Lucky 11
For Usher
Alicia, Kanye, OutKast
Also Big BMA Winners

BY GAIL MITCHELL

LAS VEGAS—Usher walked away the hands-down winner at the 5th annual Billboard Music Awards, held here Dec. 8. The singer/songwriter—who the day before picked up eight Grammy Award nominations (see story, page 5)—took home 11 Billboard awards, including artist of the year, R&B/hip-hop artist of the year and Billboard 200 artist of the year.
Alicia Keys, OutKast and Kanye West were the evening’s other major winners, taking home seven, five and four awards, respectively.
The ceremony took place at the MGM Grand Garden Arena and aired on Fox live on the East Coast, with a West Coast tape-delayed broadcast. Usher led all finalists with 15 nods, followed by Keys with 12. (Continued on page 16)

Usher opened the 2004 Billboard Music Awards with a performance of “Bad Girl,” a song from his multi-platinum album “Confessions.”

Digital Dough Divides Biz

BY BRIAN GARRITY

NEW YORK—As technology fuels an explosion of new audio and video formats, labels and music publishers remain at loggerheads over the resulting revenue streams.
The industry is struggling to establish standards for sharing revenue in the growing master ringtones business. However, companies are also clashing over business models for ringbacks, the DualDisc format, copy-protected CDs and video-on-demand.
“We just want our fair share of the new” (Continued on page 46)
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www.americanradiohistory.com
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"A study this suspect should never become part of the public policy debate." — Jay Rosenthal

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Grammys Drop 10 Noms On Kanye West

BY TODD MARTENS

LOS ANGELES—Artists from R&B's past and present dominated the nominations for the 47th annual Grammy Awards, which were announced Dec. 7 at the Henry Fonda Music Box Theater in Los Angeles.

Rapper-turned-producer Kanye West led with 10 nods, including best new artist and album of the year for his acclaimed Roc-a-Fella debut, "The College Dropout." Half of his nominations were in the rap category. West also received recognition for his collaborations with Twista and Alicia Keys.

The Chicago-born West, who was a presenter at the announcements, said, "I always felt like the sky was the limit. I might have been more comfortable with less nominations." Ten is scary. Because what if you get nominated for 10 and don't win anything?"

The rapper said he is finishing his sophomore effort, "Late Registration," which is planned for a summer 2005 release. "Hopefully I can make something good enough to be here next year and years to come and be a longstanding artist," he said. He wondered, though, that after 10 nominations, "How do you take it up from there?"

Keys and Usher tied with eight nods, and the late Ray Charles earned recognition in seven categories. Other multiple nominees include Green Day with six, and Norah Jones, Loretta Lynn, Prince and engineer Al Schmitt each with five.

Green Day's politically themed Reprise (Continued on page 59)
Indies: We’ve Got Legit Role
Promoters Question Fairness, Wisdom Of Banishment From Radio

BY PHILLIS STARK

NASHVILLE—Increasingly shut out by the large radio chains, many independent promoters are desperately trying to make the case for their legitimate place in the music-business food chain.

These indies say they do good, honest work in servicing music to stations in secondary markets, enhancing the efforts of major-label promotion teams and taking the place of in-house promoters for smaller labels. What’s more, they wonder how the labels that have come to depend on these services can continue to function effectively without them.

“We’re hoping that this will all die down,” says one indie, who asked to remain anonymous.

The promoters’ troubles began in April 2003, when radio giant Clear Channel announced that its 1,200 radio stations would no longer work with indies. Last month, Infinity and Entercom also barred their employees from any dealings with indies.

These latest moves came as New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer moved ahead on his probe of indie activity. Spitzer’s office has sent subpoenas to certain labels, including EMI, seeking information in connection with the promotion of records on New York radio stations. Independent promoters and radio stations were served with subpoenas as well, sources tell Billboard.

Infinity, the nation’s No. 2 chain, has not commented publicly about its indie ban, but told its GMs and programmers about the plan in a series of conference calls last month.

At Entercom, executive VP Jack Donlevie recently told Billboard that the company’s relationships with indies are based on “a business model that doesn’t work anymore . . . We’re focusing more on direct relationships with the record companies” (Billboard, Dec. 4).

Meanwhile, the independents struggling to run their businesses now have three fewer radio chains on which they can call. As one told Billboard last month, “It’s getting harder and harder for the legitimate indies to participate in this business.”

“Are these changes being made for the sake of appearing not guilty?” Los Angeles-based indie Debbie Gibson Palmer asks. “Doesn’t that somehow really create exactly the opposite effect?”

A ‘CLEAR’ DISTINCTION

All indies are paid by labels to work records. In some cases, the indies make payments to radio stations, which are supposedly used for station promotions. In turn, these indies often get exclusive access to station information.

These relationships are the basis for suspicion about indie operations. However, many indies do not participate in such exchanges.

“There is a clear line between indies who have dollar-based relationships with stations and those, like myself, who work solely on behalf of artists,” says Paul Brown of New York-based indie firm Red Hat 22. “I hope that this critically important distinction doesn’t get obscured amidst all the shouting.

“It would be catastrophically unfair if Red Hat 22 were to be generically ostracized from doing honest, artist-oriented work,” Brown continues.

For many indies, it is also emotionally tough being cut off from programmers with whom they have long-standing relationships.

“This was probably the most hurtful part of all,” Gibson Palmer says. “I’ve made very good friends with many of these programmers. I’ve been through bad [ratings] books, changes of ownership, great books, marriages, children and divorces with them. It’s very hard to accept that I can’t work with them after all of that, not because of someone’s wrongdoing, but because of [suspected] wrongdoing. That somehow seems un-American to me.”

Another indie promoter, containing anonymity, added, “The lack of contact with some stations is a disappointment to us, on a personal and professional level.”

“There are stations that we once had great relationships with who are now unable to take a phone call,” he continues. “One Clear Channel program director went so far as to return a single [to us] unopened because he saw our return address on it. He returned it with a note of apology, saying that he feared for his job if he spoke with us.”

