamless, Coldcut-like journey.

Toward the end of their set, the two, wielding a guitar and bars, stepped in front of the DJ booth and played along to a progressive club track. It was as if Ram Jam’s “Black Betty” had come to life.

This blending of musical styles is ubiquitous on the duo’s new album. “Back to One,” which streets Aug. 3 from Studio-distributed Feed Records.

Ming+FS, by way of its Manhattan Studios—a label and recording com-
plex—is in the process of licensing the album to international labels (see story, page 1).

Though musically diverse, “Back to One” does find Ming+FS focusing on what they originally set out to do when they merged musical forces in the mid-’90s.

“Our last two albums were more dance-oriented,” Ming says. “This time, we both wanted to get back to making progressive hip-hop, which is where we both come from.”

Although Ming says this presented himself and FS with “genre-specific challenges,” it proved to be liberating.

When Ming+FS made this album—which features the MC skills of Napoleon Solo—they were without a label. (The duo parted ways with On Records after three albums.)

“There was no label pressure to deliver a particular kind of record,” Ming notes. “But the two of us had a clear vision of what we wanted—and that was to get back to square one.”

These days, Ming+FS are on a U.S. tour, which runs through November.

Ming+FS = Seamless Mix Of Styles

Ming+FS’s Weavers of Many Hats

Coinciding with the trek is a Brooklyn Industries ad campaign that shows Ming+FS wearing the company’s fashions.

In their down time, the pair have produced music for movies (“Go”), TV ads (Sierra Mist, AT&T, Nissan) and TV shows (“Sex and the City,” “The Real World”).

The wearer of many hats—songwriters, producers, remixers—the duo has also worked with several other artists, including P. Diddy and Toby Lightman as well as newcomers Tina Sugandh (Hollywood Records) and Magneto from Norah Jones.

Hopefully, Ming+FS fans—both old and new—will connect the dots between all this activity.

“Judging from the e-mails we get, people are realizing what we’re doing,” Ming says. “It is starting to sink in—slowly. It comes down to repetition.”
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

RECORD COMPANIES: Island Def Jam Music Group names Paul Pontius executive VP of A&R for Island Records in Los Angeles. He was VP of A&R for IDJMG. IDJMG also elevates Noah Sheer to senior director of rhythm/crossover promotion in Los Angeles. He was regional manager of Internet marketing and promotion.

Virgin Records in New York names Bill Carroll VP of alternative promotion. He was VP of alternative promotion at Elektra Entertainment.

RADIO: Adult contemporary WNEW New York names Frankie Blue PD/music director. He was VP of operations/programming at rhythmic top 40 WKTU New York.

NewRadio Group in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, names Chuck DuCoby COO. He was GM of modern rock WXQX Chicago.

Classic rock/adult top 40 KJKK Dallas names Chris Long general sales manager. He was Kansas City, Mo., general sales manager at Infinity Broadcasting.

Mainstream top 40 WFLY Albany, N.Y., promotes John Frazz to PD. He was assistant PD/night-time host.

Mainstream top 40 WZEE Madison, Wis., appoints Jon Reilly PD. He was PD of adult top 40 WXXM Madison.

Regional Mexican KHOW Waco, Texas, promotes Jose Jaime Martinez to PD. He was programming assistant/weekend host.

MUSIC VIDEO: MTV Networks Latin America in Miami promotes Vicente Solis to VP of VH1 programming and music programming. He was senior director of music and talent.

VH1 Classic and VH1 Digital Television elevate Eric Sherman to senior VP/GM. He was VP/GM at VH1 Classic and VP at MTV VH1 Digital Television.

PRO AUDIO: Crown International in Elkhart, Ind., promotes Brian Divine to director of marketing, Sue Livings to director of customer service, and Amanda Divine to manager of sales administration. They were, respectively, customer service manager, manager of sales administration and international sales agent.

RELATED FIELDS: MGM Music in Santa Monica, Calif., appoints Julia Michels senior VP of music. She was VP of soundtracks at EMI Music.

In addition, MGM Music promotes Sally Papacharalambous to VP of music finance. Jane Holmes to creative director of music, and Chad Greer to creative director of music catalog. They were, respectively, director of music finance, creative manager of music and creative manager of music catalog.

Online marketing company MECA Communications in Los Angeles names Andrew Darrow senior VP of sales.

New York's AOL's RealNetworks hires senior director of sales to focus on media and entertainment. He was VP of sales at RealNetworks.

TELEMUNDO AUDIO: Spanish-language network Telemundo promotes Noah Sheer to VP of national sales. He was VP of sales at MeTV.

Telemundo Entertainment promotes Vicente Solis to VP of sales. He was director of sales.

TURNTABLE...

ROOM TO BREATHE
FOR LEANN

LeAnn Rimes and Oxygen joined forces for "LeAnn Rimes Custom Concert," which aired on the network. The June 22 concert at New York's Crobar featured a set list of fans' requests. Pictured, from left, are Oxygen senior VP of talent and music Julie Inssong, Goo Goo Dolls frontman Johnny Rzeznik, Rimes, singer Ronan Keating and Rimes' manager Scott Welch.

The Pride Of SESAC

SESAC honored Bryan-Michael Cox (co-writer of such hits as Usher's "Burn" and "Confessions Part II") with the Pride of SESAC Award commemorating his 250th consecutive week on the Billboard charts. Cox received the award June 24 during a Black Music Month reception in Atlanta, where he also received a proclamation from the city for his contributions to the local music scene. Pictured, from left, are SESAC director of writer/publisher relations James Leach, SESAC VP of writer/publisher relations Trevor Gale, Cox and SESAC senior VP of corporate relations and artist development Pat Rogers.

NOW, HEAR THIS...THE PONYS

Artists To Watch

Garage rock? Check. Punk? Check. Pop, hardcore, psychedelia? Triple check. Welcome to the musically feisty world of the Ponys. In three short years, the Chicago-based band has become a fixture on the club circuit, touring with the UConn's, the Fall, and the Fiery Furnaces, among others. Along the way, it released three 7-inch singles (including "Wicked City") on Southern indie labels Big Neck and Contaminated. Earlier this year, Los Angeles-based In the Red Records, distributed by Revolver, issued the group's debut album, "Laced With Romance." Singer/guitarist Jered Gummere, singer/multi-instrumentalist Ian Adams, bassist/singer Melissa Elias and drummer Nathan Jerde effortlessly channel such seminal records as Velvet Underground, Richard Hell and Joy Division. On a track like "Fall Inn," the members seamlessly bridge the gap between the Shangri-Las and the Byrds. Forthcoming single "Looking Out A Mirror" is equal parts English Beat and the Knack, a video lensed by Throwaway Productions will soon be serviced to TV. The Ponys, who are currently in the midst of their first headlining tour, recently participated in the fourth annual Siren Music Festival at Coney Island in Brooklyn, N.Y. They shared the main stage with TV on the Radio, Blonde Redhead, Death Cab for Cutie and other acts.

MICHAEL PAOLETTA

HOOBASTANK ON THE GRASS

Hoobastank played a special outdoor performance June 14 on NBC's "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" at the show's Burbank, Calif., studios. The band played current hit "The Reason," the title track of its latest Island Records album. Pictured, from left, are guitarist Dan Estrin, lead singer Doug Robb and bassist Markku Lappalainen. (Photo: Paul Drinkwater/NBC)

GLORIA SALUTES THE TROOPS

Gloria Estefan, right, poses with an officer from the U.S. Hampton Submarine stationed at the U.S. naval base in Norfolk, Va. Estefan was in Norfolk to tape a TV tribute special for U.S. troops and their families. Telemedio will air the special on a date to be announced.

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Hip Hop Wire
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Confab Grows On The Beach

New Sponsors Sign On To Sponsor Panels; Artist Performances Added To Business Sessions

BY GAIL MITCHELL

We've come a long way, baby. That slogan from a once-popular advertising campaign aptly describes the steady growth the Billboard/American Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference has achieved.

This year's confab runs Aug. 4-6 at the Eden Roc Resort in Miami Beach. Caping the festivities will be the Billboard/AURN R&B/Hip-Hop Awards at the 1501 Barton G (formerly Billboardlive), hosted by Free of BET's "106 & Park" and syndicated radio personality Russ Parr.

CMX Music will sponsor a cocktail party Aug. 4 with a special guest performance.

Appearances by Amara La Negra, Bone Thugs, "American Idol" finalist Tamyra Gray, Oowes, Marianela Pereyra, Pitbull and Lil' Scrappy are slated. Among the show's highlights will be the presentation of two Founder's Awards to Isaac Hayes (R&B) and KRS-One (hip-hop).

25 MILLION IN THE HOUSE

For the third consecutive year, Billboard has teamed with presenting sponsor AURN. The radio network will provide national coverage of the conference and awards to 475-plus stations.

More than 25 million listeners will experience the confab's events through commentary and vignettes broadcast live on AURN's entertainment shows: "USA Music Magazine" with host John Monds, "Hip Hop Wire" with Anji Corley, "Hip Hop Throw Down" with Skip Cheatham and "Hollywood Live" with Tanya Hart.

Veteran personality Hart also will conduct red carpet interviews prior to the awards show.

Among the new sponsors this year are Diamond District, artistnow.com, Alliance WW Communications, Iced Records, SOBE Records, Walking News and SESAC.

As in past years, the conference will offer informative panels covering vital issues affecting all segments of the industry. This year's discussion lineup will touch on cutting-edge topics, from orchestrating survival in a steadily consolidating industry to understanding the ramifications of the digital revolution.

Sharing their insight on these subjects will be a cross-section of experts. For example, discussing survival techniques will be such executives as Dangerous Entertainment Group co-chairman Helen Little; Leo Gatelywood III, senior director of finance and operations for BMG Strategic Partnerships; Bungalow/Universal senior VP of A&R John Ferguson; and Skyblaze Recordings head Namane Mohlabane.

Navigating today's marketing matrix will be the topic tackled by each panelist as Phyllana Williams, VP of urban marketing for Zomba Label Group; Mastermind Group president, Erin Patton; and Max Pierre, account manager at Opium Miami.

RADIO ACTIVE

Contemporary radio programming will be addressed by an AURN-presented panel, whose participants include the country's leading PDs and consultants, among them Pacific Hollywood of WEDR Miami and Chuck Atkins of KMJM St. Louis.

Exploring gospel's increasing mainstream presence will be such noted practitioners as radio/cable personality Mr. Bobby Jones, EMI Gospel VP/GM Larry Blackwell, Sony Music Gospel executive VP/GM Tara Griggs-Magee and Verity senior VP/GM Jazzy Jordan.

The ever-expanding union between music and visual media will be discussed by Hollywood Reporter music editor Tamara Conniff, UrbanWorks Entertainment president Jeff Olman, "106 & Park" producer Lee Harris and Creative License president/CEO Kevin McKiernan.

The digital revolution will be dissected by such executives as Yahoo head of artist and label relations Jay Frank, Consect CEO Mark Friesen and Sirius Satellite Radio director of R&B programming B.J. Stone.

One of the most entertaining sessions each year is the Super Producers Panel, hosted this year by ASCAP. Due to their take on music trends and creative sounds are Cool & Dre, Souldiggaz and the Platinum Bros.

The panels, which are each presented by a participating sponsor, will open with an artist performance. These sponsor/performer alliances include EMI Gospel (Smokie Norful, Kierra "Kiki" Sheard), AOL Records (Aaron Hall), Azera Records (Crea), Dynasty Records (Mishon), Jindasiege Records (Neshay, Chris Matthew, Play/Featuring Playboy Click, Lucky & Tamika) and L.M. Records (BDBB). Hasstyle of Hoodlum Entertainment will kick off the Superstar Q&A session featuring top music executive Mathew Knowles.

Recognizing that new artists are the lifeblood of the industry, Billboard will stage its annual New Artist Discovery Showcase. The afternoon event will feature Ceojes, Gia, DDQ, Eel Will, Hannibal, K era and Supremes aka Mr. Perfect and Ver-C-Tile.

Elsewhere on the music front, AURN will host a salute to the Billboard/AURN R&B/Hip-Hop Awards finalists, led this year by R. Kelly and Jay-Z. Singer Temmora will also perform. A poolside party sponsored by Bogard Music will follow.

Networking remains a principal ingredient in the conference mix. PR is set to host its second annual 6 Degrees Urban Networking party at the Mansion in Miami Beach.
American Awards was dangers-hop.

Boogie Down was influential quickly one likewise.

One-another of original soul man, who made a mark in the music scene with power ballads and soulful vocals.

KRS-One, born as Ismael BAR and later known as Ismael Joiner, was a key figure in the early hip-hop scene.

As a member of the duo Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five, KRS-One gained recognition for his rhymes and flows that often addressed social issues.

His solo career took off with albums like "Sex, Drugs & Success" and "The Message," which tackled topics such as police brutality and the importance of education.

KRS-One's influence extended beyond music, as he became involved in various social and educational initiatives. He established the Get Real Foundation, a nonprofit organization that uses music and arts to empower youth, and founded the Temple of Hip-Hop, which promotes education and social change through hip-hop culture.

His contributions to the hip-hop community have been significant, with his work being recognized through various awards and honors, including the BMI's President's Award.

KRS-One's legacy continues to inspire and influence new generations of hip-hop artists and fans.
Kelly, Jay-Z Lead Finalists

BY JOHN LANNERT

Two household names dominate the list of finalists for this year’s Billboard/American Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Awards: R. Kelly, a finalist in eight categories, and Jay-Z, who is up for an award in seven categories.

Other well-known stars are not too far behind, however. Tied as finalists in five categories are Beyoncé, Alicia Keys, OutKast, and Lil Jon. Ludacris and Chingy are finalists in four categories.

Atlanta and New York natives rule the finalists list, with seven finalists hailing from Atlanta and five coming from New York.

At this year’s awards ceremony, the distinction between the artist, songwriter and producer categories is blurred as each of the finalists in the songwriter and producer categories are also up for awards in various artist categories. Kelly and Kanye West are finalists in songwriter and producer categories.

The finalists were determined by their performances on the Billboard radio and retail charts from the May 31, 2003, issue up to the May 22, 2004, issue. Here are capsule profiles of the artists, songwriter and producer finalists. The number of categories in which each artist is shown in parentheses.

R. KELLY (eight)—Embrouiled in several legal cases and plagued by bootlegs of his work, 35-year-old Robert Kelly seemed unfazed as his hits kept coming in waves. They included “Step in the Name of Love,” a sensuously bouncing stomp that reached the apex of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart in its 44th week.

“Step in the Name of Love,” which lasted a mammoth 70 weeks on the chart, is from the Jive/Zomba CD “Chocolate Factory,” a chart-topping title that logged 21 straight weeks in the top 10, while yielding another No. 1 single, “Ignition.” Chicago’s nonpareil songwriter-producer, who for nearly 10 years has been a vital presence on the R&B/hip-hop chart, is also nominated in the songwriter and producer of the year categories.

Kelly charted 29 songs as a songwriter, 28 as a producer.

JAY-Z (seven)—As he mulled over retirement and marriage to Beyoncé at the ripe old age of 34, Brooklyn, N.Y.’s high-flying hip-hop entrepreneur continued to be a force on the radio and retail charts. “The Black Album,” Jay-Z’s ostensible final CD on his famed Roc-a-Fella imprint, bowed atop the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart, where it stayed for three straight weeks.

“The Black Album” remained in the top 10 for 19 consecutive weeks, yielding two top 10 hits on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart: “Dirt Off My Shoulder,” which reached No. 3, and “Change Clothes,” which peaked at No. 6.

In August 2003, Jay-Z was so hot at radio, he finished a three-week run at No. 1 with Beyoncé (appearing on her song “Crazy in Love”) by succeeding himself on the chart throne the next week as a featured performer on Pharrell Williams’ smash “Frontin.” Jay-Z and Williams tallied six straight weeks at No. 1 before getting knocked out by none other than Beyoncé, who reached the top of the chart with “Baby Boy,” her duet with Sean Paul. A co-writer of “Frontin” and “Crazy in Love,” along with credits for six of his own hits, Jay-Z is up for songwriter of the year under his birth name—Shawn Carter.

BEYONCÉ (five)—Recording CDs might be taking a back seat these days to her fashion, film and romantic aspirations, but Houston’s most famous chanteuse, who turns 25 Sept. 4, is still rolling at R&B radio and retail. During the past year, Beyoncé reached the pinnacle of the charts with “Crazy in Love,” as well as scoring three top five hits: “Me, Myself & I,” “Naughty Girl” and “Baby Boy.” Her smash CD on Columbia/Sony Music, “Dangerously in Love,” was a chart-topper remaining in the top 10 of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart for 14 consecutive weeks.

ALICIA KEYS (five)—Powered by the monster singles “You Don’t Know My Name” and “If I Ain’t Got You,” Alicia Keys’ latest J/RMG disc, “The Diary of Alicia Keys,” has been a top 10 staple nearly nine months after its release. “Diary,” “Keys” second hip-hop and soul album, reigned over the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart for six straight weeks, while its leadoff single, “You Don’t Know My Name,” held the No. 1 spot for nine weeks. It also was the first R&B song to score 90 million audience impressions. And in this era when second singles rarely scale a chart, “If I Ain’t Got You” scored a four-week run at No. 1 for this 24-year-old New York native, who is also a budding author and actress.

(Continued on page R-8)
### Performance

#### R&B/hip-hop Artists

**R&B/hip-hop Single**
- "Step in the Name of Love" by R. Kelly
- "Get Low" by Lil Jon & The East Side Boyz feat. Ying Yang Twins
- "The Way You Move" by Outkast featuring Sleepy Brown
- "Damm!" by Youngbloodz feat. Lil Jon

**R&B/hip-hop Album**
- "Dangerously in Love" by Beyonce
- "The Black Album" by Jay-Z
- "The Diary of Alicia Keys" by Alicia Keys
- "Speakerboxxx/ The Love Below" by Outkast

**R&B/hip-hop Singles Artist**
- Beyonce
- Jay-Z
- R. Kelly
- Ludacris

### Awards

#### Top R&B/hip-hop Artist
- **Male**
  - Beyonce (Columbia/Sony Music)
  - Jay-Z (Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG)
  - R. Kelly (Jive/Zomba)
  - Alicia Keys (J/RMG)

#### Top R&B/hip-hop Artist - Female
- Ashanti (The Inc./Def Jam/IDJMG)
- Beyonce (Columbia/Sony Music)
- Alicia Keys (J/RMG)
- Monica (J/RMG)

#### Top R&B/hip-hop Artist - Duo or Group
- G-Unit (G-Unit/Interscope)
- Jagged Edge (Columbia/Sony Music)
- Lil Jon & The East Side Boyz (BM/TVT)
- Outkast (LaFace/Zomba)

#### Top R&B/hip-hop Artist - New
- Beyonce (Columbia/Sony Music)
- Chingy (Disturbing Tha Peace/Capitol)
- Ruben Studdard (Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG)
- Kanye West (Def Jam/IDJMG)
## Hosted by

**FREE**
**Russ Parr**
- BET'S "106 & PARK"

**Billboard Founder's Awards**

- **KRS-One**
- **Isaac Hayes**
- **Hip-Hop Founder's Award**
- **R&B Founder's Award**

## Appearances by

- **Lil' Scrappy**
- **Bran Mcknight**
- **Oowee**
- **Pitbull**

### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Single - Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step It The Name Of Love</td>
<td>R. Kelly</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Don't Even Know My Name</td>
<td>Alicia Keys</td>
<td>J/PRMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Low</td>
<td>Lil Jon &amp; The East Side Boyz, Feat. Ying Yang Twins</td>
<td>BME/TVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damn!</td>
<td>YoungbloodZ Feat. Lil Jon</td>
<td>So So Def/Zomba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Single - Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superstar/Flying Without Wings</td>
<td>R. Kelly</td>
<td>J/PRMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker Outta Heaven</td>
<td>Jagged Edge</td>
<td>Columbia/SUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let's Get Down</td>
<td>Bow Wow Feat. Baby</td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F**k It (I Don't Want You Back)</td>
<td>Eamon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Rap Album

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackpot</td>
<td>Chingy</td>
<td>Disturbing Tha Peace/Capitol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beg For Mercy</td>
<td>GUnit</td>
<td>G-Unit/Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Album</td>
<td>Jay-Z</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakerboxxx/The Love Below</td>
<td>Outkast</td>
<td>LaFace/Zomba</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Top Rap Track of the Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right Thurr</td>
<td>Chingy</td>
<td>Disturbing Tha Peace/Capitol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Low</td>
<td>Lil Jon &amp; The East Side Boyz, Feat. Ying Yang Twins</td>
<td>BME/TVT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand Jp</td>
<td>Ludacris Feat. Shawnna</td>
<td>Disturbing Tha Peace/Def Jam South/DMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damn!</td>
<td>YoungbloodZ Feat. Lil Jon</td>
<td>So So Def/Zomba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### R&B/Hip-Hop Songwriter of the Year
- Christopher "Ludacris" Bridges
- Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter
- Robert Kelly
- Kanye West

### R&B/Hip-Hop Producer of the Year
- Robert Kelly
- The Neptunes
- Jonathan "Lil Jon" Smith
- Kanye West

### R&B/Hip-Hop Major Label of the Year
- Interscope
- Island Def Jam Music Group
- Sony Urban Music
- Universal Motown Records Group

### R&B/Hip-Hop Independent Label of the Year
- D.P.G.
- Koch
- TVT
- VP

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*Billboard's Founder's Awards recognize an artist for their achievements and influence in the R&B and Hip-Hop genres, as chosen by Billboard's editors.
Finalists

Continued from page R-5

LIL' JON & THE EAST SIDE BOYZ (five)—Atlanta-based crunk overlords Lil' Jon and his two East Side Boyz sidekicks, Lil' Bo and Big Sam, took the raucous Dirty South vibe to new chart heights in 2003 with the mammoth hit "Get Low." It got as high as No. 2 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart and No. 1 on the Hot Rap Tracks chart.