But the problem, this source says, is not just for the indies, but for the (Continued on page 59)

EC Bites Apple
Regulators Examine High Price Of U.K. iTunes
BY LARS BRANDLE

LONDON—European regulators’ decision to investigate Apple Computer’s iTunes download service in the United Kingdom could yield benchmark data for Europe’s download market.

The British Office of Fair Trading said Dec. 3 it had referred a complaint to the European Commission that the iTunes Music Store is overcharging U.K. customers. The move stems from a British-based consumer-rights publication’s complaint that downloads cost almost 20% more in Britain than in fellow European Union markets France and Germany.


Recently published British market statistics reveal that the territory’s download market is maturing. In its third-quarter survey, the British Phonographic Industry found that U.K. consumers bought 1.75 million downloads, up from 660,000 the previous quarter (Billboard, Dec. 11). The trade body identified iTunes as one of the driving forces behind the download market’s growth.

Apple brought its service to (Continued on page 46)

T-Mobile First To Ringback

BY ANTONY BRUNO

LOS ANGELES—T-Mobile on Dec. 8 rang in the first ringback service available across the United States.

The service allows subscribers to use music or other audio content to replace the standard ringing sound their callers hear. Specific tones can be assigned to specific callers or groups of callers in a subscriber’s contact list.

For the launch, T-Mobile has inked content licenses with Sony BMG, Warner Music Group and Universal Music Group, as well as independent labels Death Row Records and T&P Records.

The T-Mobile announcement comes three weeks after Verizon Wireless introduced its ringback service for the California market with content from Sony BMG and WMG.

Verizon says it plans to expand its service nationwide by mid-2005. Sprint and Cingular are expected to launch ringback services in the near future as well.

T-Mobile’s Caller Tones service costs $1.49 per month, and each ringback is an additional $1.99. Initially, subscribers may select from the (Continued on page 46)

Bonnaroo Seeks Wider Lineup In 2005

BY RAY WADDELL

Same Bonnaroo time, same Bonnaroo place.

The fourth annual Bonnaroo Music Festival will be held June 10-12, 2005.

The hugely successful jam-band fest will return to its previous 700-acre site in rural Manchester, Tenn., about 60 miles south of Nashville.

Jonathan Meyers, partner in Superfly Presents (which produces the event along with Ashley caps and A.C. Entertainment), tells Billboard that the lineup is being finalized and will likely be announced in January.

“We are going to continue to expand the programming from our core,” Meyers says. “We will continue to have our core, but we’re also into introducing fans to all types of music. We think these fans are very open to different kinds of music.”

Bonnaroo was the second-highest-grossing concert of 2004, according to Billboard Boxscore, taking in $13.5 million for a lineup that included the Dead, Dave Matthews & Friends, Trey Anastasio, Bob Dylan and nearly 80 other acts.

Meyers says ticket prices, which were $139 and $164 in 2004, will increase slightly in 2005. The show’s capacity will remain at 90,000.

“We want to keep the capacity the same to improve the experience,” Meyers says. He adds that the producers are close to a resolution regarding a per-ticket fee payable to Coffee County, where Manchester sits.

The city originally wanted 5%-8% of ticket sales. Bonnaroo has in the past donated $2 per ticket to local charities. The final agreement will likely result in $2-$3 per ticket going to the county.

“We know that Bonnaroo puts a (Continued on page 59)
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89  Ketel One Vodka
88  Wyborowa Vodka
87  Kremlinovskaya Vodka
86  Finlandia Vodka of Finland
86  Alps French Vodka
85  Skyy Vodka
82  Original Polish Vodka
82  Glenmore Special
82  Fleischmann's Royal Vodka
81  Mr. Boston Vodka
80  Polo Star Vodka
80  Lukussovka Potato Vodka
80  Absolut Vodka
78  Cardinal Vodka
78  Barton Vodka
78  Barclay’s Vodka
78  Amazona Vodka
76  Skol Vodka
74  Smirnoff Vodka
74  Crystal Palace Vodka
74  Bevedere
72  Schenley
69  Mr. Boston's Riva Vodka

NOTE: THIS REPRESENTS A SAMPLING OF THE 41 VODKAS TESTED. SOURCE: 1998 BEVERAGE TESTING INSTITUTE INC.

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Five Die in Club Shooting
Gunman Rushes Stage; Guitarist Abbott Among Casualties

Damageplan had just begun its second-to-last show on a 60-date tour when a gunman rushed the stage at the Alrosa Villa nightclub in Columbus, Ohio, killing Darrell Abbott and three other people before being killed by a police officer. Witnesses say Damageplan had just begun its first song shortly after 10 p.m. when the gun opened fire, shooting Abbott multiple times at close range. Sources tell Billboard that Jeff Thompson, who provides security for the band, was also shot and killed.

The band's drum tech John "Kat" Brooks and tour manager Chris Paluska are recovering from gunshot wounds, a source tells Billboard. Press reports say that among those killed was 29-year-old Erin Halk, who worked at Alrosa Villa loading equipment. Active rock WBZX Columbus afternoon jock Scoop Richards was at the concert. "They had just begun playing," he says. "I heard some loud pops over the music, and somebody said, 'That's gunfire.' We dove to the floor, and when the initial flurry of shots stopped, we ran to a secure area of the bar.

Richards was joined by drummer Vinnie Paul Abbott, Darrell's brother, who ran back to the stage as soon as the shooting stopped. Richards adds that enough time had transpired that the gunman had time to reload a clip.

The other band members: vocalist Patrick Lachman and bassist Bob Zilla, were reportedly uninjured.

Damageplan had been on the road since March in support of its debut album, "New Found Power" (Elektra), which was released in February. The band is booked by Scott Sokol at Pinecastle Entertainment and managed by Paul Bassman. The tour was to wrap Dec. 13 in Kansas City, Mo., at the Uptown Theater.

(Continued on page 48)
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Copyright Law Needs Update For Digital Era

No More Double-Dipping

By Jonathan Potter

Publishers claim the law supports the application of the mechanical right when any “reproduction” occurs, and certainly there are reproductions occurring in the course of streaming performances over the Internet. Similarly, publishers say that “transmissions” occur when a song is downloaded, and that they assert that a performance right is implicated with transmission, even if the qualitative act is a distribution.

This aggressive push to extend legal uncertainty is exacerbated because the Copyright Act imposes statutory damages of up to $150,000 per work, leaving digital services’ entire business exposed should litigation be initiated. The result is uncertainty, risk and diminished growth of royalty-paying services—a triple play in favor of pirate networks.

To shut down the publishers’ opportunistic endeavors, Peters has urged Congress to confirm his analysis by passing clarifying legislation. A second publishing-rights problem that vexes online services (and record companies) is access to mechanical licenses, which the law requires be made available. Performance licenses have for decades been easily available on a blanket (or bulk) basis through ASCAP and BMI. Mechanically licensed, in contrast, are largely unavailable because the industry-wide organization, the Harry Fox Agency, makes available only 65% of U.S. copyrighted works, and the statutory Copyright Office’s review has not proved adequate for digital services.

Again, Peters has urged congressional action to modernize the compulsory mechanical licensing process to accommodate digital services’ bulk licensing needs. One alternative Peters identified is to convert today’s song-by-song mechanical license into a blanket license covering all U.S. repertoire, so it would work as efficiently as the licenses authorized by ASCAP, BMI and SoundExchange.

Another proposal is to price mechanical licenses on a percentage-of-revenue basis, as ASCAP and BMI have done for decades. In times of dynamic pricing and business models, penny-rate licensing is inflexible and can result in mechanical rights being undervalued (as occurred for decades in the 1990s) or overvalued (for example, if a song is pushed out by digital singles to 40 cents or less).

In a March 2004 hearing, Texas Republican Lamar Smith, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property, asked if a statute developed in the piano-roller era could adequately serve digital industries. The subcommittee’s ranking Democrat, Rep. Howard Berman of California, wondered whether the Copyright Act promotes or hinders the development of legal online services and their ability to compete against piracy. At the recent Billboard conference, industry-leading executives sent Congress a clear message: The piano-rollover provisions of the Copyright Act must act affirmatively to fix the law; and only then will online services be adequately armed to win the continuing battle against piracy.

Jonathan Potter is executive director of DiMA, the Washington, D.C.-based trade organization devoted to the online audio and video industries.
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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
Benveniste Brings Hammer Down On Joint Venture Deal

David Benveniste, whose management clients include System of a Down, Mudvayne and the Deftones, has moved his Velvet Hammer Music label from Atlantic Records to Columbia Records in a multiyear joint-venture. Atlantic keeps Velvet Hammer/Atlantic acts TajMo, Poison the Well and Greg Aiola, and Benveniste will continue to work on projects released by those acts.

But he exclusively tells Billboard he is already scouting acts to sign to the Columbia deal, which started Dec. 1. "I'm looking for anything that blows me away," he says. "My tastes range from Led Zeppelin to Bill Withers to Mogwai."

Before the new label deal, Benveniste was already bringing acts to Columbia, including Sara Overall, whose debut album on Columbia will street in spring 2005. His relationship with the label goes back to 1996 when Columbia signed System of a Down. Mudvayne is on Sony sister label Epic.

"I have a great relationship with Sony Music Entertainment," Benveniste says, adding that there's "no better team" than Sony Music Group.

U.S. president/CEO Donnie Jenner, Columbia Records Group president Will Robson, Columbia Records executive VP of creative marketing and promotion Charlie Walk and Sony Music Group U.S. COO Michele Anthony. In addition to getting Velvet Hammer settled in its new home, Benveniste will have a busy 2005: System of a Down and Mudvayne have releases set for the first half of the year.

AYEROFF EXITS: Warner Bros./Reprise Records vice chairman Jeff Ayeroff left the label Nov. 30, following the conclusion of his contract. Ayeroff, who first worked at Warner from 1983 to 1986 and rejoined the label in 2001, in between he served as co-chairman of Virgin Records America and co-founder of the Work Group.

Ayeroff intends to take time off to travel and then will serve as a marketing consultant. Among the projects he helmed before returning to Warner was the marketing campaign for the Beatles’ "1" album.

"Jeff Ayeroff is one of a kind, a creative czar," Warner Bros. chairman Tom Whalley says. "His creative and musical input was an invaluable piece of the Warner Bros. legacy."

Ayeroff could not be reached by press time.

COVER ME: When we first wrote about the plethora of cover songs last December (Billboard, Dec. 5, 2003), the trend was primarily confined to top 40 and adult contemporary stations. Lately, it has spread to rock, with A Perfect Circle's version of "Imagine," Korn's "Another Brick in the Wall" and Marilyn Manson's interpretation of Depeche Mode's "Personal Jesus."

"311 had a big hit this summer with its update of the Cure's "Love Song,"" Look at the AC charts and the movement is stronger than ever, whether it be Hall & Oates ("I'll Be Around"), Michael McDonald (" Ain't No Mountain High Enough"), Rod Stewart ("What a Wonderful World") or Uncle Kracker, whose version of "Twist Away" is still going strong 92 weeks in.

The Goo Goo Dolls have also joined in: Their cover of Supertramp's "Give a Little Bit" is No. 3 on the Adult Top 40 chart.

The Go's Robby Takac says there is no mystery why radio listeners, especially the older demos, love the covers. "They know the melodies, they like the sounds of their favorite bands," he says. "It's the same reason classic rock tracks test so strong for the radio folks."

The Goos decided to include their Supertramp remake on their new Warner Bros. greatest-hits CD/DVD for a variety of reasons, including the fact that lead singer Johnny Rzeznik had previously recorded the song for a Gap commercial. "First of all, it's a great song," Takac says. "Secondly, because we were releasing a DVD disc package around Christmas, we thought the Christmas-themed Gap commercials John had done might be a cool hook for people to latch onto. It seemed that we were working for newer acts like Interscope's Spiderbait, which covered "Black Betty," or Katatonic Records artist Katrina Carlson, a cover can be a way to cut through the clutter."