"Get Low" eventually logged 56 weeks on the chart. It featured the Ying Yang Twins (Raine and D-Roc), who returned the favor by putting Lil' Jon and crew on their top 10 hit "Salt Shaker."

As if he were not ubiquitous enough, Lil' Jon was a featured performer on Youngbloodz's finalist qualifier "Damn!" and on Usher's mega-hit "Yeah!" In the Dec. 13, 2003, issue of Billboard, the BME/TVT act notched three discs on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. Lil' Jon, who co-produced "Yeah!" and "Damn!," is also a finalist in the producer category as Jonathan Smith.

OUTKAST (five)—As members of OutKast, André 3000 (André Benjamin) and Big Boi (Antwan Patton) are arguably the most popular cultural influence to come out of Atlanta since Coca-Cola. They proved it with the instant global anthems "Hey Ya!" and "The Way You Move," the latter of which featured OutKast's smooth-singing cohort Sleepy Brown.

Both songs, which simultaneously occupied the top 10 of the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart, were taken from the superstar pair's blockbuster "Speakerboxxx/ The Love Below." Despite being a double-CD, the chart-topping set remained in the top 10 of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart for six straight months. Nearly one year after its release, the multimillion seller on La Face/Zomba was still entrenched in the top 20 of the chart.

LUDACRIS (four)—Born Christopher Bridges in Atlanta, flamboyant 24-year-old MC/composer Ludacris returned to the zenith of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart in 2003 with his Disturbing Tha Peace/Def Jam South set "Chicken 'N Beer."

At radio, Bill O'Reilly's favorite hip-hop target stood eight consecutive weeks atop the Hot Rap Tracks chart with his smash duet with sultry protégé Shawna, "Stand Up." In the Nov. 15, 2003, issue of Billboard, Ludacris found himself at No. 1 and No. 2 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart, as "Stand Up" held the No. 1 spot while Chingy's "Holidae In," which sported Ludacris as a featured performer, moved to No. 2.

A co-writer of "Stand Up," "Holidae In" and Usher's massive chart-topper "Yeah!," Ludacris also is a finalist for songwriter of the year under his birth name, Christopher Briggs.

KANYE WEST (three)—Already known as a beat-savvy hitmaking producer for the likes of fellow finalists Alicia Keys ("You Don't Know My Name") and Ludacris ("Stand Up"), the 27-year-old songwriter/producer came of age as a recording star when his Rock-a-Fella/Def Jam debut, "The College Dropout," premiered at No. 1 on the Top R&B/ Hip-Hop Albums chart.

Five months later, West's album was still camped out in the top 10 of the chart, thanks to top 10 singles "All Falls Down," featuring Syleena Johnson; "Jesus Walks;" and "Through the Wire," on which he rhymed through a wired jaw after a head-on auto accident in Los Angeles.

Like fellow Chicagoan native R. (Continued on page R-9)
Finalists
Continued from page R-8

Kelly, West is a finalist in the songwriter and producer categories. West produced and even chipped in a featured performance on "Slow Jamz," a chart-topping hit for Twista that also featured Jamie Foxx.

YOUNGBLOODZ FEATURING LIL JON (three)—Youngbloodz members J-Bo and Sean Paul brought their own brand of crank to the hip-hop scene in 2003 with "Damn!" The slamming hit featuring Lil Jon ended the second trip to No. 1 on the Hot Rap Tracks chart by Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz and their runaway smash "Get Low."

"Damn!" reached No. 2 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart, and it also showed staying power by spending 46 weeks on the chart. "Drankin' Patnaaz," the Atlanta pair's sophomore disc for So So De/Zomba, hit No. 1 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart.

CHINGY (two)—"Jackpot" was a most appropriate title for the debut disc by this 24-year-old rap star from St. Louis, as his Disturbing Tha Peace/Capitol CD debuted at No. 2 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart in August 2003.

Propelled by smash singles "Right Thurr," which topped the Hot Rap Tracks chart for four straight weeks, "One Call Away," a three-week chart-topper; and the No. 2 hit "Holiday In," "Jackpot" spent 20 straight weeks in the top 10 of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart, where it still was residing nearly one year after release. Chingy, whose birth name is Howard Bailey Jr., is the only artist listed as a finalist in the hot rap track of the year and top rap album categories.

G-UNIT (two)—50 Cent, the top winner at last year's awards show, is not up for any individual Billboard award this year. But the 27-year-old Queens, N.Y.-bred superstar (whose given name is Curtis Jackson) is threatening to snag more statuettes as the frontman of G-Unit.

In 2003, 50 Cent and the G-Unit crew of Lloyd Banks and Young Buck bowed at No. 2 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart with their G-Unit/Interscope debut, "Begin For Mercy." G-Unit's maiden effort tallied three straight months in the top 10 of the chart while generating four radio hits, including leadoff single "Stunt 101."

ASHANTI (two)—Long Island, N.Y.-born Ashanti dislodged fellow finalist Beyoncé from the high seat of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart last year with her sophomore set, "Chapter II," which stayed perched astride the chart for one more week. Ashanti's third full-length Murder Inc./Def Jam CD yielded "Rain On Me," which peaked at No. 2 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart, and "Rock Wit You (Awww Baby)," which reached No. 4 on the chart. The 24-year-old singer/actress took turns as a featured artist with Tamaia on Fabolous' top 10 smash "Into You."

JAGGED EDGE (two)—This consistent hit-making vocal quartet from Atlanta scored again last year with its Columbia/Sum single "Walked Outta Heaven," a radio smash that proved to be a stronger retail performer. It spent 11 consecutive weeks atop the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales chart and 34 weeks on the list altogether. "Hard," Jagged Edge's fourth CD, reached the pinnacle of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart in its second week of release. "Hard" would go on to tally 32 weeks on the chart.

RUBEN STUDDARD (two)—The pride of Birmingham, Ala., won the American Idol talent show last year, and the 28-year-old crooner has also been making his mark on the Billboard R&B charts.

Studdard, dubbed by guest "Idol" judge Gladys Knight as the "Velvet Teddy Bear," rose to the apex of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart with his J/RMG debut, "Souful." The album yielded a pair of No. 2 radio hits, "Superstar/Flying With Out Wings" and "Sorry 2004." "Superstar/Flying Without Wings"

(Continued on page R-11)
R&B/Hip-Hop

Chart Leaders

The chart recaps for the Billboard/Atwater Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference & Awards program cover the charts published in the Dec. 6, 2003 issue (the beginning of the 2004 chart year) through the July 10, 2004 issue.

Recaps for Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums are based on sales information that Nielsen SoundScan compiles. Recaps for Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and Airplay monitored by Nielsen SoundScan compiles sales information and gross radio airplay information that Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems monitors, while recaps for Hot Rap Tracks are compiled using radio airplay information from Nielsen BDS.

Titles receive credit for sales and/or airplay accumulated during each week they appear on the pertinent chart.

Rock charts manager Anthony Colombo compiled this recap with assistance from R&B/Hip-Hop charts manager Minal Patel.

Top R&B/Hip-Hop Album Artists

1. Usher (1) LaFace/Zomba
2. Alicia Keys (2) J/REMG
5. Outkast (1) LaFace/Zomba

Top R&B/Hip-Hop Album Imprints

1. LaFace/Zomba (8)
2. Jive (15)
3. Arista (7)
4. Columbia (9)
5. Jive (12)

Top R&B/Hip-Hop Album Labels

1. Island Def Jam Music Group (24)
2. Universal Motown Records Group (15)
3. Zomba (23)
4. Interscope (20)
5. RCA Music Group (10)

Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks Artists

1. Usher (4) LaFace/Zomba
2. Alicia Keys (3) J/REMG
3. R. Kelly (5) Jive/Zomba
5. JAY-Z (2) Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/DJ/DMG
6. The Black Eyed Peas (2) Interscope
7. Lil Wayne (2) Cash Money/UMMG
8. Chris Brown (2) Def Jam/DJ/DMG
9. T-Pain (1) Atlantic
10. Chamillionaire (1) Interscope

Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks Imprints

1. LaFace/Zomba (18)
2. Columbia (17)
3. Jive (13)
4. Arista (12)
5. Lafece (9)

Hot Rap Imprints

1. Disturbing tha Peace (5)
2. Atlantic (3)
3. Zomba (25)
4. Sony Urban Music (27)
5. Universal Motown Records (27)

Hot Rap Labels

1. Island Def Jam Music Group (13)
2. Atlantic (7)
3. Zomba (6)
4. Interscope (9)
5. Capitol (7)

Note: Here is the weekly Hot Rap Tracks chart reflecting airplay for the week ending August 7, 2004.

Hot Rap Tracks

1. SLOW JAMZ - Twista Featuring Kanye West & Jamie Foxx
2. TIPSY - J-Kwon - So So Def/Zomba
5. SPLASH WATERFALLS - Jadakiss - Def Jam South/UMMG

Airplay monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems

Billboard HOT RAP TRACKS

Artist

1. SLOW MOTION
2. LEANDER BACK
3. JESUS WALKS
4. SUNSHINE
5. ON FIRE
6. I LIKE THAT
7. WHY
8. SO SEXY
9. MY PLACE
10. FREEK-A-LEEK
11. WHATS HAPPENING
12. OVERNIGHT CELEBRITY
13. HEADSPRUNG
14. LET ME IN
15. SELPH
16. LETS GET AWAY
17. WELCOME BACK
18. HOW COME
19. NO PROBLEM
20. CULO
21. GOT IT TWISTED
22. ALL FALLS DOWN
23. YOU DONT WANT DRAMA
24. FREAKS

Artist

www.billboard.com • www.billboard.biz

R&B/Hip-Hop
Funds In The Sun

BY JOHN LANNERT

It may be a narrow strip of land that runs just 88 blocks north to south and six blocks east to west, but Miami Beach has long been touted as "the sun and fun capital of the world."

And the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority, or VCA as it is better-known, works to maintain the city's enviable status quo as a tourist hot spot.

To that end, the VCA board, led by chairperson Elise Sterling Howard, promotes Miami Beach through an assortment of events and festivals—many of which are music-related—to attract more tourists to the city.

Among the prestigious annual happenings are JVC Jazz Festival Miami Beach, Brazilian Film Festival, Art Deco Weekend, MTV Networks Latin America Music Awards and the Billboard/ American Urban Radio Networks R&B/ Hip-Hop Conference & Awards.

The VCA receives funding from 5% of the annual resort tax collections of Miami Beach. So the 29-year-old organization aims to boost visitor traffic to increase, in turn, its own financial ability to promote the city.

Apart from increasing visitor count figures that boost the nearly $1 million annual budget, Howard says the VCA also aims to bolster the image of Miami Beach through events that garner plenty of media coverage.

"Viewership impact and readership impact is also important," Howard says, "because we calibrate that in terms of future visitors."

The VCA bolsters the image of Miami Beach through events that gain media coverage.

Operating under the slogan "Enhancing and Enriching Tourism Partnerships," the VCA teams with brand-name organizations or outfits that the VCA board believes offer such potential. (The VCA provides financial support to the Billboard/AURN R&B/ Hip-Hop Awards show.)

An individual or group seeking VCA support completes an application with the organization. The VCA's administration determines eligibility, and its board sets funding.

Apart from the Billboard/AURN R&B/ Hip-Hop Awards, set to take place Aug. 6, there are two other entertainment events slated to take place in the weeks ahead.

The first is Hot Wheels Cool Blues, a five-day festival held Aug. 11–15 throughout Miami Beach. The event features a Hot Wheels Expo, auto shows, a live blues fest and a drive-in movie festival.

The second is the International Ballet Festival of Miami, scheduled for Aug. 27–Sept. 12 at the Jackie Gleason Theatre of the Performing Arts. The festival boasts more than 90 dancers representing dance companies from 13 countries in Europe, North America and South America.

Howard confirms that a "major gay and lesbian event" will be held in July 2005.

Howard adds that the midsummer weather during these events should not be a problem. "I was in Philadelphia recently," she quips, "and it was more humid than here, and it was raining."

Finalists

Continued from page R-9

entered the Hot R&B/Singles Sales chart at No. 1 and remained there for eight consecutive weeks.

BOW WOW FEATURING BABY (one)—Shad Gregory Moss was a budding rapper at age 6 in his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, when Snoop Dogg gave him the name Lil Bow Wow. Now 17, the young artist has been rhymin' ever since, even though he has become a multifaceted entrepreneur involved in film, TV and his own clothing line. He even squeezed in recording last year's Columbia/SUM CD "Unleashed." It contained "Let's Get Down," a top 20 radio hit featuring Cash Money honcho Birdman that peaked at No. 2 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales chart.

"Let's Get Down" spent an impressive 12 straight weeks in the top five of that chart.

EAMON (one)—Though it broke slowly out of the singles retail gate in the fall of 2003, by the end of the year, Eamon's "I Don't Want You Back)" was sitting in the high chair on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles Sales chart. The Jive/Zomba artist held his ground for nine consecutive weeks. A raw, adolescent confessional by the 20-year-old Staten Island, N.Y., native, "I Don't Want You Back)" eventually spent 28 weeks on the chart.

MONICA (one)—After a five-year break, 23-year-old Monica returned to the upper echelon of the Top R&B/Hip-Hop chart in 2003 with her J Records hit "After the Storm," which debuted at No. 2. One year after its release, "After the Storm" was still riding high in the upper half of the chart, thanks to the Atlanta native's third hit single from the CD, "U Should Have Known Better." Last year, the CD's leadoff single, "So Gone," logged straight five weeks atop the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Tracks & Singles chart.

THE NEPTUNES (one)—Perhaps the most successful hip-hop producers in the past five years, Virginia Beach, Va., duo Pharrell Williams and Chad Hugo not only peaked atop the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart as a recording act, Williams made it to the summit of the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles and Tracks chart as a solo artist. Still, the Neptunes remained active behind the board, helming hits by Kelis ("Milkshake") and Joy-Z ("Change Clothes").
Featuring Oowee

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www.bogardmusic.com
Oak Ridge Boys Unplug For New ‘Journey’

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Even after more than three decades together, the Oak Ridge Boys still revel in trying something new. This is evidenced by “The Journey,” the group’s first acoustic album, which was released July 27 on Spring Hill Music Group.

“When we sing the hits, that shows our history, but new music shows growth,” says the group’s Duane Allen, who produced the project with Michael Sykes.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF ACOUSTIC

“The Journey” is the Oak’s fourth release on Spring Hill, a Nashville-based label known for Southern gospel and contemporary Christian music. “The Journey” is also something different for Spring Hill—it is the imprint’s first exclusively country release.

The Oak’s first Spring Hill release was “From the Heart,” a return to their Southern gospel roots. That was followed by “An Inconvenient Christmas” and then 2003’s “Colors,” a patriotic album that earned a Grammy Award nomination.

“We have always wanted to do an acoustic album,” says Allen, who thinks this one will defy expectations. “When people think of an acoustic album they think: ‘They are going to sit on stools and get all laid-back.’ This is the opposite of that.

The material for “The Journey” was culled from Nashville’s top writers. The first single, “Bad Case of Missing You,” was penned by Jeffrey Steele, Al Anderson, and Bob DiPiero.

Lyrical, the album covers a lot of emotional territory. “Saving Grace” is about an elderly couple’s struggle with Alzheimer’s disease. “My Girl Friday” is about a divorced father. “Someplace Green” conveys a longing for small-town life. Allen and fellow Oak William Lee Golden, Richard Sterban and Joe Bonsall turn singing leads on different tracks.

Unlike the Oak’s previous Spring Hill releases, which primarily targeted the Christian retail market, “The Journey” is being worked to the general market as a country release distributed by Word Distribution and WEA.

“We’re going after country radio more aggressively than with any of our previous Oak releases,” Spring Hill director of marketing David Ecrement says. “We’re initially focusing on secondary radio markets, establishing a base there, and with that momentum [plan to] move up.”

During the Country Music Association’s CMA Music Festival in June, the label distributed 3,500 “Journey”-branded prepaid phone cards. Spring Hill also hired Internet marketing company Buzzplant to launch an online campaign, with advertising placed in various locations on the Web and hundreds of thousands of e-cards blasted to country fans.

Ecrement says: “We’re using the newly launched promotional site orbthejourney.com as the ‘hub’ for all Internet/Web promotions, and we put together an advertising campaign with Jones Media Network involving TV and radio spots via GAC, as well as a Web presence at gac.com.

The label is giving away several trips through radio, TV and the Web site to Branson, Mo., to see the Oaks perform live.

The album will be cross-promoted with a coffee-table book, “American Journey,” which New Leaf Press will publish in October. The book includes stories and numerous photos from the Oaks’ lengthy career.

Managed by Jim Halsey and booked by the William Morris Agency, the Oaks will play more than 150 dates this year, bolstered by the group’s sponsorship deal with Blublocker Sunglasses.

Allen says each show is custom-designed for a particular city. The group will take requests from fans on the Oak’s Web site, confer on a set list for that city, then e-mail the crew bus. The set list tailor-made for that city is printed out and posted for the musicians and crew each night.

Sirius, XM Beam In On Nashville

Signalizing the importance with which they view their country channels, rival satellite services Sirius and XM each plan to ramp up their Nashville presence this year. Both companies have also made key hires from the terrestrial radio ranks.

Longtime WPOC Baltimore operations manager Scott Lindy recently joined Sirius as director of country programming and has already relocated to Nashville. XM, meanwhile, has hired former WMZQ Washington, D.C., assistant PD/music director Jon Anthony as music director and air personality for its country channel, Highway 16. Anthony is currently working from XM’s Washington, D.C., headquarters but will relocate to Nashville in early August.

Lindy has procured office space for Sirius on Music Row and is overseeing the building of two studios and the renovation of offices in that space. He is expected to hire more staffers to fill those offices and studios.

XM has had a presence in Nashville for nearly three years, with a studio prominently located in the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum and a handful of staffers. But the company is also expected to expand its office space and have more key staffers join Anthony.

While he declines to cite specific plans, XM senior director of country music programming Ray Knight says, “The vision for the company is to have a larger presence in Nashville. [but] it’s nothing we’re going to rush into. . . We have a lot of great ideas and plans and things we want to do.

Both companies say that a bigger presence in Music City was a natural next step.

“That’s where everything happens,” Anthony says. “Unlike a lot of formats [with no hub], with country music everything radiates out of Nashville. It’s the nerve center.”

Lindy agrees. “No format has a Nashville exception. It’s all right here. If we’re serious about country and we’re not in Nashville, who’s going to take us seriously?”

Lindy and Anthony, both of whom previously worked for Clear Channel, say they feel a renewed enthusiasm for radio thanks to their new positions and the freedom that comes with commercial-free programming.

Anthony says he noticed an immediate difference from terrestrial radio.

“The biggest thing is just the aura and atmosphere of this company that creativity rules,” he says. “No idea is too crazy. We don’t have to dumb it down so it appeals to the lowest common denominator. We don’t have to appeal to a particular demographic. To me, that has been the biggest shot in the arm.”

Anthony is also enthused about the ability to do anything we want—like, take an hour and devote it to a brand-new artist and not worry about running people off.

As a result, Anthony says, “from a country standpoint . . . we have a chance to expose new artists and break artists and get some immediate feedback on a national scale. That’s what’s going to be fun.