"Drive," Carlson's mash-up of her voice with the Cars' original song, has gone to No. 1 at KOST Los Angeles, and is getting airplay on many other Clear Channel-owned outlets. "It's really hard to break an unknown artist at AC," says Carlson's manager, Greg Bell, who is also a principal in WEA-distributed Katatonic. "Shania Twain came from country; Kimberly Locke, Clay Aiken, Ruben Studdard all came from 'American Idol.' My battle is trying to push through an artist no one else knew."

When we chatted with ID's about cover versions months ago, they ultimately felt they were fine as an occasional treat, but that the artist development process was seriously flawed if the industry began making cover songs a mainstay of its steady diet. Will we know when we've reached that point? Stay tuned.

Ludacris Turns On His 'Red Light' Album One Of Rapper's Many Activities

BY GAIL MITCHELL

Christopher Bridges uses the rap moniker Ludacris, but there's nothing ludicrous about his career.

The Atlanta rapper's Disturbing Tha Peace/Def Jam South release "The Red Light District," which hit U.S. stores Dec. 7, is expected to be one of the holiday season's top sellers.

Earlier this year, Ludacris took part in the runaway success of Usher's "Yeah!" as a guest along with Lil Jon. The threesome is headed back to the top of the R&B and pop charts with "Lovers & Friends," a cut from Lil Jon & the East Side Boys' new BBE/TVT album, "Crunk Juice."

On top of these successes, Ludacris has signed two major deals. The first is an exclusive worldwide publishing pact with Universal Music Publishing Group for his ASCAP-affiliated Ludacris Universal Publishing (Billboard, Dec. 4).

Since then, Ludacris' Disturbing Tha Peace label has entered a 50/50 partnership with Island Def Jam, building upon what is described as their "product furnishing arrangement." (Disturbing Tha Peace retains its other affiliations, such as a deal with Capitol for the release of group member I-20's debut album, "Self-Explanatory.")
Teen Queen Lohan Ready To 'Speak'

By Michael Paolotta

Lindsey Lohan really needs no introduction.

She has starred in a number of movies, filled gossip columns and appeared on countless magazine covers, including Rolling Stone and Vanity Fair.

Now, after getting her feet wet in the recording studio (she contributed songs to "Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen" and "Freaky Friday," films in which she also starred), Lohan is embarking on a singing career.

Yes, Lohan is the latest to take on the role of actor-turned-singer. Her debut album, "Speak," arrived Dec. 7 from Universal-distributed Casablanca Records.

"I have always wanted to make a record—ever since I can remember," Lohan tells Billboard. "It was all just a matter of timing."

By timing, she is referring to a hectic film schedule and a recent birthday.

"When I turned 18, I thought I could dress how I want and sing what I want."

In other words, she adds, "my first album had to wait until now."

"Speak" is equal parts pop and rock-lite, replete with catchy melodies and some autobiographical lyrics. Lohan wrote nearly half the songs with A-list songwriters including Kara DioGuardi, John Shanks, Andreas Carlsson and Cory Rooney.

Her music fits in neatly between Hilary Duff and Ashlee Simpson.

The focus track "Rumors" (a bonus cut on the album) peaked at No. 23 on the Billboard Mainstream Top 40 chart and is in rotation at KRBE Houston, WAKS Cleveland and WHTI Washington, D.C., among others.

"It started off with strong phones," WAKS assistant PD Stick notes. But the station "backed off" when it didn't see strong national airplay numbers.

Conversely, KRBE assistant PD/music director Leslie Whittle says "Rumors" exceeded her expectations.

"While I'm not sure that we'll be hearing it three years from now, it is a topical song that is resonating with her built-in audience."

The track did well on AOL and launch.com, where it was one of the most-played songs for October.

The Jake Nava-lensed video debuted at No. 3 on mtv.com's top videos chart.

Casablanca is already prepping follow-up album track "Over" for top 40 radio. Initial reaction has been mixed: KRBE's Whittle confirms the station will add it, while WKS' Stick will take a wait-and-see approach.

According to Casablanca chairman Thomas D. Mottola, the setup for "Speak" was done in record time.

"We started working on it five months ago," he says. "I never did something so quick in my career. We're still in the process of getting it where it needs to be... But if we can catch 10% of the 13 million that saw 'Freaky Friday,' we'll be off to a good start."

Indeed, the label has high expectations for "Speak" and will ship north of 500,000 units, Universal president Monte Lipman says.

That said, Mottola fully understands the realities of breaking an artist in today's market. "While you still need a hit song at the end of the day, the complete story surrounding the artist needs to be more compelling than ever."

But Mottola is a firm believer in Lohan. "She has all the necessary ingredients," he says.

Still, the label must do all it can to help people connect the dots between Lohan the Hollywood celebrity and Lohan the singer, says Jim Kaminski, pop-rock buyer for Tower Records in New York's Greenwich Village.

To help viewers tie the dots, the label scheduled several TV appearances for Lohan the week of the album's release, including "Good Morning America," MTV's "Total Request Live" and "Live With Regis & Kelly."

She also performed on Yahoo's Live @ Launch and did interviews with satellite networks XM and Sirius.

Upcoming TV appearances include MTV's New Year's Eve special.

Lohan knows it may take time for people to accept her various facets. "I am sure people don't expect me to be really singing," she says. "I know they're saying things like, 'Oh, she's just another actress-turned-singer.'"

But I love exploring other areas in entertainment. I love triple threats like Ann-Margaret—an actress, dancer and singer."

To be sure, Lohan is also working on a number of films, including "Lady Luck," "Herbie: Fully Loaded" and "Fashionsistas."

But Lohan is adamant about not mixing her message. "If I'm singing, it's me, Lindsay," she says. "If I'm acting in a film, it's me playing a part. Onstage, you're seeing the real deal."

Ludacris

Continued from page 13

Looking ahead, Ludacris will be involved with acting in two movies in 2005, "Hustle & Flow" and "Crash," music releases by New Disturbing Tha Peace artists, including rock act Lazy Eye and R&B artist Bobby V; and ongoing projects for youth-targeted nonprofit organization the Ludacris Foundation.

"The Red Light District" is the fourth Disturbing Tha Peace/Def Jam South release for Ludacris. His most recent album, "Chicken-N-Beer," debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 and has sold 2.5 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. His best seller to date is "Word of Mouf," which is at 3.4 million. The prior album, "Back for the First Time," is also approaching 3 million units.

Manager Chaka attributes Ludacris' success to his credibility. "It comes with him being himself, coming from the streets and growing up. People relate to that, especially on the urban side. His pop appeal comes from his perspective: All his music has hope and emotion; it says the world isn't over, we can transcend these things."

Ludacris adds, "I'm just trying to keep it moving. I just do what I do, always trying to bring a different element to my style."

That is definitely apparent on "The Red Light District," which reveals a more introspective side of the fun-loving rapper. Lead single "Get Back" stands at No. 20 this issue on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart.

Ludacris drafted a number of high-profile rap and hip-hop stars for the album, plus a mix of established and new producers. The mix includes Timbaland, Nate Dogg, DJ Quik, DMX, Organized Noize and DJ Green Lantern.

Bobby V guests on "Pimpin' All Around the World," while "Not Me" showcases Disturbing Tha Peace acts Small World and Dolla Boi.

Ludacris joins Nas and beatbox legend Doug E. Fresh on "Virgo," the track also appears on Nas' just-released "Street's Disciple."

Ludacris also displays his fondness for the "Austin Powers" film series on "Number One Spot," a potential single. The song takes to task conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly of Fox's "The O'Reilly Factor." Two years ago, O'Reilly's comments led to Ludacris being dropped as a Pepsi spokesperson.

"You've got to reinvent yourself and keep people guessing," Ludacris says. "So there's more experimentation on this album. It's hard to explain, but I'm rapping and harmonizing at the same time; my voice is doing different things. And I get more personal on some of the songs."

One example is "Large Amounts," in which the rapper ponders financial success in the context of his relationships with the Internal Revenue Service, women and family members.

For a Dec. 2 album release party, Atlanta's Puritan Mills complex was relaunched as a red-light district. According to Disturbing Tha Peace product manager Portia Kirkland, some 800-1,000 people were on hand. That was followed by a Best Buy in-store appearance Dec. 8 in Atlanta.


On Dec. 6, for an MTV promotion, Ludacris gave away an Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme, circa 1974. Coming up is a flyaway to Amsterdam during the first week in February, with the rapper accompanying a variety of contest winners from across the country. Among those winners will be retailers who devised the best "Red Light" visibility campaigns.

According to Def Jam product manager Mic Fox, the Ludacris press slate includes MTV's "Total Request Live," BET's "106 & Park" and "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno."

Beyond "Red Light," Ludacris has organized a toy drive on behalf of the Ludacris Foundation, which he established in 2002. The foundation works with hospitals, rehab centers, boys and girls clubs and housing developments. "It's geared toward helping kids help themselves," Ludacris says. "It's about giving back."
Biopics, Musicals, Documentaries Resurjre In ’04

The business of movies and music experienced a number of artistic and financial highs and lows during 2004. The soundtrack business was in a slump: None released this year were able to reach 1 million in U.S. sales, according to Nielsen SoundScan (Billboard, Nov. 20). The year’s top-selling soundtrack was “Shrek 2” (DreamWorks/Geffen Records), which sold 785,000 copies, according to SoundScan.

But the year had some noticeable rising trends in movies and music.

ARTIST BIOPICS: Several artist biopics were released or went into development/production this year. Universal Pictures’ Ray Charles biopic “Ray” and the companion soundtrack on Atlantic/Rhino Records were fourth-quarter hits.

MGM’s Cole Porter biopic “De-Lovely” flopped, but the jury is still out on Lions Gate Films’ Bobby Darin movie, “Beyond the Sea,” which opens Dec. 29 in U.S. theaters.

This year Pink was cast as Janis Joplin in “The Gospel According to Janis” (which is seeking distribution), and André 3000 of OutKast landed the role of Jimi Hendrix in a still-untitled independent biopic to be directed by Albert and Allen Hughes. Also in the works are films about Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash, the Grateful Dead and Brian Jones.


Warner Bros. Pictures’ “The Phantom of the Opera,” based on Andrew Lloyd Webber’s stage musical, is a big-budget contender to the “Chicago” throne. But with a lack of A-list stars and a long-winded story, the film (which opens Dec. 22 in the States) may have a tough time attracting the same audience as “Chicago.”

On the plus side, “Phantom” has competent acting and singing (except for an over-the-top performance from Minnie Driver), and the film’s stunning art direction and costume design may end up getting Academy Award nominations.

Another 2004 musical, Miramax’s “Bride & Prejudice” (which opens Dec. 25), has no pretensions of being anything other than a modest art-house film. “Bride & Prejudice,” which explores the mixing of East Indian and American cultures, is a Bollywood-styled version of Jane Austen’s novel “Pride and Prejudice.”

Expectations are higher for the big-screen adaptations of “The Producers” (Universal Pictures), “Rent” (Columbia Pictures) and “Hairspray” (New Line Cinema), all of which are due for release in 2005.

Craig Zadan and Neil Meron, executive producers of the “Chicago” movie, have signed on to produce “Hairspray” under the newly formed Zadan/Meron production company. (The duo’s Storyline Entertainment will still exist for TV projects.)


“DIG!” and “Some Kind of Monster” stood out from the pack for receiving mostly rave reviews from critics and fans. “DIG!” also achieved a rare accomplishment for a music film: It won the grand jury prize for best documentary at the Sundance Film Festival.

Although these documentaries usually played in limited release and were not big box-office hits, the fact that more distributors are willing to bring these movies into theaters speaks volumes about their increased openness to nonfiction music films.