“Some of the hardest parts about working in a major market is that you just can’t afford to take too many risks,” he says of his previous job. “I took a pay cut to leave terrestrial radio to come to XM, because I wanted to do something I believed in. It’s already catching fire. I’m just happy to be on this side where creativity rules again.”

Lindy has had a similarly invigorating experience since starting at Sirius in May.

He describes his new job as “programming music, production imaging and IDs. It all boils down to that, [and] those are the three things I got into radio for. It’s a more pure form of the things I love about this business.”

At WPOC, Lindy dedicated 40% of his workday to the things to which he can now devote 100%. Among the tasks he doesn’t miss are contesting, marketing, doing the weekend jock schedule and dealing with sales issues.

“The business of working at a radio station is the whole business of radio,” he adds. “That has all been extracted from my life. It’s the purity of radio programming now.”

But there is one huge difference. Lindy is now overseeing eight channels, including the newly launched all-Elvis channel, and he finds it challenging to segue from working on one to another without first taking a break to clear his mind.

In addition to four country channels, a bluegrass channel and Elvis, Lindy oversees Folktown, a folk music channel, and the Spirit, a contemporary Christian channel.

And while he says he is spread pretty thin, Lindy also says it’s one of the most exciting times in his career.

“I’ve never been busier in my life, and I’ve never been more satisfied,” he says.

ON THE ROW: Publicist Judy McDonough exits Compendia Music Group in Nashville to reactivate her independent publicity firm, JEMedia. Compendia is her first client.

Capitol Records has signed Amber Dotson. Billy Joe Walker Jr. is producing her debut album.
### TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

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### Top Country Catalog Albums

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<td>SOMEONE</td>
<td>Steve Tyrell &amp; Ann Gill</td>
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<td>I WANT TO LIVE</td>
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<td>SHE THINKS SHE NEEDS ME</td>
<td>Andy Griggs</td>
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<td>Big &amp; Rich</td>
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<td>HOW FAR</td>
<td>Martina McBride</td>
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<td>HERE FOR THE PARTY</td>
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<td>I HATE EVERYTHING</td>
<td>George Strait</td>
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<td>Sara Evans</td>
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**HOT COUNTRY ALBUMS**

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**HOT COUNTRY SINGLES**

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<td>THAT'S COOL</td>
<td>Blue County</td>
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<td>COME HOME SOON</td>
<td>She/Donny</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUT YOUR BEST DRESS ON</td>
<td>Steve Holy</td>
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<td>I MEANT TO</td>
<td>Steve Holy</td>
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<td>YOU DO YOUR THING</td>
<td>Montgomery Gentry</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWFUL, BEAUTIFUL LIFE</td>
<td>Darryl Worley</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU AT IT</td>
<td>Tracy Lawrence</td>
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<td>MR. MOM</td>
<td>Leesuor</td>
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<tr>
<td>ONE STEP AT A TIME</td>
<td>Bucky Bear</td>
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<td>THE LAST THING SHE SAID</td>
<td>Ryan Tyler</td>
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<td>FEEL MY WAY TO YOU</td>
<td>Restless Heart</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE LORD LOVES THE DRINKIN' MAN</td>
<td>Mark Chesnutt</td>
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<td>BABY GIRL</td>
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<td>NO END IN SIGHT</td>
<td>Clay Walker</td>
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<td>JUST LIKE A REDNECK</td>
<td>Shannon Law</td>
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<td>SINGLE FATHER</td>
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**HOT SHOT DEBUT**

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<td>DANCE WITH MY FATHER</td>
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<td>The Nevins</td>
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<td>Kelly Bryant</td>
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<td>GOES GOOD WITH BEER</td>
<td>John Michael Montgomery</td>
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<td>DIXIE ROSE DELUXE'S</td>
<td>Trent Willium</td>
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<td>I WANNA HEAR A CHEATIN' SONG</td>
<td>Anita Cochran featuring Conway Twitty</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIN'T DRINKIN' ANYMORE</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEER MAN</td>
<td>Todd Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>MY LOVE WILL NOT CHANGE</td>
<td>Hal Ketchum</td>
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</table>
GAVIN DEGRAW Chariot Song PRODUCER: James Diener J 82876-63461 RELEASE DATE: July 27 At times, studio pitchrope offers a more pretty reflection of the spirit within a musician. Such is the case with Gavin DeGraw’s original, Mark Endert-produced “Chariot Song.” That is, when compared with this new, unvulgarized version of the album, appropriately titled “Chariot Stripped.” An acoustic live studio recording, like this one, captures the essence of what makes DeGraw’s music move: raw emotion. His vocals—a falsetto that would make any R&B singer jealous—come across loud and clear. From the honest intimacy of the track “Charriot” to his compelling rendition of Sam Cooke’s “A Change Is Gonna Come,” DeGraw makes words and white skin. And while his own lyrics can at times lack depth, they serve as a great function of his emotion. His words display the courage of what it means to be stripped, leaving nothing but truth. In this way, they point to a genuine artist. — MDS

ASHLEY SIMPSON Autobiography PRODUCER: John Shanks Geffen B0029913 RELEASE DATE: July 20 In this issue, Ashley Simpson’s “Autobiography” debuts at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. By doing this, she one-ups big sister Jessica, who peaked at No. 2 with the previous iteration of her album “In This Skin.” Considering the artists are targeting different audiences, this probably won’t cause much of a stir. In the singing, Ashlee’s sound—rock-tinged pop à la Hilary Duff—is attuned to what radio is playing these days. Lead single “Pieces of Me” is ascend- ing The Billboard Hot 100. The album, produced by John Shanks (Sheryl Crow, Melissa Etheridge, Alanis Morissette), is chock-full of catchy songs, all co-written by Simpson. There’s enough fodder—from first bad girl” (“Trying To Get Edgy Nail (”Love Me For Me”)—to keep “Autobiography” on the charts in the foreseeable future. We hope she won’t try to outdo her sister by tak- ing her rough-around-the-edges persona to the extreme. — KK

Lean Back.” The Scott Storch-produced jam is on its way to becoming a crossover smash. Club anthem “Take Me Home” has similar potential. More than just hip-hop postur- ing, Sunshine represents the group’s most romantic side on the duo-wor- ting “Streets of NY.” Fans who want something more hardcore need look no further than “Yeah Yeah Yeah” and “Bring Em Back,” which features vocals from deceased MCs Big L and Big Pun.— RH

K.D. LANG Hymns of the 49th Parallel PRODUCER: Ben Mink, K.d. lang Nonesuch 79847 RELEASE DATE: July 27 “Hymns of the 49th Parallel” is the album’s “recording” of demands repeated listeners—not always easy to do in a culture that thrives on multi- tasking, moving on to the next big thing and blogging. But those that do spend time with this disc will be rewarded. For her first Nonesuch album, lang delivers a collection that pays homage to fellow Canadian artists. Like numerous contemporaries before her, she revisits songs that have become her own, with each one having just the right amount of torch and twang. Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Jane Siberry, Leonard Cohen, Ron Sexsmith and Bruce Cockburn are the artists that receive some of her TLC. Highlights include “Helpless,” “A Case of You,” “One Day I Will” and “Fallen.” The disc’s final two songs—Cohen’s “Bird on a Wire” and Siberry’s “Love is Every- thing”—find lang saving the absolute best for last. — MP

NEW LOUD,” pursued a series of well- received dance/electronic side projects as a solo artist (“Invest” and a U.K. (“EKKicks”); he also contributed vocals to Roykopp’s album “Melody AM.” One’s signature chilled vocal aesthetic, which has been the calling card of all his work during this period, is a pleasure to experience. Here, with King’s partner Erik Granbom Boe, it is extra special. With hushed guitars and piano, “Riot” is one mellow gem.—BG

VARIOUS ARTISTS Por Vida: A Tribute to the Songs of Alejandro Escovedo PRODUCERS: various Or: Music 804022 RELEASE DATE: July 27 Great things often come in a power- ful combination, and “Por Vida” is just that. This double-CD was created to raise funds to help Alejandro Escovedo with his medical expenses. He has not been able to tour for the past year as a result of the effects of hepatitis C. Some very prominent friends have come to his aid, including Ray Barretto, and a host of others—include Lin-Manuel Miranda, Steve Earle, Calexico, Tres Chicos, Los Lonely Boys, Vic Chesnutt, Rosie Flores and Shelita E. (Alejandro’s cousin). The best thing about “Por Vida,” however, is Escovedo’s songs. He has penned every- thing from the languid mambo “Inside This Dance” to the pure rock of “Let’s Drunk.” It’s a sure sign of Escovedo’s rock legacy that his friends can use his songs to create an album as powerful as this one. —PVY

Sahara Hotnights Kiss & Tell PRODUCERS: Pelle Gunnerfeldt, Johan Gustafsson RCA 82876 62689 RELEASE DATE: July 27 The four female Scandinavian rockers known as Sahara Hotnights are not reinventing the wheel with their major-label debut; they’re just taking the car out for a spin with the top down. Like the band’s two previous records, “Kiss & Tell” owes obvious debts to some high-quality creditors, including the Runaways, the Ramones and the Cars. The 11 tracks breathe in a blaze of exuberant, pop-tinted glory, with standouts including opener “Who Do You Dance For?,” new wave zero “I Play Stay Away” and first single “Hot House Party.” — CRASH. Singer/guitarist/lyricist Maria Andersson’s slightly accented delivery adds a note of charm to this short, fun set.— IM

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

MARTINNA TOPLEY-BIRD Anything PRODUCERS: various Palm 2134 RELEASE DATE: July 27 Martinna Topley-Bird first made her presence known by way of Tricky’s nova-classic, trip-hop-spiked 1995 “Maxinquaye,” which spotlighted her bluesy, raspy and com- manding voice. In 1998, after working on three more Tricky albums, Topley- Bird went her own musical way. Last year in the United Kingdom, the British artist delivered her solo debut, “Quirietic,” which was nominated for a Mercury Music Prize. The album now arrives in the United States, completely redesigned and resequenced, and with a new title (“Anything”). Fortunately, nothing was lost in the process: The eclectic electronic-based music—penned and produced by Tricky, Amp J, David Holmes, the artist herself and others—remains as stunning as ever. The songs “Soul Food,” “Need One,” “I Still Feel,” “Lullaby” and “Too Tough To Die” will surely resonate with fans of Bjork, Sia Furler and Erykah Badu. Bill- lied lifetime enthusiasts will find much to admire in Topley-Bird’s voice. Fresh and imaginative, “Anything” is one intoxicating recording.— MP

GIOIA Expose This PRODUCERS: various Koch 8698 RELEASE DATE: July 13 Dance-pop fans know Gioia from her work with female trio Exposé, of which she was an original member. “Expose This” is a pop album…and it finds her in familiar territory: radio-friendly club music steeled in energetic pop sensibilities. Its lead single, the hooky “Be Mine,” perfectly fits alongside current jams by Van Dahl and Motorcycle. The electro-smacked “Incredible” is worthy of a Benny Benassi remix. The trite ballad “Until the End of Time” and an energized cover of “Kiss” (“I Was Made for Lovin’ You”) miss the mark. But other choice cuts—including the tranced-laced “Again and Again” and soulish “Invisible Thing”—make up for such generic missteps. — MP

CASTRO, GIANMARCO

Peruvian singer/songwriter Gianmarco has penned hits for countless Latin acts, from Gloria Estefan to Marc Anthony. So, what’s left for his own albums? Judging from his sophomore disc, Gianmarco’s supply of good songs is inexhaustible. Sporting edgy arrangements that are far more rock- oriented than when other artists handle his songs, Gianmarco displays a more alternative-leaning sensibility than on his first album; this is not an alternative album, but it’s certainly not stand- by. He’s done it all before, at the organ—which lends the set a decidedly “60s feel” —“Residual” also features tra- ditional Peruvian instruments like cha- ranga and cuica for a fusion that at times is reminiscent of Carlos Vives (“Sin Querer”). The first single, the title track, has a Beatles-like feel, with organ and electric and acoustic guitars creating a lush, melodic sound. In con- trast, “Ayer” is a sparsely arranged pop version of a Peruvian waltz. — LC

ISSA BAGAYOGO

Tassomakwan PRODUCERS: Philippe Bechter, Yes Wernert Six Degrees 657036 1103 RELEASE DATE: Aug. 3 Malian artist Issa Bagayogo’s third album is, without question, his most appealing and ambitious record to date. Bagayogo initially gained notice for his compelling synthesis of elec- 

Contributors:
Leila Cobb, Deborah Davies Price, Brian Garrity, Rasham Hall, Katy Kroll, Jackie McCarthy, Gail Mitchell, Michael Paulella, Wayne Robbins, Michael David Spies, Christina L. Titus, Phillip van Vleck, Christopher Walsh.

ESSENTIALS: Releases deemed by the review editor to deserve special attention on the basis of musical merit and/or Billboard chart potential. NOTABLE: Reviews of albums of special artists, seminal and commercial interest and/or containing collections of works by one or more artists. PRODS: New releases predicted to fill the top half of the chart in the coming tournament. ORNITE OPTIONS: (+) New releases, expansions of chart potential, highly recommended because of their musical merit. All albums commercially available in the US are eligible. Send album art and copies and singles review copies to Michael Paulella (Billboard, 770 Broadway, 6th floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writer in the appropriate boxes.
tronica and traditional Malian music, which, in his homeland, earned him the nickname "Techno Lisa." With "Tassoumakan," Bagayogo and producers Philippe Berthier and Yves Wernert have further refined his sound. In the process, they created a classic of modern Malian music. Bagayogo's dusky voice, as beautifully understated as ever, weaves through a collection of tunes that feel supremely minimalist, yet are anything but. Everything—be it the n'goni (stringed lute) or drum loops, balafon (a wooden xylophone) or Mama Sisoko's sublime electric guitar—merge into an unctuous, organic vibe that redefines African vs. modern as ancient is modern.—PV

**VITAL REISSUES**

**THE ROLLING STONES**

*Sinful 1965-1967*

**PRODUCERS:** Andrew Loog Oldham, the Rolling Stones

**ABKCO 0001-1220**

**RELEASE DATE:** July 27

This box is as impossibly as it is beloved. The 11 CD albums, pressed to look like 45 rpm singles (complete with "grooves"). Each is packed in a sleeve with a reproduction of the original artwork. That's a good thing, since the Stones were at their most wildly photogenic as drag queens ("Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadow?"") and with Brian Jones looking stoned ("Let's Spend the Night Together.") "Baby, You're a Trip," and The last was the same shot as the U.S. "Between the Buttons" LP cover.) The set begins with "I Can't Get No Satisfaction," and ends with four tracks from "Their Satanic Majesties' Request." Great music, but how should fans use it? They could import each disc to a computer, then burn a CD. Or it would make a lovely gift.—WR

X

**THE BEST: Make the Music Go Bang!**

**COMPILATION PRODUCERS:** Gary Stewart, John Doe

**ORIGINAL PRODUCERS:** various

**Elektra/Rhino 27 80919**

**RELEASE DATE:** July 27

This two-disc, 46-track collection is a welcome document of Los Angeles' punk progenitors. The band's initial burst of energy, following the "Adult Books"/"We're Desperate" debut single (included), coincided with X's unlikely pairing with Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek, who produced the band's first four albums. Despite Manzarek's occasionally inappropriate keyboards on otherwise turbo-charged punk workouts, these early songs document X's unique and hugely influential punk rockabilly/poop sound. Though John Doe's king-size vocal quirks yet complementary vocals are X's most distinguishing characteristics, this compilation does justice to the unappreciated guitarist Billy Zoom. His solos on the Doors' "Soul Kitchen," "The One Over Twice" and "Beyond and Inside"—"zoom"—which significantly influence is taken to extremes—are lightning-fast and muscular. X's rockabilly leanings are also the two tracks from offshoot band the Knitters. Later tracks show X settling into a more melodic pop rock sound, with mixed success: Disc one is the essential X, but later gems like "See How We Are" demonstrate the band's musicality, versatility and longevity.—CW

**ESSENTIAL REVIEWS**

**SINGLES**

Edited by Michael Paolleta

**MODERN ROCK**

**SNOW PATROL** Run (4:15)

**PRODUCER:** Garret Lee

**WRITER:** Snow Patrol

**PUBLISHER:** not listed

**A&M/UMV ADRL 11197-2 (CD promo)**

It's easy to peg Snow Patrol as a grimmer Coldplay or a warmer Radiohead, but the Scottish-based quartet deserves to be judged on its own merits. With third album "Final Straw," the band should gain success beyond the cult formed around 2001's epic angst-fest, "When It's All Over We Still Have to Clear Up." Lead single "Spitting Games" was a false start, however, stalling at No. 39 on the Billboard Modern Rock Tracks chart. Worse, it made Snow Patrol sound disappointingly generic. But "Run" showcases the band's strengths with a lush melody, soaring chorus and frontman Gary Lightbody's brooding vocals. His Heathcliff-ian-anorak persona is hard to resist, and it makes "Run" instantly memorable. This is the kind of song that makes you want to stop following the radio dial in hopes that the DJ will tell you just heard.—JM

**R&B/HIP-HOP**

**NAS Thief's Theme (3:10)**

**PRODUCERS:** Nas, Salaam Remi

**WRITERS:** H. Caesar, D. Hines, D. Ingle

**PUBLISHERS:** not listed

**Sony Urban Music/Columbia 38K 76922**

**CD promo**

Nas Jones is one of hip-hop's most enigmatic MCs. From one album to the next, he has proved himself to be a great but inconsistent rapper. Fortunately, "Thief's Theme" showcases the Queens, N.Y., MC's better side. The song's dark, guitar-thumped track, which Nas produced with Salaam Remi, is driven by a sample of an Ice-Cube/Mosquitos/Mos-Lada. Lyrically, Nas is as ferocious as ever as he spins tales of street life with an eloquence that few other MCs can muster. R&B/hip-hop programmers should be quick to champion this hardcore gem. If "Thief's Theme" truly reflects the tone and mood of the artist's forthcoming two-disc set, "Streets Disciple," hip-hop heads will recall a hip-hop thing to look forward to this fall.—RH

**COUNTRY**

**DIAMOND RIO Can't You Tell (3:23)**

**PRODUCERS:** Michael D. Cline, Diamond Rio

**WRITERS:** E. Silver, J. Belle

**PUBLISHERS:** Pickanbo Music/Wild Pink Music (ASCAP); Jolley Music (ASCAP)

**Arista 8287663397 (CD promo)**

The sultry Latin flavor of this track might have some listeners thinking that it's an onion. Made with friend that is lead single "Penny & Me.", "Lost Without Each Other" is poised to build on the success of "Underneath," which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Independent Albums chart.—KB

**POP**

**HANSON Lost Without Each Other (3:44)**

**PRODUCERS:** Hanson

**WRITERS:** H. Hanson, T. Hanson, Z. Hanson, G. Alexander

**PUBLISHER:** Jam 'N' Bread Music (ASCAP)

**3G Records 10410 (CD promo)**

Considering the pervasiveness of "Lost Without Each Other" during "Lost Without Each Other" at a recent concert in New York, it is no wonder that Hanson has made the single from its self-released second album, "Underneath." But will that live enthusiasm translate into radio spins? At the very least, it should help the track hit the ground run-

**JILL SCOTT Golden (3:53)**

**PRODUCERS:** Anthony Bell

**WRITERS:** J. Scott, A. Bell

**PUBLISHERS:** Universal Music (ASCAP), Jac Cat Music Publishing (ASCAP); Blue's Baby Music (ASCAP); Abuckland Music (BMI)

**Hidden Beach Recordings/Epic ESK Music (ASCAP); Hip Hop (ASCAP)**

**A&M/UMV ADRL 11197-2 (CD promo)**

It has been four years since the release of Jill Scott's critically acclaimed debut album, "Who Is Jill Scott? Words and Sounds." The Golden" picks up right where that collection left off—with a distinct mood which perfectly melds Scott's R&B, jazz and gospel influences. The sparkling arrangement—presented in an "Original Workman" and the East Coast 107 Mix"—is set off by her colorful, homegirl lyric, "I'm taking my freedom, putting it in my stall, I'll be high stepping, I'll be loving the joy unfold." This is a life-affirming anthem with a catchy hook ("I'm livin', that's all I'm livin'..."). That said, the Golden" is a perfect second single and the first single from Scott's long-anticipated second studio album, "Beautifully Human: Words and Sounds, Vol. 2."—GM

**DANCE**

**FRANKIE KNIGHTS FEATURING NICKI RICHARDS Matter of Time (8:51)**

**PRODUCERS:** Frankie Knights, Danny Hender

**WRITERS:** F. Knights, D. Madden

**PUBLISHERS:** Baby Knights Music (ASCAP); Danish Publishing (BMI)

**REMARKS:** the Groove Junkies Definitive D223 (CD promo)

Frankie Knights knows a thing or two about soulful house music. And the brightly shining "Matter of Time" is precisely that. Arriving on the heels of "Bac N Da Day," which recently topped the Billboard Hot Dance Club Play chart, "Matter of Time" spotlights the incredible vocal stylings of Nicki Richards. The second single from Knights' third artist album, "Matter of Reality," "Matter of Time" will be greeted with open arms by club DJs, who, depending on their musical preferences, will program Knights' own classic-sounding Chicago Style Mix and Organic Dub or the Groove Junkies' jazz-oriented Classic Mix and Soul Excursion.—MP
U.K. Publishing Returns To State Of Grace

BY NIGEL HUNTER

LONDON—After a nine-month hiatus, it is back to business for Bob Grace. The music industry veteran has launched Bay Songs and Bay Global Management.