IN BRIEF: Sony Pictures is reportedly in discussions with Madonna and her husband, director Guy Ritchie, to do a movie version of her book “The English Roses.”...Usher has landed the role of a mafia leader’s assistant in the Lions Gate drama “Dying for Dolly.” He is also in talks to star in MGM’s urban musical drama “Step in the Name of Love”...Jessica Simpson has been cast as a hotel heiress in Emmett/Furla Films’ romantic comedy/drama “Room Service,” based on the novel of the same name.

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Wonder: 2004 Century Award Honoree
Quincy Jones, Others Pay Tribute To Musical Genius

The 2004 Billboard Century Award was presented to Stevie Wonder by Quincy Jones at the Dec. 8 Billboard Music Awards.

Diana Ross, R&B legend and Destiny’s Child paid a musical tribute to Wonder by singing some of his songs. The following transcription includes Jones’ presentation and Wonder’s acceptance speech.

Quincy Jones: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. For his enduring influence, and contributions to music, the 13th Century Award honoree is my baby, Stevie Wonder. Stevie Wonder, you’ll give it up … There’s no one like him. Stevie Wonder! … I love you for loving Stevie.

In announcing the award, Billboard magazine said Stevie Wonder is an American icon. He has transformed not only R&B, but popular music overall, and he represents to all of us the essence of what the Billboard Century Award is all about. It’s an artist and career and body of work continues to evolve and influence new generations of musicians. It’s obvious in everything I hear.

Stevie, from the bottom of my heart, I love you. I’ve always loved you. I’ve always liked you. I’ve always felt big-time props since the first time we met at the Apollo, when you were 2 years old, and I was roasting you about Ray Charles and his women. You know it’s true. No words can ever truly capture the mesmerizing and wonderful artistry he brings to the stage and casts over us. Your respect for your roots and your positive commitment to a better world is who you are as a human being and my most cherished brother and friend. So we have five, five incredible ladies—I know you won’t like that beautiful ladies, who love you and your music as much as we do, to pay tribute to you through your own music.

Diana Ross, Mary J. Blige and Destiny’s Child perform.

Diana Ross: Thank you. Thank you all. Thank you very much. Please, please welcome, ladies and gentlemen, Century Award winner, ladies and gentleman, the one and only, genius, genius, Stevie Wonder.

Stevie Wonder: I’m sorry, y’all—I’ve got to do it! Can I do it? The band joins him as he sings “Higher Ground.”

Wonder: I wanted to say first of all that it was—I can’t believe how long it was—it was 41 years ago, in 1963, at the age of 13 at the Apollo Theater that Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman gave me the Billboard award. I never, ever imagined this. I’ve worked hard. I’ve worked hard. I have so much thanks to give to so many people. First of all, my God and thanks to my family. All of the fans. All of you. All of the people that have made it possible for this to happen.

You know, I must honestly tell you that truly I do appreciate this honor. But it if were possible, if it were possible for me to, as opposed to receiving an award, see a day where we can as a people all of us come together. I challenge all of us, wherever cultural political party we belong to, whatever religion we are. Christian and Muslim, whether you are in the world, I challenge you to do this. I do not wish the world to have. Terrorism is not his way. Prejudice is not his way. Believe me when I say that.

I thank you so much for giving me this honor. I would like to say something, this is actually a song that myself and India—India, his India—we co-wrote together. It’s a song called “A Time to Love.” I just want to pay a little bit of it because I think it is significant for this time that we’re living in. And it says this: He sings: “We have time for racism/We have time for criticism/We’re possessed by our isms, when will there be a time to love?”

We must come togetherness and love, and I encourage all of you, those of you who are singers, musicians, and producers, whatever you might be, use your energy for the goodness of life, for the goodness of us coming together as a united people. Thank you, and God bless you.
Boulevard FOR GREEN

KANYE had hoped he would
drop a new album soon. "I'm going to start meeting with some writers and really talk to them about the album. There is room for a lot of dialogue and things like that and taking quotes from the album here and there to put into the script, so it looks like it's going to be a reality."

The group may even meet with its No. 1 fan, Stephen King, who named "American Idol" his pick for album of the year in the Entertainment Weekly. "We've talked about it. That would be great. This is the guy that did "Creepshow," which is one of my all-time favorite movies."

WHEN KEITH URBAN called Sheryl Crow to ask her to perform "Dancin' in the Dark," he got her album, "You're Still the One" on her. She said, "I've been wanting to actually write with him and record with him, so his call was kind of serendipitous. It was really welcomed." Crow said. "In fact, during sound check we were kind of nodding around with an idea that we could write together and maybe record."

KEITH URBAN is headed to Los Angeles to record two shows at the Wiltern Theater Dec. 13-14 for a DVD release. Even though the cameras will be rolling, he says he'll try not to let them get in the way.

"The struggle is always striking the balance between performing and playing well," he said. "It's awkward to do both. Playing live is more a visual medium than an auditory medium; when you throw a DVD into the mix, suddenly the audio is a crucial part of it too. You don't get the forgiving compassion of being in the moment amongst the audience, so it's a little more scrutinized. At the end of the day, I'm way more for an inspired attempt over soulless perfection."

DURAN DURAN is gearing up for a 40-city U.S. tour in February. The trek follows this fall's release of its first album with all the original members since 1983. Even after a two-decade-run of hits, lead singer Simon LeBon said the seemingly undying enthusiasm for the band's music continues to surprise him.

"It's the fans who have kept us going for so many years," he said. "This is almost like payback for them." What's more, the band has already agreed to make at least one more studio album for Epic on this go-around. "This was always going to be a long-term plan for us," LeBon said. "I would have had to go home horribly wrong for us not to go and make another album."

ASHLEE SIMPSON, female new artist of the year, displayed a light-hearted attitude about her infamous appearance at the MTV Video Music Awards when a pre-recorded vocal track started to play on the air before she began to perform. In fact, during the upcoming second season of her self-titled MTV reality show, she said, "You're actually going to see the whole week of 'SNL'..."

Vince Neil of Mötley Crüe may no longer be able to ride teleporters without his glasses (as evidenced by his amiable mangling of the introduction for the digital artist of the year award during the awards broadcast), but that doesn't mean the band won't be up to its old tricks on its 2005 reunion tour. Neil promised "all the hits, but I think we'll all have to play some obscure stuff that we haven't played in a long time."

As for the three new songs set for inclusion on the upcoming Island retrospective "Red, White & Crue," the vocalist described them as simply "very Mötley." Bassist Nikki Sixx added, "I think it's another progression for us. It's some fresh, new-sounding stuff, but it has our trademark all over it."

MARK TREMONTI, a presenter with his band Alter Bridge, is proud of his brother Mark Tremonti, who is known as a guitarist and the rear-view mirror. He said he was even opposed to Winning-up-Nov. 23 release of the band's greatest hits.

"To tell you the truth, I didn't want that to come out," Tremonti said. "I did everything I could to say, 'I want everybody concentrating on Alter Bridge,' but it went out anyway. . . . Creed, to me, is done. There's nothing else I'm going to work for. I'm not going to spend another minute on Creed. I never will again. Alter Bridge will be everything I work for, and I'm dead set on doing it, even though we've been fighting to get our name out there. I'm never going to stop. Creed is the past."

FANTASIA, who took home two trophies, is already building the Fantasia brand. "I have a clothing line with American Rag," she said. "My line is with M.A.C., and it's called Fantabulous 1 and Fantabulous 2. I'm 20, and I'm stepping in. I'm doing [UPN series] 'All Of Us' with Will [Smith] and Jada [Pinkett Smith], so that door is opening and hopefully more doors will open so I can act."
The 15th annual Billboard Music Awards, held Dec. 8 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, were highlighted by performances from Usher, Gwen Stefani, Green Day, Evanescence, Nelly, Keith Urban with Sheryl Crow, Alicia Keys and a special tribute to Stevie Wonder featuring Mary J. Blige, Destiny's Child and Diana Ross.

The celebration was followed by a private party at Studio 54 hosted by Billboard. (Photos: Chris Farina, Kevin Mazur/WireImage)
In the Billboard Music Awards Radio Room, members of Duran Duran stop to talk with Billboard. From left are Billboard chart manager Silvio Pietroluongo, Simon LeBon, billboard.com news/reviews editor Jonathan Cohen, Billboard West Coast bureau chief Melinda Newman, Nick Rhodes, Billboard staff writer Jill Kipnis and Billboard senior writer Gail Mitchell.

A string section accompanies Evanescence lead singer Amy Lee during a performance of "My Immortal."

"Entertainment Tonight" anchor Mark Steines interviews Billboard co-executive editor Tamara Corniff to get the scoop on the awards show.

Bandmerch president Donn Delson, Bandmerch VP Joyce Delson and Warner Music Group media buyer Lisa Kim have an animated conversation outside Studio 54.

Sheryl Crow and Keith Urban get into the groove while performing Urban’s "Days Go By."

Destiny’s Child (from left, Beyoncé, Michelle Williams and Kelly Rowland) celebrate winning the artist achievement award.

Gwen Stefani, with dancers in tow, walks the red carpet before performing "What You Waiting For?" and "Rich Girl" on the telecast.

Diana Ross is in the spotlight as she rehearses her role in the Stevie Wonder tribute.

Motley Crue, fresh from announcing its upcoming reunion world tour, presents the digital artist of the year award with actress Tara Reid. From left are Mick Mars, Vince Neil, Nikki Sixx, Tommy Lee and Reid.

A bevy of goodies awaits Billboard Music Awards performers and presenters in the gift room coordinated by Backstage Creations. Among the participating companies were Talia, Biolustre, Aqua Swiss, Bella Lucee, Hello Kitty, UGLY clothing line and the Margarita King.

The Billboard Music Awards Radio Room featured 23 stations representing 22 markets, as well as two syndicators. The two-day event, Dec. 7 and 8, hosted walk-throughs from about 50 celebrities.
Gospel’s Hopes Are High With Channel Debut

In what may be one of the fastest start-ups in history, the Gospel Music Channel bowed as scheduled Oct. 30 and looks to be a promising venture that should aid gospel’s growth.

It was only last spring that GMC president/CEO Charles Humbard and vice chairman Brad Siegel announced the network; then began rapidly hiring staff during the summer. During a recent launch party in Nashville, the two presided over a gathering of movers and shakers in the Christian music industry, including label execs, booking agents and artists. There, Nashville got its first glimpse of GMC.

Since it has not been added to Nashville’s Comcast cable system, attendees were anxious to see just how GMC would look and what kinds of programming it would carry. Attendees seemed pleased with what they saw. The programming illuminates the depth and diversity of the genre, including Southern gospel, rock and gospel.

“The response we got from everybody was sort of beyond belief,” Siegel says. “People didn’t expect to see what they saw from the network: a business that had [started] less than six months ago and actually launched six months later.”

Humbard says there were a couple of reasons for the fall launch. “Cable operators tend to like to offer new services in the fall,” he says. “It’s great for them because it’s right before the holidays, when people are making decisions [such as] Do I finally get DirecTV or go to satellite or make other changes? So it’s a really nice time for them to have a new offering.”

Beyond that, Humbard says, Siegel just felt the timing was right. “Brad and I both had the opportunity over the years to launch a lot of channels,” Humbard says. “We both had the big machines of Turner and Discovery behind us. But as an independent outfit there never was really great to be involved in all the parts from top to bottom and really create this kind of channel.”

Both men say the support of the gospel music community was crucial in launching the network with a good amount of original programming. “We just had success with everybody really stepping up and responding in a very supportive way to really help us do this,” Humbard says.

One of the initial GMC programs was “Goodman Family Reunion,” which featured a final concert by the late Howard and Vestal Goodman. “We did a world premiere on that, which was our first hour on the air,” Siegel says. “It was a great program to launch with, a classic like that.”

Among other highlights are the biography series “Faith & Fame” and the series “Front Row Live.” The network aired Third Day’s new “Live Wire” DVD on “Front Row Live” Nov. 23, the same day the DVD was released.