Grace surprised the music industry last fall with his abrupt departure after 10 years at the U.K. helm of Windswept Music. He said nothing at the time, but it was surmised that the parent company, based in Japan, had found itself overstretched in the harsh economic climate.

"I don't want someone in Japan or anywhere else telling me when my music business career has ended," Grace now says. "I'll make that decision on my own terms."

His career trajectory has been unusual. He started as an office go-fer for Dusty Springfield and later became a song plugger for Pye Records and EMI Records.

His publishing activities began with United Artists Music, where he developed a Scottish band named the Scots of St. James, which became the Average White Band.

A chance meeting with Terry Ellis at a Françoise Hardy concert led to Grace founding Chrysalis Music in 1969 and signing David Bowie, among others. Chrysalis subpublished Rondor Music in the United Kingdom, and Rondor (Almo/Irving in the States) persuaded him to build up both Rondor Music (London) and Rondor Music International during a 12-year stint.

His Rondor signings included Supertramp, Dire Straits, Galagher & Lyle, Joan Armatrading and Rod Temperton, the co-writer with Michael Jackson of "Thriller" and other mega-hits.

Grace left Rondor in 1985 to run Empire Music, the publishing arm of Derek Green's China Records, where he signed Albert Hammond, Lahi Stott's, the Levellers and others during an eight-year period. He then set up the U.K. operation of Windswept Pacific (as it was then known), signing the Spice Girls and Craig David.

"It's time for me to be the sole proprietor of my own business," he says, "Essentially I shall be nurturing unknown talent, which is what I've always done through music publishing."

A major component of his new venture is Bay Songs, the publishing arm for the Agency Group, the international booking company with offices in London, New York, Toronto, Los Angeles, Nashville and Stockholm.

Despite the music industry's current problems, Grace remains optimistic.

"People get confused by believing the music industry is merely the record industry," he says. "The latter has certainly changed dramatically and is experiencing major problems, which are largely its own fault. But there's still a lot of talent out there, a great live scene, and there's more specialist activity developing a niche market that can cross over into the big time."

Grace's reputation and track record have ensured that people traced him to make contact and send demos before he had even finished furnishing his office. His first Bay Songs signing is singer/songwriter Mike Silver, whose track "Not a Matter of Pride" from his debut album "Solid Silver" created a favorable stir last year.

Bay Songs will represent Silver's Fat Music Publishing, and all of Bay's administrative activities will be handled by Jigal, a longstanding friend and colleague of Grace, through his IQ Music.

Subpublishing overseas is also being organized, with a deal already set with Clippers in Spain. Others are in negotiation through IQ Music's numerous international affiliates. "The opportunities for getting songs covered have shrunk because of amalgamations among the major record companies and the formation of songwriting/production camps," Grace says. "I'm focusing on artists who write their own songs and getting them record deals. It's better to do it yourself in terms of A&R and artist development and then get distribution. If you're not a self-starter these days, you might as well give up."

MORE THAN A PUBLISHER

Seeking new songwriting and performing talent is not his only priority. Healthy, sustainable revenue flow is another.

"I want to represent a small amount of quality European and U.S. catalogs, I'm hoping to build up a strong select catalog dimension for the company. I can offer excellent administration facilities through Jigal's IQ Music and hands-on personal creative service from myself."

On that score, Grace says his Bay Global Management venture will provide guidance for writers, including those who may be signed to other publishers but who feel the need for some extra personal attention and support.

"I'm particularly interested in working with highly talented, self-contained writers. Having previously signed such names as David Bowie and Joan Armatrading, my main strengths are probably in spotting and helping to develop up-and-coming singer/songwriters. I'm aiming for a steady flow of writers, some new and quite probably some not so new."

His protegés will need talent, determination, attitude and perseverance. Grace has always prided himself on spotting what it takes to achieve stardom and is immediately and ruthlessly frank if the necessary quality is not there.

"I'm networking around the clubs and gigs and concerts as many nights a week as is necessary," he says. "You've got to go where the heat is."

Lother And Stotts: Classics Meet Plasmatics

Yes, it is "a very odd pairing," Carla Loher says with a laugh. The Canadian-born adult contemporary singer/songwriter's current Cheeky Records album "100 Lovers" features four songs written with Richie Stotts.

Yes, the one-time mohawk-topped Richie Stotts who played lead guitar and wrote such immortal titles as "Butcher Baby" for punk rock's infamous Plasmatics.

"I knew about Richie and the Plasmatics from my brother," says Loher, who had accompanied her brother to Friday-night screenings of the Ramones' movie classic "Rock 'n Roll High School" back home in Winnipeg. "He listened to all the Plasmatics stuff, so I knew who Richie was—but I didn't recognize him without the mohawk."

Indeed, Stotts' hair has grown out since the Plasmatics broke up in 1983 and his ensuing ventures fronting his own bands and collaborating with the late Joey Ramone.

"But you can still see little tattoos on his head if you look closely enough," Loher observes.

A classically trained pianist who launched a jazz program at her alma mater, Mannes College of Music in New York, Loher recorded for CHR Records and now has a deal with the Bang-on-a-Can release, as well as doing numerous jingles for the likes of Maxwell House and MasterCard.

She met Stotts at a neighborhood pub in Brooklyn.

"She was hanging out there, and a friend from my old days at CBGB introduced me," recalls Stotts, who adds that Loher's music is much different from that of his previous musical protégé, the Plasmatics' late, great Wendy O. Williams. "She invited me to a gig at the Bottom Line, and it was a great show, but her music was kind of 'worky'—Celtic-influenced—and ethereal [and] not something I would usually go see."

Loher's classical training made collaborating "the last thing I thought I would do," Stotts adds. "But I had gone over to Debbie Harry's to write some songs, and Carla was looking for new material for her album that would be more guitar-oriented. So I played some of what I played for Debbie, and we ended up writing seven songs together."

Stotts thinks he "simplified" Loher's songs; she credits him for a "more guitar-based" direction. "I was writing as a pianist before—and music comes out very different when you're writing on the piano," she explains, contrasting "100 Lovers" with her pre-ceeding album "Ephemera."

"On that one I didn't write lyrics but used a lot of public domain poetry and found myself naturally writing in a more classical style," she says. "But after tapping Richie's guitar riffs, I wrote melodies and moved to a different place that's more mainstream-palatable."

People who liked the first album might not like "100 Lovers," BMI writer Loher says. "My life was like a ballad until I met Richie. Now it's mayhem—but a lot of fun. He keeps the riffs nice and simple and doesn't bury me in super-duper guitar noodling—and that suits my voice, which is not big and boomy."

The currently unaffiliated Stotts now plans to continue a modest comeback, writing and performing with Loher and perhaps starting a new band of his own. Severe music business burnout had led to Stotts' return to school in 1990 and a degree in geology, followed by his current stint in the computer department of a Wall Street financial firm.

"Just did an MTV interview about being the first person in rock 'n roll with a mohawk, and the Plasmatics were listed in 'The Top 100 Heavy Metal Moments' on VH1," Stotts says. "It's bittersweet to revisit some of this stuff, but I'm having a little fun—which is how it started."
Air Stream

New Wireless Networking Products Bring Digital Music Into The Living Room

BY SCOTT BANERJEE

SAN FRANCISCO—As consumers populate their PCs with digital music, the desire to stream these tracks on stereo systems is growing. Thus far, however, linking PCs and home entertainment systems has been a slow and difficult process often reserved for tech-savvy early adopters.

"It hasn’t been a nice, slick, all-in-one world where everything is connected and everything gets transmitted digitally," says John Barrett, analyst with market research firm Parks Associates. "It’s been a patchwork."

But the "digital living room" is coveted real estate for top PC and consumer electronics manufacturers. To date, simple solutions have included running wires and cables throughout the house, playing burned CDs (which, according to Parks Associates, is what the majority of people do) or connecting MP3 players straight into a stereo system.

Apple Computer, with its easy-to-use iTunes software and iPod portable music player, is a logical choice to simplify home networking. The company is trying to accomplish this with its new portable wireless networking station, the Airport Express.

The $129 device plugs into any power outlet and allows PC and Mac users with existing home Wi-Fi networks to stream music from their iTunes library to their stereo. It can also act as a base station for creating a home Wi-Fi network, or it can extend to an existing one.

Barrett thinks Airport Express could be a steppingstone, allowing consumers to unlock the potential of PCs as multi-media "hubs" and living rooms as "digital entertainment dens." But the device lacks a user interface or remote control, so volume, song order and other variables can only be adjusted on the computer—an inconvenience if the Air

Port Express and computer are located in different rooms.

Apple is not the first company with a digital music service to offer networking solutions for the living room. In 2003, RealNetworks' Rhapsody, the leading subscription music service, integrated Intel’s "Universal Plug and Play" standard into its software.

As a result, companies like Linksys, Netgear, SMC Networks, GoVideo and Rockford rolled out "Rhapsody Ready" set-top boxes, allowing users with a wireless network to stream Rhapsody or an MP3 music library into their home entertainment system. In contrast to Airport Express, these devices can be operated through a user interface and remote control.

Until recently, the cost of this extra hardware, coupled with the cost of in-home Wi-Fi could price most consumers out of the market.

But according to Sean Ryan, VP of music services at RealNetworks, the prices for these set-top devices have dropped considerably, to about $150, making them more attractive to the consumer.

CAPABILITIES STILL NOT CLEAR

Despite these developments, Todd Board, analyst with Ipsos-Insight, a market research group, says consumers are still confused about the equipment, functionality and compatibility of home entertainment networking products. The "digital den" has lacked a catalyst, he says: namely a trusted consumer brand to take the reins.

"When consumers aren’t sure how a new technology approach will work, they look to trusted brands as a proxy, a "guarantor of performance,"" Board says.

Apple states its case as such a guarantor with its recent

(Continued on page 45)

Spring Hill’s New Slant: Christian Pop

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—After a decade in the Southern gospel and inspirational fields, Spring Hill Music Group is expanding into the Christian pop/rock market with the launch of Slanted Records.

The new label’s first signing is Charity Von. Her self-titled debut album was released Sept. 28.

"We’ve talked about starting a new imprint for several years," Spring Hill Music president Scott Chancey tells Billboard in an exclusive interview. "With Charity, we have the right artist.

Slanted will be distributed by Word to the Christian market and by WEA to the mainstream.

Spring Hill built a name as one the top labels in Southern gospel music with the Martins, Jeff & Sheri Easter, CrossWay and the Oak Ridge Boys. It expanded into the inspirational/adult contemporary side of Christian music in 1996 with Scott Krippayne, Babbie Mason and Wayne Watson. The label also has a worship product line, gift products and children’s releases.

Slanted represents a radical departure for Spring Hill. When label execs heard Von, they knew she was their first artist. "She’s a great talent, and her heart is so sincere," Chancey says. "We all look for talent, but if [an artist] has the ability to really communicate and has something to communicate, it makes all the difference in the world."

Christian music seems to be a natural step for Von, a 19-year-old Kansas City, Kan., resident whose pastor father once was a traveling evangelist. A cousin introduced her to writer/producer Billy Smiley (formerly with seminal Christian rock band Whiteheart). He brought her to Spring Hill.

"I was so impressed with their hearts, and how they were so willing to get out and do something new and different," von says. "Other labels didn’t know what to do with me. They liked [my music] but didn’t know how they would be able to pull it off."

Von says she was influenced by Janis Joplin and Janis Joplin and describes her style as "Sheryl Crow meets Lenny Kravitz."

Smiley produced Von’s debut. She wrote or co-wrote eight of the 10 tracks on the album. The first single to Christian top 40 and rock stations is "Weight of the World."

Von is managed by Rick Cua of Rick Cua Entertainment and booked by the Breen Agency.

Spring Hill’s new label executive David Ecrement says the label’s staff is equipped to work the pop/rock market. "If you look at the experience of some of the people on our team here, cumulatively we probably have more experience working in other genres of music than we do Southern and [inspirational]," he says.

Spring Hill has hired Derek Bruner, who has a background in pop, as coordinator of radio and promotions. The label flew Christian rock and pop programmers to Nashville July 29 to introduce Slanted and showcase Von.

"We have the luxury of having a viable kind of mothership or parent company in Spring Hill," Ecrement says. "We don’t have the pressures of a new label that would have to have five or six artists and have to turn a profit in six months or shut down."
The Indies caught up with new Ryko Label Group president Bill Hein on the eve of sister company Ryko Distribution’s convention, which kicked off July 27 in New Orleans.

Hein, who previously headed Ryko’s DVD operation, was brought in to replace Joe Regis, his former partner in Restless Records, which is now owned by Ryko (Billboard, July 10).

Hein has his work cut out for him. Though it remains a premier name among indie labels, Rykodisc has hit some bumps in recent years. An uneasy and expensive alliance with Chris Blackwell’s Palm Pictures was ultimately terminated, and Restless, acquired two years ago from Regency, was not integrated seamlessly.

But Hein says he has faith in the Ryko staff, which includes key A&R man Rob Seidenberg (former Hollywood Records president), Steve Profess of recently acquired Emperor Norton and label vet Jeff Rougier, best-known for helping Ryko’s celebrated reissue programs of the ’90s.

Rykodisc and its sister labels have several significant releases on tap for the remainder of 2004 and the first half of 2005. Hein credits the label’s previous administration for the pending titles.

“A lot of the stuff on the schedule was already in the pipeline,” Hein says.

Due before the end of the year are albums from Penalty Records act the Beatnuts, ex-Sublime bassist Tommy Stinson’s one-time band Perfect and Los Angeles band Midnight Movies (an Emperor Norton act). Ryko will also issue early albums by Chicago’s Ministry and a best-of compilation by recently reactivated Boston band Mission of Burma.

Due in early 2005 are sets from Ladyltron, Kelly Willis, the Juliana Theory, the Misfits, Josh Rouse, Big Star and the Posies (whose John Auer and Ken Stringfellow are also current Big Star members).

During Regis’ tenure, fresh signings were few and far between. But Hein says the label is now “actively chasing a couple of deals.”

Hein has plans for the company’s catalog as well. Ryko will probably release four to six Super Audio CD titles by the end of the year; it rolled out an SACD edition of Richard & Linda Thompson’s “Shoot Out the Lights” in June.

“I really like the format,” Hein says. “I wish we were getting more support from the industry.”

Hannibal Records released the Thompsons’ classic. Though the imprint has been relatively dormant since the departure of founder Joe Boyd a few years ago, it issued Robert Wyatt’s album “Cuckooland” last year. That title recently received a nomination for the United Kingdom’s prestigious Mercury Music Prize.

Hannibal reissued a couple of Wyatt catalog titles in June, but Hein has bigger ambitions for it.

“It’s a wonderful label,” he says, “and I want to bring it back to life.” Hannibal’s A&R department will be based in Ryko’s London office.

Given Hein’s background in DVD, it’s not surprising that Ryko will remain active in the format. A DVD collection from late comedian Bill Hicks is set for late October.

Next year will bring a special edition of John Heyn and Jeff Krulik’s hilarious 1986 documentary “Heavy Metal Parking Lot.”

“I’ve been on that for two years,” Hein says. “I think it’s one of the best films ever made.”

Ryko will also release a 5.1 remix of 1982 gospel documentary “Say Amen, Somebody,” which features Thomas Dorsey, Sallie Martin and other sacred-music greats. Looking further ahead, Hein says he would like to get more of the extensive Restless catalog onto CD, but he does not have a timetable. Referring to one of Restless’ most eccentric acts, Hein says, “I’d like to have a John Truett record available.”

In the Market: Viastar Media VP of distribution Courtney Profitt has exited her post following a restructuring of the company. Last fall, Profitt left her post as executive director of now-defunct indie trade group the Asn. for Independent Music to join Phoenix-based Viastar (Billboard, Nov. 8, 2003).

She is seeking other opportunities and can be reached at 480-755-8812.
With a record first quarter behind it, Navarre management expects the company to double its earnings during its current fiscal year.

In a July 22 conference call with analysts, VP/CFO Jim Gilbertson projected that earnings for this year would be 74 to 94 cents per diluted share on sales of $575 million to $590 million. If Navarre hits the low end of this projection, it will double the 37 cents per diluted share it earned last year on total sales of $475.2 million.

In its fiscal first quarter, which ended June 30, the Minneapolis-based distributor/entertainment software publisher turned in a profit of $4.5 million, or 74 cents per diluted share, on sales of $126.7 million (billboard.biz, July 22). The sales figure represents a 73% increase compared with the $73.1 million the company garnered in the first quarter of last year, when net income was only $308,000, or 1 cent per share. Gilbertson said a good portion of year, Navarre's entertainment software volume was $4.6 million. This year, it was $50 million before the elimination of intercompany sales.

In addition, the distribution operation posted a 50% increase, with first-quarter sales growing to $109 million, compared with $73 million during the same period last year. The company said all distributed product lines contributed to the increase.

At the end of the first quarter, distribution accounted for 78% and software publishing for nearly 22% of sales; during the corresponding period last year, those figures were about 94% and 6%, respectively.

Navarre's overall sales growth and the software division's incremental profit allowed the company to post first-quarter gross profits of 14.9% of sales, compared with 13.7% during the same period last year. Meanwhile, the company's operating expenses dropped from 13.4% of revenue in the first quarter of last year to 11.4% this year.

Navarre plans to open a new warehouse, which will provide greater efficiencies, by late August. As a result, it expects to generate an additional $800,000 annually in savings, executives said.

During the current fiscal year, Navarre established a $20 million revolving credit facility for acquisitions with GE Commercial Finance. Gilbertson said the company is in the market for more software and label concerns.

He also said Navarre is likely to use its war chest to buy something on the DVD side of the business, similar to BCI Enterprises.

The acquisition facility is in addition to a $40 million revolving credit facility for operations. Navarre does not have any funds drawn from the revolver, since it has been funding operations with cash flow.

The day after its July 21 earnings announcement, Navarre's stock closed at $14.59, down 46 cents from the previous day's close. Its July 28 closing price was $15.06, seven times more than its $2.08 close one year ago.

ON THE DOTLINE: In a last-minute switch, Concord Records cut a U.S. distribution deal with Universal Music & Video Distribution.

The Los Angeles-based jazz label recently decided to exit its deal with Innovative Distribution Network and was believed to be heading to WEA. But late offers from RED, which had been pursuing the label all along, and UMG, which only recently became aware that Concord was looking for a distributor, swayed the label into reconsidering its decision.

Concord began releasing albums through UMG July 27. First up: a new set from the Elektric Band featuring Chick Corea. August will see the release of “Genius Loves Company,” the last album from soul legend Ray Charles, who died June 9. Also, Concord agreed to purchase Fantasy Records in June.

Concord is said to have had global sales of about $20 million last year, including $13 million in the United States. Sources say Fantasy had sales of about $22 million, half of that in the United States.

If Concord closes its deal to buy Fantasy, and the Charles or an upcoming Barry Manilow album develops into a hit, the company could have U.S. revenue of about $30 million and worldwide revenue of about $50 million, including publishing.

Now that Concord has secured U.S. distribution, sources say it may begin looking for an international deal.

COMMENTS: Retail Track sends condolences to the family and friends of Mark Kohler, a 30-year music sales and retail veteran, who died July 10 of cancer. He was 53.

Kohler most recently worked as West Coast regional sales director for Virgin Records, but his career also included stints at Trans World Entertainment, CBS Records and Sony Music.

Kohler was well-regarded by retail accounts. “He was one of the top sales representatives at CBS Records and Sony Music when I worked with him,” friend Ron Simms says.

Mark is survived by his wife, Ineta, and children James, Jennifer, Jason and Michelle.

A college fund has been established in his name; donations can be made to the Mark Kohler Memorial Fund, c/o fund executor Lydia Etman.

GILBERTSON: HOPES TO HIT $575 MILLION

Air Stream

Continued from page 43

waves in the music market and its “hands-on” retail presence. But a recent Ipsos-Insight survey revealed that only 3% of respondents regard Apple as the preferred brand to create a home media hub.

The survey also found that only 16% believe that Apple would “do a good job of providing products and services that help you connect these home electronic devices.”

This compares with Microsoft, at 54%, and Sony, at 52%. Also ahead of Apple in the survey are Dell, HP, IBM, Panasonic, “your local cable company,” MSN, Intel, Samsung, “your local phone provider,” AOL and Yahoo.

Eddie Cue, VP of applications with Apple, believes Airport Express will benefit from iTunes’ popularity and user-friendliness and provide an easy way to extend digital music into the living room.

Ipsos reports that nearly three out of four U.S. consumers (74%) say they are interested in a product that would easily connect their home entertainment systems to the Internet. Yet 64% of U.S. consumers say they are not familiar with the products that act as a central hub for sharing music, movies, games and other digital content with electronic devices and the Internet.

“Technology firms need to start with the basics and raise awareness levels, improve consumer understanding and performance trust, then get consumers excited,” Board says.

Microsoft is starting to get more aggressive, rolling out a new version of its Windows Media Center and Windows Media Player. The forthcoming holiday-season launch of its Portable Media Center will allow high-quality audio and video playback on entertainment systems.

Additionally, Microsoft’s Xbox videogame console is regarded as a formidable CD and DVD playing device. Meanwhile, manufacturers HP, Sony and Dell have each been beating each other’s PCs to handle multimedia applications.

“When you have the capability for any media application to be built-in to whatever consumer-electronics product you buy, that’s when the market truly takes off.”
Kiosks
Continued from page 6

that shakes up the home entertainment industry.

Plans to sell DVDs through the kiosks are in the works.

DO FRIES GO WITH THAT FLICK?
The company hopes to place about 30 more kiosks in office buildings, health clubs, colleges and coffee shops by the end of the year. Similar machines are also being tried by McDonald's and Virgin Megastore.

McDonald's is testing DVD rental kiosks (created by DVDPlay) at its Denver locations this summer. The kiosks' rental video will cost consumers $1 per day. Returns can be made to any McDonald's in that city.

At Virgin's San Francisco location, a kiosk offering new-release DVDs is located outside of the store, attract- after-hours business.

"It's important to experiment," says Dave Alder, senior VP of marketing and strategic development for Virgin. "This adds a bit of theater to the overall experience."

Studies' reaction to kiosks is mixed.

"Vending machines have been tried over the last 15 years. It never worked with VHS," says Steve Beek, president of Lions Gate Entertainment.

"However, it is a way to get more products to consumers as their DVD appetites continue to grow. We all have to be careful that we do not devalue DVDs."

Despite some misgivings, some studios are dealing with kiosk companies.

"We are working with several studios already," says Olivier Delouis, co-founder of Moviebank.

DVD Software, Players Continue Climb

DVD software shipments and player sales continued to surge in the first half of 2004, according to a new report from trade organization the Digital Entertainment Group.

The group presented its report at the Video Software Dealers Assn.'s Home Entertainment convention, held July 14-16 at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas.

A substantial 649 million DVDs shipped to retailers in the first six months of this year. This represents a 52% increase compared with the same period last year.

Players are also hot, with about 13 million sold in the first half of 2004, a 25% increase compared with the same period last year.

More than 3 billion DVDs and 103 million DVD players have shipped since the format launched in 1997. Now 62 million U.S. households have players, and about 25 million own more than one: an 8% increase compared with first-half 2003.

**VSDA SHOW NEWS:** Koch Lorber Films will release its first self-distributed theatrical title on DVD Oct. 5. "The Five Obstructions" will retail for $24.98.

The film follows director Jorgen Leth as he shoots five different remakes of Lars von Trier's 1967 short film "The Perfect Human." It was an official selection at the Sundance, Toronto and Venice film festivals.

Koch Lorber will also issue the two-disc DVD of Federico Fellini's "La Dolce Vita." The Sept. 7 release carries a $34.98 list price.

Koch Lorber is distributed by Koch Entertainment Distribution.

Fumination Productions will launch preschool-focused label Our Time Family Entertainment Sept. 7.

Fumination president Gen Fukunaga says the new imprint marks a "diversification of the company's profile into a robust market."

Fumination is best-known for animated series on DVD, including "Dragon Ball." The first wave of Our Time titles will include "Arthur Gets Along," "Connie and Friends" and "Connie's Adventures on the Farm."

Kultur is branching out into sports. The company, which mainly distributes performing arts DVDs, will release "The Wimbledon Collection—The 2004 Official Film" Aug. 31 for $24.95. "There isn't a lot of tennis product out there, other than instructional videos," VP of sales Sam Napolitano says. "We are looking for niche items that aren't an opening." Other sports titles will focus on the sagas of the New York Yankees, New York Mets and Brooklyn Dodgers.

Synergy Media Group previewed its latest TouchStand media kiosk at the VSDA show. The company will roll out the kiosk to video retailers in September.

The existing kiosk, geared to music retailers, is a touch-screen machine that allows customers to search for artist information, preview songs and learn about in-store events. The new kiosk will make a database of more than 180,000 movies and 6,000 previews. By scanning a DVD's bar code into the machine, consumers can get more information about the title.

The kiosk, which carries a $7,700 list price, leases for about $300 per month, according to Synergy VP of sales and marketing John Common.

BACK AT THE REGISTER: Kevin Smith launched his filmmaking career in 1994 with " Clerks," which revolves around the mundane yet hilarious lives of several New Jersey slackers.

This fall, fans can revisit the story of convenience-store employees Dante and Randal with " Clerks X," the film's 10th-anniversary DVD edition. Miramax Home Entertainment will release the three-disc set Sept. 7 for $34.99.

" Clerks X" includes audio commentaries, music videos, photo galleries and 90-minute documentary "The Snowball Effect." Smith says the documentary is his favorite bonus feature.

"It is check-and-block full of information, interviews from everyone and footage from way back," he says. "For me personally, it's a real 'This Is Your Life' kind of thing."

Smith, whose subsequent films include " Mallrats," " Chasing Amy" and " Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back," says he never would have guessed 10 years ago that " Clerks" would still have appeal in 2004. "I was always worried that it would just be a snapshot of that era, and that once the grunge era of the '90s was over, no one would think of it. But it holds up really, really well."

Smith also says that DVDs of his films are more valuable to him than theatrical releases. " Mallrats was a theatrical flop," he notes. "Now it's one of my most popular movies, and it's all because of video."

Smith's " Jersey Girl" also debuts on DVD Sept. 7 from Miramax ($29.99).
## Billboard Top DVD Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label/Distribution</th>
<th>Label &amp; Number</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
<th>Release Date</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>COLD MOUNTAIN (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment</td>
<td>0697539096106</td>
<td>Julie Law, Nicole Kidman</td>
<td>2003-08-01</td>
<td>$29.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>THE CHEETAH GIRLS</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment</td>
<td>0599002346106</td>
<td>Raven-Symone</td>
<td>2004-04-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>SPOOKY DOO &amp; THE LOCH NESS MONSTER</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment</td>
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<td>Scooby-Doo</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>SPIDERMAN VS. DOC OCK</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>DORA THE EXPLORER: SILLY ADVENTURES</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment</td>
<td>0599002346106</td>
<td>Dora The Explorer</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>BROTHER BEAR</td>
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<td>0697539096106</td>
<td>Dakota Fanning, Emma Watson</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE</td>
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<td>Ben Stiller</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (2-PACK)</td>
<td>Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment</td>
<td>0599002346106</td>
<td>Kurt Russell</td>
<td>2004-01-21</td>
<td>$14.98</td>
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### Notes
- All DVD sales for the week of May 23rd, 2004. DVD sales are reported through Rentrak Corporation. All rights Reserved.
- Data source: Nielsen VideoScan, Inc. All rights reserved.
- Nielsen VideoScan, Inc. is an independent measurement service that reports on U.S. home entertainment sales. Nielsen VideoScan combines physical and digital transactions. 
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- A unit of VNU Business Media, Inc.
BY CHRISTOPHER WALSH

NEW YORK—Among the creative and novel ideas conceived to remedy slumping sales and rekindle passion for popular music, Umixlt Music Technologies may prove to be the most innovative and controversial.

Inspired by a 17-year-old musician's desire to isolate individual instruments on a CD—the better to learn parts—a Umixlt-enabled CD is a mixed-mode disc encoded with traditional two-channel mixes of songs and six individual tracks of one or more particular songs, along with Cakewalk Media Mix software.

Boston-based music software developer Cakewalk is known for such digital audio workstation products as SONAR 3, the core technology for the Media Mixer.

Inserting a Umixlt-enabled CD into a Windows PC launches the Media Mixer, which includes a standard-type DAW mix window with various mixing and editing features including mute and solo.

Users can create their own mix of the six separate tracks loaded on the CD, as well as add their own instrumental or vocal parts to two additional tracks. Tracks are encoded with a proprietary Cakewalk tool that performs Windows Media 9 Series encoding and applies Microsoft-developed digital rights management.

THE IP QUESTION

Umixlt Music Technologies is a joint venture between Webster Hall Records and Enterprise Goldenhawk.

The latter was co-founded by James DeVito—the 17-year-old musician—and his sister Marissa with help from their father, producer (and longtime Columbia Records exec) Don DeVito. Webster Hall Records, like the popular New York nightclub of that name, is run by Lon Ballinger and his family.

“We can be the ambassadors of good news for the industry,” Ballinger says. “Music isn’t going to be done the way it used to be. The big stars might not use their hits [for Umixlt-enabled tracks] right off the bat, but they might use the No. 7 or 8 song, or something they’ve had in their library for a long time. Artists want to be out there with their fans.”

Ballinger says that as a producer, DeVito is adamantly pro-artist and supportive of intellectual property rights, “and I come from the dance club arena and was more flexible with the [Umixlt] idea. He said, ‘Why don’t you and the kids talk and think about this plan they’ve got about isolation [of discrete tracks], because I talked to some people, and it might be possible.’”

The first Umixlt-enabled releases are Webster Hall Records’ “Transworld Vol. 8,” compiled and produced by German duo the Warp Brothers, and sets by Man With Van and Umix.

Interactivity is a new feature for the prerecorded CD, apart from the limited features of enhanced CDs. Its future depends on acceptance by artists and labels at large. But six discrete tracks represent more bandwidth than can be downloaded, the technology’s creators assert, so copyright holders are protected from online dissemination.

Further, DJ-created mix CDs, the popularity of mash-ups and the entrenched practice of sampling beats and musical phrases have fostered a culture in which the notion of intellectual property is, at least, flexible.

Umixlt’s developers are confident in its acceptance. “I think the artist is really going to go for it,” Ballinger says. “That’s who has to go for it.”

Remembering A ‘Committed’ Studio Master

David Baker, a Grammy Award-winning recording engineer and producer, died in his sleep July 14. He was 83.

During his 40-year career, Baker worked with such acts as Al DiMeola; Art Farmer; Medeski, Martin & Wood; Maceo Parker; John Scofield; John Zorn; and Sun Ra.

Baker recorded Shirley Horn’s “I Remember Miles” (Verse), which picked up the best jazz vocal performance Grammy in 1998.

“He was definitely a master of the art of recording,” says Kirk Imamura, president of Avatar Studios in New York. “He was also a very generous teacher and shared his knowledge, experience and opinions freely. Everybody he came into contact with here at Avatar was deeply influenced by him.”

“David was absolutely committed to his work,” adds Zoë Thrall, GM of Hit Factory, also in New York. “His intensity during sessions was legendary and he always kept us running, but the results were always magical. His contributions and dedication to the Audio Engineering Society—especially to the Historical Committee—will be greatly missed, as will his friendship.”

Baker was born Oct. 12, 1945, in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. His grandfather was a salesman for Columbia Records in the 1920s. His father, Harry, founded Baker Audio in Atlanta, which performed sound system installation and also housed a radio station. Baker began to make recordings there and soon coordinated sound for the Atlanta Arts Festival.

Baker recorded sermons, rallies, meetings and demonstrations in Mississippi in 1963 and 1964, which were later chronicled on the “Movement Soul” release. In 1967, he joined Apostolic Studios in New York, then home to Frank Zappa & the Mothers of Invention.

From 1973 to 1975, Baker was chief engineer for Vanguard Records, after which time he worked as a freelance engineer. In 1986, he began remastering the Vanguard Classics catalog for CD release.

Most recently, he had performed archival work for Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, and in May he was a panelist at AES’ New York chapter’s session “Does Quality Matter, Or Has the iPod Defeated the Listening Room?”

“David Baker was a true craftsman, and I was blessed to work with him on several projects,” engineer Rich Tozzioli says. “The techniques and skills he taught me were the kind only many years of experience reveal. He was a good friend of the recording community, and we will all miss him.”

A memorial service will be held Aug. 16 from noon until 10 p.m. at Avatar Studios. The service will include performances that will be recorded and given to family members.
Joss Stone's British soul stylings gain her a Mercury Music Prize nomination.

Canadian Majors Drop Names Into Indie Laps.

BY LARRY LeBLANC

TORONTO—The trimming of major-label rosters is creating A&R opportunities for Canada's independent-label sector.

According to sources, a wave of Canadian artists from major labels is available to independent labels here for direct signing, licensing or pressing-and-distribution deals. It includes mainstream artists Tom Cochrane, David Usher and Colin James; country singer Michelle Wright; all-styled Andy Stocharsky; and Headstones frontman Hugh Dillon.

These are artists the multinationals originally developed. Many have reached gold (50,000 units) or platinum (100,000 units) status in recent years but parted with their labels for varied reasons. "Just about everybody is knocking on our door," Lyras Entertainment president Geoff Kulawik says. "The majors aren't signing, and their cutting of acts is incredible."

Steve Jorda, A&R director at True North Records, says he also has been receiving calls from "previously gold or platinum artists who no longer have homes at the majors." He adds, "These are heritage acts, and they still have audiences." Such acts will be the focus of Icon Records, a digital-rights manager and conference keynoter Steve Johnston told Big Sound delegates. "It's going to be very, very good for the independent sector—and already is proving to be."

Johnston's prime message was that independent artists and labels should join forces to negotiate online terms equaling those of the majors.

Some indie perceives it as a two-tier fee system among online companies. They believe the fees they receive for their product are lower than what is paid to the majors.

"The new download companies know the major labels have the [top 40] product they want," Vodicka said. "Those labels have been strident about making deals on our own terms. But independents are not in a

Warner Nouveau
Chassagne Revamps French Affiliate.

BY EMMANUEL LEGRAND

LONDON—Thierry Chassagne has dramatically changed the shape and focus of Warner Music France since becoming its president in May. "It has been a very busy time for me," the former managing director of V2 France and Epic Music Group France says. "I like to act fast, and I needed to make some radical changes. We now have smaller teams [than before], but with a commando spirit.

Chassagne arrived at the Paris-based Warner affiliate (billboard.biz, May 4) to fill a position that had been empty since the July 2003 death of president/CEO Yan-Philippe Blanc. Retired Warner Music Spain president Saul Tagaro stepped in as WMF acting president until Chassagne's appointment.

Prior to taking his new role, Chassagne was founder-president of Up Music. That label, a 50/50 joint venture with WMF, launched in October 2002, after Chassagne left Epic.

Chassagne says he was happy at Up Music and admits that he hesitated when Warner Music International chairman/CEO Paul-Rene Albertini offered him the WMF presidency. "What excited me is that Warner today is a 100% music company with the mentality of an indie," Chassagne says.

Chassagne's experience at V2, Epic and the successful Up imprint has made him a respected force in the French industry. "He has a great track record," one competitor says, "and he is going to be a dangerous challenger."

Chassagne, who reports to London-based Albertini, is bringing a new focus to WMF. He says the company's priority is no longer market share, but profitability. In 2003, WMF was France's fourth-largest record company, with a 14.2% market share.

Diversification of revenue sources is another goal. "E-commerce, online distribution and ringtones are becoming a business reality," Chassagne says. "We are going to be extremely active in this field. We are also going to start co-producing concerts and getting involved in merchandising."

LEANER STRUCTURE

Central to Chassagne's plan was the elimination of WMF's traditional dual-label structure (billboard.biz, July 14).

During the past decade, stand-alone (Continued on page 53)
### Japan

#### Singles
1. **Your Eyes**
2. **Dry Your Eyes**
3. **Lolita's Theme**
4. **Some Girls**
5. **Burn**
6. **See It in a Boy's Eyes**
7. **Move Ya Body**
8. **Only Lonely Glory**

#### Albums
1. **Hit**
2. **The Streets**
3. **Lost Lovers**
4. **Amazing**
5. **My Immortal**
6. **Don't Go (Girls & Boys)**

### United Kingdom

#### Singles
1. **F***K (I Don't Want You Back)**
2. **To Who It Says to Me**
3. **This Love**
4. **I Wanna Know**
5. **Left Outside Alone**
6. **Trick Me**

#### Albums
1. **Vasco Lui**
2. **Boy Band**
3. **Erasure**
4. **Lloyd Bank**
5. **The Tragically Hip**

### France

#### Singles
1. **Miss Adorables Vecinos**
2. **Diras Que Estoy Loco**
3. **Y Ademas Es Imposible**
4. **Dragostea Din Tei**
5. **Left Outside Alone**

#### Albums
1. **Los Lunes**
2. **Vasco Lui**
3. **Boy Band**
4. **Lloyd Bank**
5. **The Tragically Hip**

### Germany

#### Singles
1. **Dragostea Din Tei**
2. **Femme Like U**
3. **Mamae Uguer**
4. **Face a la Mer**
5. **Et C'est Parti**

#### Albums
1. **Dragostea Din Tei**
2. **Femme Like U**
3. **Mamae Uguer**
4. **Face a la Mer**
5. **Et C'est Parti**

### Hits of the World

#### Canada

- **I Believe**
- **Dreams**
- **Yeah!**
- **Everytime**
- **Let's Get It Started**
- **Spider-Man Theme**
- **Amazing**
- **Watch Your Money**
- **My Immortal**

#### Italy

- **F***K (I Don't Want You Back)**
- **To Who It Says to Me**
- **This Love**
- **I Don't Wanna Know**
- **Left Outside Alone**
- **Trick Me**

#### Spain

- **Miss Adorables Vecinos**
- **Diras Que Estoy Loco**
- **Y Ademas Es Imposible**
- **Dragostea Din Tei**
- **Left Outside Alone**

#### Australia

- **Angels Eyes**
- **Let's Get It Started**
- **Burn**
- **I Believe**
- **Four to the Floor**
- **Perfume**

### The Netherlands

- **Dragostea Din Tei**
- **Holiday in Spain**
- **Liefdeskappein**
- **Mopfie**
- **Counting Crows**

### Sweden

- **Dragostea Din Tei**
- **Holidays in Spain**
- **Liefdeskappein**
- **Mopfie**
- **Counting Crows**

### Norway

- **Dragostea Din Tei**
- **Holiday in Spain**
- **Liefdeskappein**
- **Mopfie**
- **Counting Crows**

### Switzerland

- **Dragostea Din Tei**
- **Holiday in Spain**
- **Liefdeskappein**
- **Mopfie**
- **Counting Crows**

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**Hits of the World is compiled at Billboard/London.**
Mercury Prize List Reflects U.K. Top 10

The U.K. music industry launched the Mercury Music Prize in 1992 to boost album sales in the quiet summer months. But several entrants on this year’s short-list—announced July 20—need a lot of boosting, judging by the U.K. charts.

Four of the 12 nominees were in the top 10 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. listing for the week ended July 24. The Cure’s “The Head On the Door” (Epic) tops the charts. But “Trick Me” by Anathakia (Epic) and “The Last Shadow Puppets” by John Maus (4AD) were also in the top 10.

The Cure are improving a lot. Their albums are much more listenable than when they last appeared in the top 10 in 1997.

Dizzee Rascal, a young London rapper whose debut album, “The Boy in da Corner,” sold 20,000 copies in its first week, is in the running. He’s currently in the top 10 with his second album, “From Da Corner 2 Da Corner.”

The Mercury Prize is sponsored by building society Nationwide. A panel of music media representatives and journalists will pick the winner, to be announced Sept. 7.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: Many have complained about an unconvincing imitation of American styles, but artists like the Streets and Dizzee Rascal appear on his own

MC ESTEBE: WEST LONDON REALITY

imprint Muté North America.

The act combines catchy pop with a dash of melancholy and ambient electronics. “Dead Cities” dropped in Europe in April 2003 through Label/EMI and has shipped 18,000 units globally.

The July 27 U.S. release, a double disc, adds five videos and sides. eclectic Seattle station KEXP and DJ Nic Harcourt of KCRW Santa Monica, Calif., played the album as an import. The resulting U.S. buzz drew Muté’s attention.

Continuing its support, KEXP will host an M3 in-studio performance Sept. 20, following the band’s brief U.S. tour.

GARY SMITH

PANK SPANKERS: Polish rock band Lady Pank proved it is still a major force in the local rock market with its 15th studio album, “Terza” (BMG) released June 28, the set peaked at No. 3 on the Polish album chart for the week ended July 24.

“Terza” reunites the band with lyricist Andrzej Mogielnicki, who co-wrote its domestic hits in the early 1990s. Lead guitarist Jan Borysewicz co-founded the band with Janusz Panasewicz in 1981. “The magic and fun of writing together is back big time,” he says.

Formerly on Koch International, Lady Pank signed to IBM in 1998.

ATHERYKOWIECKI

ALBARN IN AFRICA: Blur lead singer Damon Albarn has two side projects in development. A second album from his “cotton bar” Gorillaz is due this fall on Parlophone/EMI, but for now Albarn is in Lagos, Nigeria, recording an album with several West African musicians. Among them is Tony Allen, former drummer for Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti.

“It’s shaping up to be the most exciting thing I’ve ever been involved in,” Albarn says.

A new album will appear on his own EMI-distributed Honest Jon’s label. No release date is set.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON
Japan’s Victor Is Busy Multitasking

BY STEVE McCULRE

TOKYO—Leading Japanese independent label Victor Entertainment has spent much of this year developing a “multitasking” operation that it believes will redefine the role of a music company in Japan.

The new company, JVC Entertainment Network, is a service and content provider dealing in virtually all aspects of the record business except distribution.

Victor is part of Japanese consumer-electronics giant JVC.

“We will be handling marketing, merchandising, and advertising,” JEN COO Hiroshi Inami says. “Ideally, we want to be in control of the whole picture. This is the business model of the future.”

JEN CEO Teruo Saegusa was previously senior managemen
t director of Victor’s A&R division. “Until now, record companies in Japan haven’t been serious about copyrights or other businesses they had rights to, and [they] relegated these tasks to subsidiaries,” Saegusa said. “In the new model, we plan to take the status of these businesses and expand them.

“Instead of downsizing and laying off people,” he adds, “we’re trying to develop this business so that we can absorb people from the sector that isn’t making money.”

Inami and Saegusa report to JEN chairman and president Yoshiishi Shibuya.

NEW BUSINESSES

JEN is a wholly owned subsidiary of Victor. It originated from the JEN merger of three of the parent’s divisions: artist-management/production company Hit Vibe (a joint venture with Warner/Chappell), music merchandising company Victor Creative Agency and record-import arm Victor Musical Trading.

Since the January launch, Victor Music Publishing has also been integrated into JEN. Victor Entertainment continues as a record company with no other changes in divisions or personnel.

Hiro Productions, a part of the Hiro Group of artist management and production companies, of Victor’s other companies, was integrated into JEN.

JEN is also focused on creating a variety of companies in developing entertainment content, with music the primary—yet not exclusive—focus. Victor will not automatically release content that JEN develops.

In the previous two months of the JEN's existence, the new company has raised the masters, they have you other rights, such as merchandising and publication rights.

Saegusa believes the use of the JVC brand will raise recognition of the new company outside of Japan. The country’s record companies have “limited themselves to Japan by their thinking, and we want to show them that it is possible to succeed overseas,” he says. “So we decided to use the brand name of JVC. In Canada, for example, nobody has heard of Victor, but they’re familiar with JVC.

Outside Japan, JEN is working on an artist-by-artist basis to strike deals with local labels and publishers for its artists and writers. JEN has a system of alliances with such companies. Saegusa and Inami are eager to license product from independent companies out there that are interested in this market,” Saegusa says. “As a respectable company, we’ll also work with JVC to find sponsorship opportunities for music-related events.

In the release of 2004, Victor Entertainment claimed a 6.6% market share, compared with 8.6% for the same period in 2003.

Oz Indies

Continued from page 49

the position to make those calls.”

Vodicca said AIL held discussions with Johnston during the conference, and the two established a dialogue with Europe’s independent sector. Among the topics Vodicca mentioned were license agreements and sharing opportunities in international touring and marketing initiatives.

No industry-sanctioned data exists on the market share of Australian independent labels. Leading retailers here estimate that indies accounted for 20% of market value in 2003. Acknowledged market leader Universal Music Group has 24%, with Sony Music close behind at 22%.

AIL claims that its 250 label members represent 90% of indie sales.

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES

The growing opportunities for digital music market offers were a key topic at the conference.

Another keynote speaker was Kevin Bermeister, Sydney-based CEO of online content supplier Alnet. The company is a defendant in Australian labels’ ongoing copyright-infringement suit targeting Sharman Networks, which operates peer-to-peer file-sharing network Kazaa.

Bermeister spoke on “the new world order and what’s around the corner.”

He told delegates that as litigation against the companies progresses, “there will be, in fact, a return of profit to artists.”

Bermeister also sat on the “Blanket Licenses, Downloads, Free Trade and the Indies” panel, alongside Michael Speck, GM of the Australian Record Industry Assn. and piracy investigator unit.

Speck told delegates there is “nothing revolutionary” about marketing through the Internet.

The music industry is always going to be based on a model where people pay for a product, and the copyright owner has the last word on use of that copyright,” he said.

Big Sound is organized by the state of New South Wales and the country’s body Q Music. This membership-based association promotes the development of the local music industry.

The conference’s 200 paying delegates included representatives of labels, publishers, media, legal firms, recording studios, retailers and Internet companies, as well as artists.

Warner

Continued from page 49

divisions WEA Music and EastWest France each developed local acts and handled international repertoire, and Australian-based Chappell scrapped that structure, putting all international repertoire (an emphasis on U.S. product) through a new unit called WEA.

Local repertoire previously signed to WEA Music or EastWest, as well as new local signings, are now handled by a new label called Warner. Warner and Warner each have their own marketing and promotion teams.

“Our goal is to develop our local roster and maximize our international repertoire,” Chappell says. “By focusing on international repertoire on one side and domestic on the other, we can make the best of our strengths.”

WEA managing director Alain Veille, who previously held that role at WEA France, is also in charge of WME’s special-marketing and export units. Rose-Helene Deplasse, previously promotions director at Epic France, has become WME managing director.

“I am really happy that Rose-Helene joined,” says Chappell, who knows her from his Epic days. “She is very experienced, likes artists and has a great marketing expertise.”

FEWER DOMINIONS

Overall, Chappell says, WME lost 48 jobs in the restructuring, reducing its head count to 135.

Among those who departed were Westman managing director Michael Winjen and WME co-directors general Michel de Souza and Eric Viard.

Chappell says the company has simplified its executive structure, with top management directly reporting directly to him.

“Were there more dominions in the company,” he says. “We needed a lean structure, reflecting what the company now can handle.”

“Every one of these decisions was made by the state of the company, they were all made by the people.”

The changes at WME have led some slimming of the local roster, but Chappell says all major domestic acts remain signed to the company. They include pop singer Helene Segara (licensed from indie label Orlando) and rapper MC Solaar.

Forthcoming releases include new albums from chanteur Mano Solo, urban act Tragedie, instrumentalist Jean Michel Jarre, pop act Serena and R&B act Lynnhwa; live sets from alternative rockers Têtes Raides; Dance music records; and live sets from Segara and France Gall.

“The past two months have been very intense,” Chappell says. "It’s a good team, with strong core at this summer and fall of 2004, in both local and international repertoire. I am really looking forward to the rest of the year.”

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**Egrem Ready For The World**

**Cuba’s State-Owned Label Negotiating Global Distribution Deals**

**BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

Havana—Cuban state-owned record company Egrem is getting an international launch for the first time in its 60-year history. The label’s catalog features major names in Cuban music, including the Grammy Award-winning members of the Buena Vista Social Club: Compay Segundo, Ruben Gonzalez, Omara Portuondo and Ibrahim Ferrer. Egrem will enter the U.K. market Aug. 30 with 10 CDs to be released through a deal with Beckenham, England-based Proper Music Distribution. Similar independent deals are set for other European territories in coming months.

These are the first direct international distribution deals for Egrem; the label’s repertoire is currently available outside Cuba only under licensing deals.

“We’re looking forward to working with Egrem and Proper on this fantastic catalog and unearthing some previously unheard classic gems,” says Simon Coe, London-based world and roots music buyer at Virgin Megastores.

The first batch of releases features recordings by such acts as Beny More, Chucio Valdes and Los Van Van alongside new material from some of the 33 acts on Egrem’s current roster. Among those are pop group Buena Fe, 20-year-old singer Leticia and rap trio Triangulo Oscuro.

A second batch of U.K. releases—including a boxed set of early recordings by the Buena Vista members—will follow in November.

“Since the [Cuban] economic crisis of the early 1990s, we have had to learn to see music as a business and get to know foreign markets,” Egrem international commercial division director Minerva Rodriguez says. “Now we are ready to compete.”

**LIVE EXPERIENCE**

The choice of the United Kingdom as its first overseas territory coincides with Egrem striking a deal that will see its acts appear at a new London venue. The artists will perform regularly at the new Floridaia bar/restaurant on Wardour Street in London’s Soho district, under an agreement with London-based partners Havana Holdings and Conran Holdings.

These companies are due to open the venue in October on a site previously used by the Marquee Club, one of London’s key music venues in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Floridaia, which will have music performances six nights per week, will feature Cuban artists brought in by Egrem.

Havana Holdings is the parent of Floridaia Events, a production company behind Cuban-themed events in the United Kingdom. Conran Holdings is the parent company of architecture/design, restaurant and retail conglomerate the Conran Group.

The company has five recording studios and operates several live venues in Cuba under the name Casa de la Musica. It has franchised that brand in Germany, Italy, Spain and Brazil.

The majors have also been offering licensing or distribution deals for acts that were formerly directly signed.

“We’re down to eight direct signings,” Universal Music Canada senior VP of A&R Alan Reid says. “We were at 14 or 15.”

**INDIOPORTUNITIES**

Canadian independent labels have traditionally been geared toward nurturing the types of artists that U.S. nationals wouldn’t pursue. Now they are in a position to give a voice to well-known Canadian artists like Cochrane, whose 1992 Capitol album, “Mad Mad World,” is diamond-certified (1 million units sold) in Canada.

“Tom is a very attractive artist for an independent, and they are all interested,” Cochrane’s manager, Bernie Breen, says. “We’re now deciding what is the best route for him to go, whether with a major, an independent or on our own.”

James’ manager, Vancouver-based Paul Mercs, adds that a label suitor must be able to take advantage of business opportunities internationally.

“We are in a position with Colin to pick the kind of deal we want,” he says. “But the ultimate consideration is what we get on an international basis [in terms of] relationship or clout.”

David Usher parted with EMI Music Canada earlier this year after a decade with the company, first as frontman with Moist and then as a platinum-level solo artist.

“Looking at different opportunities,” he says, “It was good to be at a major for such a long time, but it’s exciting being on my own. Maybe I will be shocked by what’s out there for me.”

Steve Blair, director of A&R for Warner Music Canada, says, “Often, doors get closed on you [internationally] because an artist has been around for a while. At some point financially a deal doesn’t make sense.”

It will be difficult, sources say, for these acts to repeat their previous success through a new deal with a major label. They face more restrictive promotional budgets and lesser clout at retail and radio.

Indie sources, however, contend that many of these acts are capable of selling 10,000 to 30,000 units—enough to succeed on these smaller labels.

“We can still make a profit selling 5,000 or 10,000 records,” says George Marnats, A&R VP at Netwerk Productions in Vancouver.

Da Silva agrees. “With these acts, the brand has been built,” he says, “and you don’t have to go gold to make money.”

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Global
Continued from page 5

Just five weeks after that event, Warner Music International released the band’s new set, “Live in Hyde Park,” July 28 in Europe and Aug. 2 in other territories. It is the act’s first live album. It also is the first major project handled by WMIs new global marketing team.

“When the [Hyde Park] shows were put together, we spoke to the band’s manager [Peter Mensch of Q Prime] about releasing a live album from the show,” London-based WMIs executive VP of marketing John Reid says. “It just happened that the shows were so successful that they broke all records. The album documents a fairly unique event.”

New York-based Mensch says the album-release pattern follows the route of the tour.

“We’re putting it out where they played,” he says. “This is like a souvenir of the show, a record for the people who went to see them. We thought it was a cool idea.”

“Live in Hyde Park” will not be released in the United States or in Latin America because the group did not play there on tour, Mensch says.

TAILORED APPROACH
Reid says WMIs new global marketing structure is tailored for such projects as the Peoples’ album.

The company has always aimed to maximize the potential of its albums and catalog, he says. That attitude bore fruit in the week following the Hyde Park shows, when the band had no less than four titles in the Official Chart Co.’s top 75 albums chart.

“In the past, we were fairly effective, but I want to bring in speed and the ability to react quickly,” Reid says. “We will work fewer records harder and increase the focus. We have a small priority list. We owe it to artists to give more than a shot, try harder, be smarter, quicker and deliver a better service.”

Mensch says, “John is a good marketing guy. The changes are fine by me.”

My feeling is that if we make good records, people will buy them.”

WMI chairman/CEO Paul Rene Albertini announced Reid’s promotion in May. At that time, he said the role of the former WEA London Records U.K. managing director was to be “the champion of repertoire exploitation” internationally for U.S., British and non-American product with the potential for global development. He is also responsible for introducing non-U.S. repertoire to Warner Music U.K.’s labels.

British repertoire was previously worked internationally by a team directly attached to Warner Music U.K. The new WMI structure—recently moved west from central London to WMI’s times central district—now incorporates international exploitation of British-signed repertoire and the marketing of global priorities into one team.

Reid calls his team “lean and mean.” It consists of 18 people, working front-line and back-catalog material. He has structured it by repertoire source, echoing Warner Music Group’s setup with Atlantic and Warner in the United States.

The Atlantic team at WMI in London is headed by Dion Singer, who handles the U.S. product coming from Atlantic, as well as British repertoire. An executive responsible for the Warner stream will be appointed shortly.

Projects on the Warner Music global priority list are the major focus for WMI. Reid says his team is concentrating its efforts on releases by Muse, Jet, The Streets, Brandy and the Darkness. Upcoming key releases for fourth-quarter 2004 include albums from R.E.M., Enya, Staind, Laura Pausini and Alejandro Sanz.

However, he is keen to point out that the emphasis on priority acts does not prevent other albums from enjoying international development throughout Warner companies around the globe.

“Some [currently successful] projects like Michael Bublé started to exist outside the priority list pattern,” he says. “We work with repertoire owners and look at the ways to build an environment for their artists,” Reid adds. He says he aims to act as an interface between repertoire owners and the territories working the projects.

“We trust the territories, they know their markets; it is up to us to help them do their job better,” Reid says. “Sometimes central functions can be bureaucratic, but when done properly, it can be helpful.”

Agents
Continued from page 5

Although touring took center stage at the International Assn. of Assembly Managers conference, held Feb. 23-27 in New Orleans, March 31. The organization has 7.2 million in assets, $5.1 million in liabilities and $2.1 million in net assets. Revenue for the past fiscal year, which ended March 31, was $4.04 million, and expenses were $3.8 million. Operating income is $178,000, and the net surplus is $258,000.

Earl succeeded Mike Kelley of New Zealand’s Christchurch Town Hall. IIAAM executive director Dexter King discussed information pertaining to reorganization of IIAAM and membership. The staff has been revamped into teams: sales and marketing, professional development and business and finance.

IIAAM membership totals 3,626. Out of that group, active membership is 2,320.

Orders say 1,075 people attended this year’s event, along with about 307 exhibitors, both on par with last year’s figures.

Next year’s show will be held July 14-19 in Washington, D.C.

RAY WADDELL AND JILL KIPNIS

Next IAAM Prez Looks Ahead

Earl Wants Budget, Membership To Increase

Concerts and related events are a top priority for the new president, who will serve one-year terms.

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RAY WADDELL AND JILL KIPNIS
Tuneful 'Christmas Carol' Heads for TV

Programming

TV's love affair with musicals is heating up with a winter holiday favorite. NBC recently announced the all-star cast for "A Christmas Carol: The Musical," which the network will air Nov. 28.

Emmy Award-winning actor Kelsey Grammer will star as Ebenezer Scrooge. The cast includes Jason Alexander ("Seinfeld") as Jacob Marley, Jesse L. Martin ("Law & Order") as the Ghost of Christmas Present, Jane Krakowski (" Ally McBeal") as the Ghost of Christmas Past, Geraldine Chaplin ("The Ghost of Christmas Future and Jenny Love Hewitt as Emily, Scrooge's lost love.

Hallmark Entertainment will present the musical, which is being produced in Budapest, Hungary.

The program is part of the booming trend of made-for-TV musicals (Billboard, Aug. 30, 2003). This one will be set in the Madison Square Garden production of "A Christmas Carol," which features a script by Tony Award winner Lynn Ahrens (who wrote the teleplay) and the music of Academy Award and Grammy Award-winning composer Alan Menken ("Aladdin," "Beauty and the Beast").

EMMY NODS: A&E reigns supreme as the network to earn the most 2004 Emmy Award nominations for music specials. "A&E in Concert: Paul McCartney and Wings" garnered five nods, including best variety, music or comedy special. The program featured McCartney's first concerts in Russia.

The special was also nominated for multicamera picture editing for a miniseries, movie or special; technical direction, camerawork, video for a miniseries, movie or special; sound mixing for a variety or music series or special; and lighting direction (electronic, multicamera) for VMC excellence.

Also nominated in those latter four categories is "A&E in Concert: Sting: Sacred Love," a documentary about the making of the artist's album. "American Idol" received three nods: reality-competition program, lighting direction (electronic, multicamera) for VMC programming and technical direction, camerawork, video for a series.

Earning two nominations each were PBS' "Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues," the 46th annual Grammy Awards telecast, "Harry Connick Jr.: 'Only You' in Concert" and composer Al Clausen for his work on "The Simpsons." The 2004 Emmy Awards will be presented Sept. 19 at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles and will air live on ABC.

"AMERICAN IDOL" PART FOUR: Auditions for the fourth season of "American Idol" begin Aug. 4 in Cleveland. Although the minimum age requirement for contestants is still 16, this year's maximum age has been raised to 28, from 24.

Other dates and cities for auditions include Aug. 15 in Washington, D.C., Aug. 29 in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 31 in New Orleans; Sept. 12 in Las Vegas; Sept. 28 in Anchorage, Alaska; and Oct. 5 in San Francisco. The fourth season premieres on Fox Jan. 5, 2005.
Ashlee Simpson more than doubles her famous sister's best sales week, and the scary thing is, it could have been even bigger. With a first-week splash of 398,000 copies, the younger sibling easily conquers The Billboard 200, leading last week's champ, Jimmy Buffett, by 250,000 units.

From the moment her debut album went on sale July 20 with an initial shipment of 440,000 copies, Geffen, Interscope and Universal Music & Video Distribution were playing catch-up. Reorders that day from just two chains bumped exposure by another 150,000.

A few years ago, a label needed to ship out about twice as many copies of an indie demand title than it would scan during its first week to come up with a handsome opening sum. That Simpson could manage a Nielsen SoundScan week that almost equaled its initial shipment is testament to how quickly replenishment happens in the new millennium, and that labels have learned to better manage lean stock spreads.

By the album's eighth day on the market, UMDV had gotten total shipments of 1.4 million into the market. Even with that quick recovery, some stores were out of stock for as many as five days while the one-stops that would have offered stop-gap relief also ran dry.

Over the Counter.

By Geoff Mayfield

These are the problems that can unravel when consumer demand completely outstrips merchants' expectations. MTV series “The Ashlee Simpson Show” obviously drove this train, but lead track “Pieces of Me” is a bona fide hit, too. It jumps 8-3 on Top 40 Mainstream and combined sales of downloads and retail-available singles surpass 100,000.

Pricing helped, too. “Autobiography” came to market with a developing-art price of $13.98 and was sale-priced at $9.98 in circulars at Best Buy, Target and Circuit City.

Big sister Jessica Simpson, despite her obvious fame, has yet to earn a No. 1 album. The highest chart peak and biggest SoundScan week of her three albums happened earlier this year when the DVD-enhanced special edition of “In This Skin” yielded a sales week of 150,500 and a 1-2 leap.

Although the consumer press may tuck the older sister for seeing the younger one reach greater numbers, it goes without saying that Jessica's considerable celebrity opened the door for Ashlee's opportunity.

SINGULAR SENSATIONS: Proof of Ashlee Simpson's popularity extends beyond her album sales. In fact, the arrival of “Autobiography” creates a confluence that has become rare: the coexistence (Continued on page 60)
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**Greatest Gainer:**

- **Soundtrack**
  - From **#101** to **#1**
  - Title: *The Very Best Of The Beach Boys: Sounds Of Summer*

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of an album, a paid download and a store-available single.

If Simpson's lead track “Pieces of Me” is any indication, digital track sales seem to maintain the pace when an album hits stores but the physical single is more likely to decline, although in this case the retail single has been discontinued.

Hot 100 Singles Sales “Pieces” takes a 50% dip (selling almost 3,000 for the week) but rises 2-1 on Hot Digital Tracks with an increase of 3.5% to 13,500 (transacts 16,000). The digital version has sold 82,000 downloads in nine weeks. The “Pieces” single moved 22,500 in four weeks, selling less than 8,000 copies in its first frame. Aside from “Pieces,” Simpson places two other songs on Hot Digital Tracks and Trackers chart in No. 29 and the title track in No. 39.

GUFFAW: Aside from the Olympic Games and presidential politics, 2004 will be remembered for such watersheds as the growth of digitally distributed music, man’s first privately financed space flight and the renaissance of red-neck humor.

The last mentioned of those is illustrated by this week’s album charts. Featured prominently in promotional spots and press efforts on behalf of Jeff Foxworthy’s new WB series “Blue Collar TV,” Ron White realizes a 23% increase, good for Greatest Gainer tributes on Top Country Album (No. 13) and Top Heatseekers (No. 3). Oddly, sales on Foxworthy’s latest actually decline by 29% this frame, falling six places to No. 15 on the country list. Larry the Cable Guy, who, like White, has benefited from Comedy Central’s foray into “Blue Collar” programming, holds flat (No. 3 on Top Ron Catalog). Also, the Long Beach, Calif., native’s account, “Irresponsible,” tops the Best New Artist charts for the second week in a row.

DOUBLE PLAY: For the first time since the band released its live EP, Maroon’s sees set and its “Songs for Jane” album earn sales increases. And how.

Its original album returns to the top 20, earning The Billboard 200’s Greatest Gainer (27-20, up 27%). The chart’s largest percentage increase yields the Pacersetter award to “122.03,Acoustic” (63-42).

“Jane” benefit from that album’s third hit single: “She Will Be Loved” grows 22-12 on Top 40 Mainstream and 19-13 on Adult Top 40 while picking up 28 plays at VH1 and 18 views at Fuse. The EP’s first gain since it bowed four weeks ago comes thanks to a circuit-to-touted sale price of $7.98 at Target.

This marks the first time in more than a year that the same act has won the Greatest Gainer and PacerSetter in the same week. In the issue dated March 22, 2003, Josh Groban saw his self-titled album win the former and “Josh Groban in Concert” win the latter after a run of his visit to “The Oprah Winfrey Show.”

A GIANT’S FOOTPRINTS: The sales ripples stirred by news of an artist’s death usually only cause a week or two of impact on our sales charts. Throw out the book when it comes to the beloved Ray Charles.

“Andolpho” and “The Very Best of Ray Charles” have been fixtures for seven straight weeks on Top Pop Catalog. The former moves 24-16 with its first increase in a month (up 16%) while “Very Best” ranks No. 18. The two Rhino titles combined have surpassed 112,000 copies in that time.

Charles’ posthumous duets album, “Greatest Loves Company,” will be released by Concord at the end of August.

Additional reporting by Ed Christman and Silvio Petrolongo in New York.
### Billboard Top Jazz Albums

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### Billboard Top Contemporary Jazz

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<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Jazzmasters: The Smooth Cats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Andre Ward</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Stoppin' Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Chris Botti</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>A Thousand Kisses Deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Pete Belasco</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Deeper</td>
</tr>
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### Billboard Top New Age Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jim Brickman</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Ultimate Yanni</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mannheim Steamroller/C. W. McCall</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>American Spirit</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Peaceful Moods</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Purely Moods: Celestial Celebration</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Windham Hill America</td>
</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>100 Church Classics</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Steven Anderson</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Peaceful Music: Body &amp; Soul</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Wellness Music: Quiet Time</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Wellness Music: Spiritual Healing</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Wellness Music: The Healing Garden Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Karunesh</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Call Of The Mystic</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Peaceful Music For Sleep</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Wellness Music: Spiritual Healing</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Most Relaxing Classical Album...Ever!</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Legend Of The Amazon Women</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Legend Of The Amazon Women, Pt. II</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Legend Of The Amazon Women, Pt. III</td>
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### Billboard Top Classical Albums

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yo Yo Ma</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Ultimate Baroque Album</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>The Most Relaxing Classical Album...Ever!</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Legend Of The Amazon Women</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Legend Of The Amazon Women, Pt. II</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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### Billboard Top Classical Crossover

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<td>Purely Yanni</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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<td>Peaceful Moods</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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<td>Wellness Music: Body &amp; Soul</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Healing Garden Collection</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Karunesh</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Call Of The Mystic</td>
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<td>Peaceful Music For Sleep</td>
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<td>The Most Relaxing Classical Album...Ever!</td>
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### Billboard Top Classical Budget

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<td>1</td>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>Ultimate Yanni</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>Nielsen SoundScan</td>
<td>The Most Relaxing Classical Album...Ever!</td>
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With the most total detections that Hot Country Singles & Tracks has seen in any week since last fall, Reba McEntire’s “Somebody” rises 3-1 with a gain of 1,150 detections after a length of 30-week trek to the top. The song’s prior top gain was 465 detections in the July 17 issue.

Widespread industry buzz suggests that label-sponsored, back-announced promo campaigns at several station chains, like those described in the June 19 issue of Billboard, drove the title’s rise to No. 1.

A playback from Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems verifies at least one of those stations, WRCN Columbus, Ga., participating. It had two plays for “Somebody” during the middle-two 6 a.m. slot, compared with 20 spins in that daypart one week ago.

Other stations with significant jumps in total detections include WNKT Charleston, S.C. (8-39); KUBL Salt Lake City (10-39); KDKR Spokane, Wash. (8-39); KATM Modesto, Calif. (8-33); WRDF Nashville (11-33); and KHM Tucson, Ariz. (9-30). Of McEntire’s 1,150-spin gain, 485 were achieved in the overnight hours, roughly twice as much as the morning drive (278) and evening (211) hours.

The huge increase in detections launched a fiery discussion about how it was achieved.

Universal Music Group Nashville senior VP of promotion and artist development Scott Borchetta disputes the accusations. “We are absolutely being unfairly accused of buying No. 1,” he says. “This is a legitimate, big-hit record. Did we identify some opportunities that are totally legal to maximize spins? Yes, we did. But that does not take away from how powerful this artist is and what a big hit record this is.”

The industry’s tongue-wagging included guessing the price tag attached to this achievement.

“There is a lot of misinformation out there. The competition is quoting stupid numbers that I would never spend on one record, let alone one week,” Borchetta says. “We are celebrating this No. 1. It is a huge victory. Shame on anyone for trying to take that away.”

McEntire’s 5,450 detections are the most spins in a single week since Tim McGraw’s “Real Good Man” was detected 5,898 times in the Oct. 11, 2003, issue, one week before our

panel of monitored stations was trimmed from 147 to 129 stations with the revision of our minimum current music-frequency criterion. “Somebody” achieves this hefty total with spins at 121 monitored stations, eight fewer stations than “Real Good Man” needed to accumulate 4,817 in the Oct. 18, 2003, chart based on the smaller panel.

The gain for “Somebody” is the biggest increase on the country list for a No. 1 track since Daryll Worley’s “Have You Forgotten?” gained 1,035 plays in the April 5, 2003, issue, with airplay at 148 stations.

McEntire’s rise marks only the second time this has occurred since the beginning of 1993 that any No. 1 title has gained more than 1,000 detections in a week. The other three belong to Worley, Mark Wills’ “19 Somethin’” in January 2003 and Alan Jackson’s “Where Were You (When the World Turned Blue)” in January 2002. Wills’ single gained 1,224, spins, and Jackson’s gained 1,149 plays.

While McEntire sits atop the detections chart, No. 2 “Don’t Lie Like You Were Dying” enjoys a fourth week as the most-heard title with 39.9 million listener impressions. McEntire’s No. 2 single gains 4.8 million for a total of 37.1 million.

‘REASON TO LEAVE’ — The Reason” by Hoobastank sets the one-week detections record on the Adult Top 40 chart with 4,043 spins as it spends its fourth week at No. 1. It surpasses the mark set by recent chart-topper ‘This Love’ by Maroon5, which peaked at 4,001 detections in the July 5 issue.

Meanwhile, Jolo’s “Leave (Get Out)” holds at No. 1 on the Top 40 Mainstream chart for a third week and shows no signs of letting up. The song’s lead of 2,197 detections over Christina Milian’s “Dip It Low” at No. 2 is the smallest chart gap this has ever seen.

Prior to this issue, the largest spin differential between the top two tracks on the Top 40 Mainstream chart occurred in April 2000 when 1,990 detections separated Mariah Carey’s “Anyway” from runner-up “Maria” by Santana Featuring the Product G&B.

‘MOTION DETECTOR’ — “Slow Motion” by Juvenile Featuring Soulja Slim Tops the Billboard Hot 100, knocking Usher’s “Confessions Part II” out of the top slot after a two-week run.

With ‘Lean Back” by Terror Squad at No. 3 on the Hot 100 and “Move Ya Body” by Nia Sky Featuring Jaba at No. 4, Universal Motown Records Group has three of the chart’s top four songs. That is for first for UMWR, which formed in 2000 when Universal Music Group absorbed Polygram’s labels.
Dance

Continued from page 1

artists are signing give them complete creative freedom and allow them to retain ownership of all master recordings.

"I was able to make the record I wanted to make, without a label person telling me what or what not to do in the studio," French electronic dance music artist Miss Kittin says of her new-found freedom.

Such arrangements also are working for the labels, since less money has to be invested initially. There is no need for a huge advance to cover recording costs or to develop an artist's career.

Naturally, this new way of doing business is greatly affecting the A&R process.

Miss Kittin (aka Caroline Hervé) is a prime example. When it came time to release her solo debut, "I COM," she knew that she did not want to "sign my life away," she opened the doors to Nobody's Bizness in Berlin, where she lives.

"It was an excuse to not sign with a label," she explains. "It was also a way for me to not give up my master recordings."

Miss Kittin licensed "I COM" to EMI's Labels imprint in France. Labels has since made deals for the album with other EMI Labels, including Nouvante in the United Kingdom and Astralwerks, which issued the title June 1 in the United States.

Similarly, New York-based dance/ pop artist Amber recently founded her own label, JMC Enterprises. Formerly signed to Tommy Boy, Amber is in the process of licensing her new album, "My Kind of World," to various labels around the world. In North America, Navare will distribute the album.

"I now have the final say in what my music should be," Amber says. "Each licensing deal must be handled individually—so you want the right global partners."

LABEL ROLE CHANGES

Many in the industry acknowledge that the function of the label is shifting, and what worked yesterday is not working today.

"Except for international priority acts with huge crossover potential, world巡sell as a thing of the past," says Kuros Nasseris, president of Nasseris Music Business Solutions in Washington, D.C., who manages Van Dyk and DJ Rashad.

Labels as assemblers focusing more on marketing and distribution and less on artist development, likening today's label to a "big filing cabinet with lots of drawers, with artists selecting the drawers they need."

When given the choice, Nasseris believes most dance/electronic artists would choose "the drawers labeled "marketing.""

In this scenario, Nasseris adds, "developing the artist's story rests on the shoulders of the artist, management and often an independent publicist."

Nasseris artist Van Dyk released the recording of his most recent album, "Reflections." In addition, he covered the costs of all remixes and videos. He then licensed the finished product to 20 companies throughout the world.

Mute released "Reflections" in North America last year.

DO THE MATH

Traditionally, a dance/electronic artist would sign a six-figure deal with a label, with an option for additional albums. The details would depend on the artist's reputation and the number of territories covered in the deal.

Today, artists who license their work directly to labels in various markets receive five-figure sums from each label. And, as many managers point out, the resulting amount is usually more than the advance for recording a first album.

Artists like Van Dyk prefer such deals. "This gives him more freedom and allows him the opportunity to find the right label for each album," Nasseris says.

George Manatis, senior VP of A&R at Nettwerk Records, says, "Most managers are now going this route, especially when they are renegotiating deals of previous releases."

Because the labels do not end up owning the masters, these new deals have the potential to be less lucrative for them. That is, unless the label works with the emerging technologies and marketing channels for digital distribution.

"This new scenario almost makes the record label have to do its job," says New York-based Gary Salzman, founder of Big Management, who oversees the careers of Jason Nevins, Ray Roc and Mike Rizzo, among others.

Nevins has licensed his new producer-driven project, the Funk Rocker, to Tommy Boy for North America, Southeast Asia, South Africa and Australia. Sanctuary has it for all of Europe. Additional deals are being worked on for Japan, China and South America.

FIND YOUR NICHE

"By going with specific—oftentimes niche—labels, you are ensured of working with a local player who knows its market," says Caliente Entertainer Jorge Hijojeska, who manages Deep Dish.

Judy Weinstein, co-founder of Def Mix Productions & Industries—which oversees the careers of Grammy winners Frankie Knuckles and Morales, among others—adds, "Labels in specific markets know their retailers and radio stations. We want the charts, we want the sales, we want the radio."

And if things don't work out as planned, Hijojeska continues, "we can parachute out of these deals and go elsewhere with the next album."

For example, DJ Rashad, who Van Dyk licensed his debut album "All or Nothing" to Los Angeles-based, Koch-distributed independent label Kittin Deep Recordings, which released the title last March.

Under the terms of the agreement, Kittin says the label has the right to the album for North America and Mexico for a period of five to seven years, with the length dependent on sales.

Lawrence adds that Kittin Deep also has the right to sublicense the tracks to third parties for nonexclusive use throughout the world—provided that Lawrence approves the terms of any such sublicense.

"The label gave me an advance recoverable against sales," Lawrence says. "So, it makes sense for the label to work that much harder to sell that我对 many more copies of the album. It's like an incentive for the label to do good."

Still, KittinBeat GM Randy Sills views the arrangement as a "traditional deal" in that the title still goes through the label system.

That said, Sills acknowledges that the deal represents a "new type of relationship that gives the artist a bit more power."

For example, Lawrence is taking out his own ads in consumer magazines. He also will release 12-inch vinyl singles from the album on Kittin Deep label. And he can shop the album himself in international markets.

ADDITIONAL INCOME

In addition to benefiting from their own sub-licensing deals, artists who own their masters can generate additional income from synch licenses and other uses of their work in a variety of media.

"In order for an artist to make the most of his copyright, he needs to be in as much control as possible," says Amsterdam-based artist manager Olga Brooten. "He should be part of such operations."

For artists who are not part of such operations, Sills adds that deals for ancillary revenue are done. That is what forums like assist in the development of a label that can offer artists the support of what a great label can offer in various territories.

Basically, Mute founder Daniel Miller says, "you have to structure a deal for the interests of both the artist and the label. It's only the way the partnerships will work."

Miss Kittin says, "At the end of the day, you must figure out and know what you don't want. I think this one is very hard. I do not want to be linked for life to a label."

Pasing for a moment, she adds, "If you want for a label to make you famous, you may as well dream on. The artist must take matters into his own hands."

Taking Issue

Continued from page 8

with the Induc Act now pending in Congress.

And it is clear to us that protection from piracy will be needed on an ongoing basis. One area that illustrates this is high-definition digital radio. This new technology could be an exciting development for consumers—because it would give them better quality sound—but it does create a new set of challenges.

Specifically, HD radio gives rise to the possibility of copying songs off the broadcast and then rebroadcasting the copies on a different broadcast channel that will disable legitimate sales.

This does raise the specter of digital piracy that is much more extensive than what we have been seeing in recording piracy. These concerns must be appropriately addressed as HD radio standards are being developed.

AGREEMENT ON RATES

The second issue is that record labels and publishers must come to an understanding with regard to the pricing structure for all digital exploitation. A major hurdle to progress in the digital music world from the very beginning has been reaching an agreement on publishing rates for digital exploitation. Getting the digital downloading business up and running was severely delayed, because all the interested parties involved could not expeditiously work things out.

Consumer technology companies are equipped to deal with the distribution of physical goods but does not at this stage provide an adequate framework for digital distribution.

Congress has addressed the area of digital downloads for now, but we need to establish a comprehensive and flexible system that will allow us to move quickly to exploit new opportunities involving content in the consumer's hands. lengthy negotiations every time a new digital avenue emerges. Our collective inability as an industry to resolve this issue quickly has contributed to illegal distribution models flourishing.

The answer to this problem lies, I believe, in establishing a compensation system based on percentage of net receipts instead of the current statutory penny-based mechanical rate methodology. This approach would be flexible enough to allow for steady progress as new technologies and formats emerge—which we know will be inevitable.

INTEROPERABILITY

The third issue is that of [digital rights management] uniformity and interoperability. As long as there are different standards in the market, digital exploitation will not be able to achieve its full potential. We have seen examples from time to time of how conflicting standards retard the growth of new technologies.

We as an industry have an unprecedented opportunity right now: the chance to create a world in which consumers can purchase music from virtually anywhere and play it on any device. This is a scenario that would encourage more purchases and would also be more consistent.

In the traditional physical world, consumers are used to simplicity and consistency. This experience must flow to the digital world. We are facing an industry that has a tremendous amount of stake. It is not about deciding whose format and technology should prevail—interoperability will allow everyone to coexist in the market. It is about seizing the opportunity that full mobility has created for the distribution of music—to set up a seamless, consumer-friendly commercial infrastructure that will tremendously benefit not only the industry, but also our technology partners.

IN CONCLUSION

The last few years have been brutal for the industry, with many major labels being absorbed or disappearing. As an industry, we were unprepared for the ill effects and the onslaught. We took for granted that our copyrights would be protected. We were wrong.

When we did wake up to the reality, we had a deep hole to dig out of. When you lose 25% of your sales in three years, the effect on the bottom line is exponentially greater than that. One hopes that the pain of losing sales will be compounded in the long run, that the market has bottomed out and that going forward, the industry can operate in a more confident fashion.

One cannot underestimate the fact that the investment flow that is helping to shape the future music marketplace. It does mean that the collaborative effort must now involve more content companies, our technology and distribution partners, as well as the consumer, more consistently.

Consumer habits will play a much more important role going forward in dictating how business ultimately gets done. This is what forums like assist in the development of a label that can offer artists the support of what a great label can offer in various territories.

We have made progress in the past year, the future is uncertain. Will current sales trends hold up? Will record labels be able to adequately invest in the artist development process as the market struggles? Will our efforts at controlling piracy be successful? Will we all take the proper steps necessary to secure vibrant and consumer-friendly digital markets?

These are some of the challenges that will ultimately determine how the marriage between music and technology progresses.

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Sony BMG

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CEO, BMG COO Michael Smellie and Sony Music CFO Kevin Kelleher will have those same roles at Sony BMG. Both executives, who will emerge as major players in the new company and who will fall by the wayside remains unclear. The integration process is expected to run through 2008. What is immediately certain is that the five major global music corporations will now be reduced to four.

Indeed, one of the primary areas the FTC examined was whether Sony BMG’s size and scope would lessen competition, in violation of Section 7 of the Clayton Act or Section 5 of the FTC Act. The FTC approved the deal without asking for any concessions. Although Commissioner Moeller W. Thompson voted for approval, he said in a statement that the deal concerns him, particularity given the fact that he may be asked to undermine a potential collective exercise of market power on the part of the major labels.

Both companies issued statements on the deal’s approval and declined further comment.

BMG thanked the EC and U.S. regulatory agencies for their diligent review. “We now look forward to creating a global record label that will promise to be one of the most successful as well as a vast catalog of recordings,” its statement said.

Bono commented, “We look forward to establishing a dynamic new company that will be deeply dedicated to serving the needs of its artists, while at the same time enriching the lives of music lovers around the world.”

BY THE NUMBERS

Last year, the combined revenue of the two companies totaled about $9.1 billion, according to their financial statements. That includes an estimated $3 billion in revenue from such operations as publishing, manufacturing and Sony Music Entertainment Japan that are not a part of the merger.

The new company anticipates annual revenue of about $5.5 billion. Global leader Universal Music Group had revenues of $6.1 billion in its most recently completed fiscal year.

Currently, BMG and Sony employ some 13,500 people. With the job cuts—and excluding the publishing and electronic components that are booked—Billboard estimates the new company will have a staff of about 8,000.

BMG’s staff has driven explosive growth this year, with total U.S. market share reaching 16.4% in the first half from 13.7% in the same period last year.

Sony’s U.S. share is 13.8%, a decrease from 14.2% for the same period last year.

In the United States, BMG and Sony’s combined album market share at midyear stood at 20.3%, compared with UMG’s total of 27.1%, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

THE LABEL OPERATIONS

While layoffs are expected in most operating units, the U.S. labels at each company have already experienced significant cuts and consolidation. The hit at the mainstream label groups is expected to be right compared with other operations.

In the United States, Sony Music tapped Don Lenner as president of North American operations in April 2004. He oversees the company’s Franziska, Epic, and Fontana labels, which share services in sales and in R&B operations. Major artists include Bruce Springsteen, Prince, Harry Connick Jr. and Aerosmith.

For BMG, Clive Davis, the senior statesman among label chiefs, heads up North American operations as chairman/CEO. Reporting to him are Barry Weiss, president of the Zomba group, and BMG North America president/COO Charles Goldstein, who works as Davis’ No. 2 man in overseeing the RCA Music Group, which owns J Records and Arista. Top-tier acts include Rod Stewart, Usher, R. Kelly, Britney Spears and OutKast.

Jenner, who formerly worked for Davis at Arista, has taken his own legacy through the years with a long tenure at CBS and now Sony. It is unclear whether Jenner or Davis will head an overall label structure, or if the new structure could feature a Jenner overseeing Sony’s U.S. labels and Davis overseeing BMG’s labels. In R&B, BMG enjoys a substantial edge over Sony Music. At midyear, BMG held 23.7% of the U.S. market, compared with Sony’s 13.9%, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Sony’s R&B operation is headed by Lisa Ellis, GM of Sony Urban Music. At BMG, the labels have a variety of key R&B execs.

Both companies have a large presence in Nashville. BMG’s RCA Label Group comprises three imprints: Arista Nashville, RCA Records Nashville and RCA Music Nashville has the Epic and Columbia imprints as well as the nearly defunct Monument label, which is home to the Dr. Duck’s own RLG is run by chairman Joe Galante, who is perennially one of the leading profit producers at BMG, according to sources. RLG’s top acts are Brookfield, Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Martina McBride and Lonestar. Its midyear market share of 25.4% was nearly twice that of Sony Nashville.

Sony’s RCA is run by president John Grady, who is said to have reinvigorated the label in the 15 months he has been there. Its biggest acts are Rodney Crowell, Patty Loveless, Montgomery Gentry, Travis Tritt and breakout through sensational Gretchen Wilson.

Sony’s LATIN STRENGTH

In Latin music, sources believe that many of BMG’s operations will be absorbed into Sony, the bigger, stronger company in the genre, both in the United States and the Latin region.

Both companies said any comment on U.S. Latin operations would be “premature.”

For now, Sony and BMG have their U.S. Latin operations headquartered in Miami. Sony’s operation falls under Sony Norte, which includes Mexico and Central America. All report to Frank Welzer, chairman/CEO for Latin America at Sony Music International.

At BMG, the Latin region and the U.S. Latin operation also reported to one regional head until last year, when the company dismantled its regional operations. Since then, Latin operations have reported directly to corporate headquarters.

Sony’s U.S. Latin has significantly reduced its operations, going from a major label to a marketing/promotion/distribution office that has no longer signs domestic acts. International signings continue through regional labels in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and elsewhere.

BMG’s Latin market share for the first six months of 2004 was 17.1%, down from 19.2% a year before. BMG’s market share for the period was 6.1%, down from 7.9%.

Even after the merger, the combined Sony and BMG would trail Universal’s Latin Music Group, but it had lost U.S. Latin market share in the past year, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Sony’s total Latin market share for the first six months of 2004 was 17.1%, down from 19.2% a year before. BMG’s market share for the period was 6.1%, down from 7.9%.

CLASSICAL & JAZZ

On the classical front, Sony and BMG have widely divergent rosters and aims.

Sony’s Classical mandate and repertoire range is far wider than that of BMG Classics.

Helmed by president Peter Gelb, Sony has a roster that includes jazz vocalist Janis Ian, Montini, Béla Fleck and Edgar Ramirez head of Donnaronnera, Ma Yo Mo, violinist Joshua Bell, tenor Marcelo Alvarez and such crossover artists as violinist Vanessa-Mae and A.R. Rahman, composer of the Broadway hit Bombay. BMG’s Classical also has a strong emphasis on film scores.

Because of prior restructuring, BMG Classics’ focus is far more tightly focused on traditional jazz and music.

Since spring 2003, BMG Classics has been an international company, with Nicholas Firth as chairman. Its crossover activities were moved to a new unit, Sony Classical’s Victoria Greem (now headed by Jeb Hart, senior VP of worldwide marketing), which reports to RCA Music Group.

Artists signed to BMG Classics include pianist Evgeny Kissin, conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt, early music ensemble Sequenzi, tenor Ramon Vergas and sibling pianists the Five Browns, whose debut is slated for next year.

Both companies have enormous classical archives; together, they will represent the richest single classical music vault.

Head-count reductions at Sony Classical and BMG Classics have left relatively small staffs. Executives privately assume that a merger of these divisions would use each label’s strengths to advantage, playing up Sony’s Classical’s current artist roster while emphasizing BMG Classics’ savvy exploitation of its archives.

At both BMG and Sony, big names have played home to many of the great names of jazz through the years, neither has an official jazz division anymore.

At Sony, Jeff Jones is senior VP of Columbia/Legacy, a stand-alone reissue operation, and Columbia Jazz, which is part of the Columbia Records Group. At BMG, jazz is part of the RCA Victor Group.

BMG and Columbia have been working their deep jazz catalogs, but roster-wise have limited signings. In addition to Fleck and Morheiten, major jazz artists at Sony include David Sanborn, Peter White and Chris Botti. RCA’s roster includes Eliane Elias, Tom Harrell, Fourplay and Dave Douglas. Jones also heads Sony’s lead Legacy Division, which has much stronger catalog to work with than BMG. Sony Music Strategic is headed by executive VP Chris Hamer.

At BMG, Joe DiMuro is executive VP of BMG Strategic Marketing. His responsibilities include reissues, special products, digital licensing and offshore catalog.

DISTRIBUTION ISSUES

The merger does not include the manufacturing and physical distribution operations of the two companies. However, the distribution sales operations, including both companies’ field staffs, are part of the deal.

The Sony-owned manufacturing and physical distribution operations are expected to keep those functions for the merged company in the United States. Some suggest that BMG’s facilities could pick up the international portion of the business.

The new entity will likely combine the distribution sales forces of both companies. Each is under relatively new distribution leaders. Jordan Katz, formerly with the artful Dix and recently named executive VP/GM of BMG Distribution. At Sony Music Distribution, Bill Frohlich has served as executive VP since March 2003.

The restarchers have different philosophies regarding sales and distribution. Sony Music in the States has gotten away from the branch structure; it maintains four regional sales offices. BMG has a branch structure with 10 sales offices, and each label has its own sales team.

Sony last year went to a shared-services approach, with each label managing its own staff and regional reporting to Tom Donnaronnera, executive VP of sales for Sony Music Label Group.

Donnaronnera and Frohlich have forged a relationship that is unique in the industry, removing the traditional walls between sales and distribution.

In this day and age of shuttering sales offices, the betting is the new company will adopt the leaner Sony approach. However, sources cannot foresee Davis and Weiss buying into the shared-services concept. Each likely will want to retain control of his own sales staff.

Meanwhile, RED Distribution, Sony’s independent distribution arm, will likely benefit from the merger as BMG has no independent distribution solution, an ingredient highly sought after by its labels.

Turning to legal and business affairs, Sony has those functions centralized at its worldwide headquarters in New York. Operations, while BMG has the corporate functions combined into one department. At the same time, each BMG label has its own legal and business affairs team.

So, for example, Julie Swidler, as senior VP of legal and business affairs for BMG North America, heads the legal department for RCA. But she reports to the Chairman, not to Jeff Jones, the RCA Group’s executive VP.

Additional reporting by Lella Cobo in Miami, Don Quellet and Anastasia Tsoulos in New York and Phyllis Stark in Nashville.
Plug.In
Continued from page 1

Instead, Card advised labels and service providers to look at digital sales—now forecast to total $17.2 billion by 2009, or 12% of the U.S. recorded music market—"as an incremental revenue stream comparable to the licensing business."

REAL SEeks harmony
Such reduced expectations did not dim Plug.In attendees' interest in such hot topics as new business models for subscription offers, marketing strategies for digital music services and the impact of new platforms. However, there is then the issue of interoperability among rival technology standards.

RealNetworks catalyzed the discussion when it announced the advent of Harmony. This technology solution is designed to make tracks from the RealPlayer Music Store compatible with Apple Computer's iPod, as well as with a number of portable music players that use Microsoft technology.

"Mass adoption of digital media services will [occur] when they are accessible off the PC," said Richard Wolpert, chief operating officer for RealNetworks. Similarly, the conference was buzzing about the pending release of Microsoft's new Janus technology, which is intended to allow subscription-content to be transferred to portable devices.

to date, subscription service music can only be heard on a personal computer, a factor that is believed to have limited the consumer appeal of these services. While Microsoft is keeping details of the technology to a minimum—the feature will be included in the next version of the Windows Media DRM released this fall—anticipation for the solution among labels, device makers and subscription service providers has been building.

Roo, Napster and MusicNow, all supporters of the Windows Media format, are among the companies that have expressed tentative plans to support Janus. BMG North America president/COO Charles Goldstuck predicted in the opening keynote of the conference that Microsoft's anticipated entry into the digital music market later this year will be the next major "threshold event" for the industry. (For excerpts from Goldstuck's address, see page 8.)

However, analysts say the jury is out on how the portability proposition will change with the introduction of Janus. Analyst Michael Gartenberg does not expect Apple to lose its position as the market leader for portable devices in the near term.

"Obviously the prospect of Microsoft entering the marketplace with Janus technology does have interesting implications," Gartenberg told Billboard. "[But] as long as the iPod can remain competitive in terms of functionality and feature differentiation, the walls won't come down that fast."

Welcome to the Balkans
Where and how commercial digital music can be moved off the personal computer is currently limited.

Subscription content cannot be moved to any handheld device, and U.S. devices are only starting to double as playback devices for personal digital music collections (see story, above).

Overall, competing technology standards have been incompatible, and the solution is to make the portability proposition. The compatibility debate is at the heart of Real's Harmony initiative.

Until now, music from the Real dashboard stores has been incompatible with the iPod and Windows Media-compatible devices because of competing digital rights management standards from Apple and Microsoft.

"We're having to supply MP3s to Harmony as a way to promote our RealPlayer Music Store in the face of competition from the likes of Napster and Apple iPhones. Users don't have to think about the format," says Sean Byan, senior VP of music services at Real. "The proposition is: Buy it here; move it anywhere."

Real hopes to move the digital music business closer to fulfilling the recording industry's desire to have tech companies shake hands in the interest of promoting digital downloads.

Apple's Itunes calls up Motorola
NEW YORK—The impact of iTunes has reached cell phones through a deal between Apple Computer and Motorola.

The partnership will introduce the iTunes music player on Motorola's next-generation phones and will mark the first U.S. mass-market attempt to merge an MP3 player with a cell phone. The deal also will allow iTunes users to export tracks to Motorola handsets.

"This is a big first step toward allowing the consumer to understand that the phone can be used as a music player," says Mark Friiser, CEO of New York-based Con.

Motorola expects his duties to change with their representative of the company's IMMP. Jackson and his office are there [in Nashville]. At the same time, I'm jealous. All that hard work has paid off for him." Baid joined CAA in 1991 to open the company's Nashville office in his garage as a one-man operation that has now grown to 35 people. His many CAA clients have included the Chicks, Twin, McBride, Clint Black, Alan Jackson and Reba McEntire.

Baid expects his duties to be spread out among CAA's Nashville staff, including senior agents Rod Essig and John Huie. "All the artists I have been representing [at CAA] are working with the rest of our agents, and nothing will change with their representation," Baid says.

He leaves on a high note: The agent's final major project was Twin's hugely successful 2003-2004 tour, which grossed $89 million and drew more than 1.2 million people to 55 shows. Baid oversaw both of Twin's headlining tours—the only ones she has done so far—which grossed a combined $170 million.

A Montgomery native, Baid got his start at the Good Music Agency in Missoula, Mont. He came to Nashville via Tulsa, Okla., where at the Halsey Co. he booked such acts as Merle Haggard, George Jones, the Judes, Oak Ridge Boys, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette and Dottie West.

Baid serves as chairman of the board of the Country Music Assn., in 2006 planned a big CMA gala to celebrate.

He does not have a non-compete contract with CAA but when he decided to leave the music business, he said, "I have no absolute plans. Liking the business, I'm very appreciative to have taken this ride. It's someone else's turn." Baid says.

Kobalt
Continued from page 7


"We see huge opportunities for the States," Lampcov says. "Not only is it the biggest market in the world, but there's an enormous amount of business for us, because there are (so many) other territories who don't have a dedicated world-wide. America is the territory they often focus on, but when you look into it, half of their royalties are coming from abroad."

"We're the fastest-growing music publisher," he says. "We have a solid capital base, and I do believe we have the model for the future."

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EMI's Cohen describes the move a "good first step." In a keynote session he noted that "there's no technology reason why services can't be interoperable."

However, Harmony does not allow tracks secured with Windows Media DRM to be directly transferred to the iPod or for iTunes tracks to be transferred to Windows-based devices from the iPod. Apple and Sony have been pushing hard to ensure portability of music purchased from Apple and Sony is still limited to those who buy company-controlled hardware.

What's more, the solution could prove to be a legal headache for Real. It does not have a license for Apple's FairPlay DRM technology. Instead, Real says it has engineered its own technology solution that allows RealMusic with Windows Media format tracks to work with iPods.

After the close of Plug-In, Apple issued a statement characterizing Real's action as that of a "hacker." It warned that it would explore the legal implication of Harmony.

Apple earlier rebuffed Real's overtures for a shared solution to interoperability.

Real says it is converting tracks into the Windows Media format under an existing license agreement with Microsoft.

"Harmony will be very important for Real, but they still have to convince people to make the switch to the Apple music store," Gartenberg said. "The key here is going after the mass market, knocking down technical barriers for the casual consumer, not just the tech enthusiast."

Alan McGlade, president/COO of MusicNet, said closed ecosystems will ultimately upset the casual music buyer who is regarded as integral to digital music growth.

For the time being, the MP3 remains the key portability solution for digital music. Apple does not "rip" tracks from CDs into MP3 format, can play on any portable device and comprise about 90% of all music on portable devices, according to Card.

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‘I’m Not Trying To Keep Up With Anyone; That’s A Myth’

BY RASHAUN HALL

Career longevity has eluded many rappers. Many rock, R&B and country stars maintain their hitmaking status for 20-plus years, but that rarely happens in hip-hop.

Unless you are LL Cool J.

Born James Todd Smith, LL Cool J (an acronym for “Ladies Love Cool James”) began his career in 1985, at the ripe age of 16, with the Def Jam release “Radio.” One of the label’s first artists, he has since released classics like “Bigger and Deffer” and “Mama Said Knock You Out.”

After establishing himself as a force in hip-hop, LL became one of the first rappers to take on Hollywood. He starred in such films as “Any Given Sunday,” “S.W.A.T.” and “Deliver Us From Eva,” as well as his own TV series, “In The House.”

The Grammy Award-winning rapper releases Aug. 7 with his 11th album, “The DEFinition,” on Def Jam/IDMG. The album, his first since 2002, features production from Timbaland, N.O. Joe and Dame Grease, among others. Lead single “Headsprung” resides at No. 16 in its ninth week on the Billboard Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart.

“The beauty of LL’s career is he has never had to have a comeback . . . he has never left,” Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio “L.A.” Reid says. “After 20 years he is physically, mentally and spiritually in the greatest space of his entire career. To add to that, he also has an amazing new album with hit after hit. We expect nothing less than stellar success from the ‘crown jewel’ of Def Jam.”

Q: What is the key to sustaining a career in hip-hop for as long as you have?

A: I’m not trying to keep up or adapt. I’m allowing myself to grow, evolve and create new music. Through the grace of God, I am a crusader. I’m not trying to maintain, because there is no one to keep up with; it’s about creating. If I were a painter, as long as I could look out at different landscapes and different things in the world, I could continue to paint new paintings.

I’m an artist in the truest sense—from the heart. I’m not trying to keep up with anyone. That’s a myth. Obviously, you have to work with the best people to make the best records, but it’s not about trying to keep up or hanging on. I’m trying to push the envelope by creating new music, movements and points of view. Even in the landscape of what’s out there now, I feel like “Headsprung” is new.

Q: You were one of the first MCs to diversify into film, TV and endorsements. Why was that important to you?

A: I don’t want to be in a position where I have to depend on one thing. I want to be able to express myself as an artist in a lot of different ways and be able to do a lot of different things. I just don’t want to limit myself.

Q: Many artists have also become entrepreneurs in the fashion and/or music worlds. Have you had any involvement in those realms?

A: As far as clothes are concerned. I own a piece of PUMA. After Karl Kani, that was one of the first [hip-hop] clothing lines, at that time, to bang out. Obviously, I’ve moved on since then. We’re all still friends, but I don’t endorse the brand anymore.

I do have my own clothing line, James Todd Smith. I am in the process of looking over three or four different distribution deals, and I will be putting that out soon. I’m sitting here talking to you with a James Todd Smith shirt on.

I also have a film production company, and I have acquired [the film rights to] a book. I am going to produce a film and create jobs for other young actors. So many actors feel like rappers and musicians are taking their jobs, so I want to produce movies and create jobs for them.

I am definitely in the process of diversifying, but I wanted to get myself on track musically first, and make sure that I was focused in that area. Now I’m in the process of spreading it out, and I’m going to do a few more things to create more jobs for more people. I want to create opportunities for people.

Q: What can we expect next from your acting career?

A: I just wrapped a movie with Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey and Justin Timberlake called “Edison.” It’s a thriller and will probably be out next year.

Q: What is your favorite LL Cool J album?

A: I’m still in the moment. I love my new album so much I can’t even tell you. It’s like, if you heard “Radio” and “Bigger and Deffer” before “Mama Said Knock You Out” came out and you were asking me that, I would be telling you about this album called “Mama Said Knock You Out” but you probably wouldn’t be hearing me, because you wouldn’t know what I know about this record.

I love “The DEFinition,” and that’s what I feel good about. I try to try each album stand alone. As an artist, album by album, you can judge them because all you can put into it is what you know and who you are at that time. So it’s not fair to judge one album [against] another, because every time I record an album, I have grown a little more.

Q: Why did you decide to return to the studio after two years to record “The DEFinition”?

A: I love what I do. That’s the easiest question to answer. I had no reason not to make music and not to continue to do what I love.

Q: Was there a particular moment that made it feel right for your return?

A: There wasn’t that large of a space between this and my last album. My last album did very well. My deal was up, and I ended up re-signing with Def Jam. I wanted to get right back to work after that, so I went in to record the next record.

Q: Is there a specific concept for the new album?

A: I wanted to make a party record. Something that was real flavorful and new, that would be hot in the clubs. Something that was a lot of fun to listen to and people could enjoy any time. That was the kind of album I wanted to make.

When I got with Timbaland, us working together really set the tone for everything. He [produced] the majority of the record, and we went from there.

Q: What was the inspiration for “Headsprung”?

A: As a track, it has an exciting energy that just feels really right. When we were in the studio, Timbaland came in and we had the beat playing . . . and we decided to get our “heads” sprung.

As far as it being the first single, I wanted to come with something different. I didn’t want to come with a ballad or a love song. I really wanted to approach this from the party point of view and really switch it up.

There was a minute there, when the record first came out, that a lot of people didn’t even know it was me. The whole point was to do something new—and we accomplished that.

Q: How has the music industry changed since you first got into the game 20 years ago?

A: I don’t think it has, really; it’s just gotten bigger. Hip-hop has gotten bigger—that’s the main thing.

Q: What’s your main concern as an artist today?

A: I don’t have any. I just have faith. You want people to enjoy the music, but that’s not a concern—that’s more of a hope and a belief. Either way, it is what it is. You can’t live your life in fear.

LL Cool J: Career Highlights

2004: Releases 11th Def Jam set, “The DEFinition”

1997: Releases autobiography, “I Make My Own Rules”

1995: Stars in TV series “In the House,” which runs until 1999

1992: Wins first Grammy Award for best rap solo performance with “Mama Said Knock You Out”

1985: Releases debut album “Radio”

1984: Records first single “I Need a Beat,” which is also the first release from Def Jam Records

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