Another new series, “Gospel Music Channel in Studio,” recently featured Larry Gatlin & the Gatlin Brothers working on their new CD.

The network’s claims the network will be in 30 markets by year’s end, and it is continually working on adding new carriers.

Tilson Thomas, SFS Hit Mark With Mahler

Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony’s ongoing cycle of the complete Mahler symphonies continues with a ravishing recording of the Second Symphony, featuring soprano Isabel Bayrdaradian and mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson.

The cycle’s newest entry, issued Nov 9 on the orchestra’s own SFS Media label, is garnering rightful raves, particularly for Hunt Lieberson’s glorious performance of the fourth movement and the thunderous, brilliant climax of the finale.

Critical acclaim isn’t new, however, for this label. Although SFS Media launched in 2001 with the start of the Mahler project, the label has already won two Grammy Awards. And although an orchestra’s decision to start a label can be risky, SFS Media’s financial success has far exceeded expectations, according to David Kuehn, consultant to the San Francisco Symphony.

Kuehn notes that initially, sales expectations were rather modest. “We arranged for limited pressings of 10,000 at first,” he says. “Our gut feeling was that we would sell 60% via the symphony itself, either online or at Davies Hall concerts, 20% at U.S. brick-and-mortars and online and the remaining 20% at foreign retail.”

Quickly, though, SFS Media learned that it had seriously underestimated consumer interest in the Mahler cycle. “Japan alone alone alone more than our total international allocation, and we had a huge response in the U.S. as well,” Kuehn says. “We’re already doing represses of three of our recordings.”

The label’s handsomely presented deluxe packages lead to single-disc price points of $19-$20; the two-disc recording of the Mahler Symphony No. 2 retails for about $28.

Kuehn notes that the SFS capitalizes on audience enthusiasm by turning around recordings in a short time. “We’re recording twice a year and releasing new titles twice a year,” he says. “So we can tie release dates in this Mahler cycle to the orchestra’s live performances of either Mahler or related repertoire.”

The charisma and enthusiasm of Tilson Thomas—who this season is celebrating his 10th anniversary with the San Francisco Symphony—has been a boon to the growing label, Kuehn says. “We have a lot of success promoting the new releases at Davies Hall around release dates,” he says. “Michael has been great about doing post-concert CD signings, which just go for hours.”

NAXOS A NEW MUSIC PATRON: Naxos has launched a major commitment to the music of British composer Sir Peter Maxwell Davies.

Not only did the label agree to produce and distribute a five-volume cycle of recordings of Maxwell Davies’ 10 string quartets, but in a project spearheaded by Naxos founder and CEO Klaus Heymann, the label commissioned all 10 of these works as well.

The first volume in the series, featuring the Naxos Quartets Nos. 1 and 2 performed by the Maggini Quartet, was released last month. The Maggini Quartet, as they are written in annual concerts at London’s Wigmore Hall.
Holiday Radio Shows Offer Acts ‘Mixed Bag’

BY JILL KIPINS

LOS ANGELES—Deciding whether to book their acts for multi-artist holiday radio shows can be a difficult decision for agents and managers.

Though benefits tend to far outweigh possible drawbacks, acts are sacrificing money and headlining dates to participate.

“It’s a mixed bag,” says Michael Arfin, booking agent for Linkin Park at New York-based Artist Group International. “It’s a great opportunity for a developing band to get a tremendous amount of exposure during the holiday season period, not only in regard to playing in front of most likely a larger crowd but the promotion from the radio station that will help them at retail. It helps established acts too.

“The short-term drawback for an established act is they would most likely sacrifice a normal guarantee,” he continues.

Ultimately, it will maintain the band’s positioning at the top of the chart, which will be seen as more impactful than the road than sacrificing some dollars for a show.

Acts’ representatives cite additional inclusions that radio shows offer, which include high ticket prices and potential production problems.

CONTINUED AIRPLAY

Agents and managers say that maintaining or achieving airplay is the main reason to accept a radio show invitation.

“The only benefit for artists doing radio shows is to get continued support from the station for the current single or the next single, or for the past single,” says Larry Webman, booking agent for Avril Lavigne at Little Big Man in New York. “It’s a way to say, ‘Thank you.’

Acts’ representatives say they do not feel pressured by radio stations to accept these invitations, though the free promotion they receive in return is invaluable.

“The only pressure we feel is the fact that we are trying to break a band and trying to expose them to more people. If you say no, you are risking not getting additional promotion,” says John Reese, manager of the Used at Laguna Hills, Calif.-based Freeze Art Management. “They will boost airplay for your act, and up to 70% of the audience hasn’t seen your band perform before.”

Ken Fermaglich, booking agent for Story of the Year at the Agency Group in New York, believes that “there’s always a bit of pressure to do them from the label side. The payoff is good from stations who know what they are doing.”

Agents and managers say that routing an act’s own headlining tour to allow for potential Christmas show invitations can be tricky. Planning for the summer season—the other time of year when radio shows abound—is similarly challenging.

“Radio shows can hurt you if you have planned a headlining tour that you have completely secured and you get thrown a handful of offers, which will conflict with your ability to perform your schedule down the road,” AGI’s Arfin says.

Many deliberately leave holes in headlining schedules to allow for possible radio show bookings.

“Now, we earmark schedules for summer and Christmas radio shows,” says Steve Feinberg, manager for Good Charlotte at New York-based A Fein Martini Management. “But if you stay out of a major market on your own tour and you’re not asked to play a radio show, you are left out of the market.”

Feinberg notes that a manager “10 years my senior who manages a multiplatform act” advised him that if it is unclear whether the artist will be invited to radio shows during these times of the year, that when the act should be touring in Europe.

“It’s hard to say no to [Los Angeles modern rock station] KROQ, but if you’re in Belgium, you can exclude yourself,” he says.

Acts’ representatives say money can be a consideration, as radio show tickets are typically priced higher than regular concert tickets.

Many of this year’s best seats go for more than $100. Average prices hover closer to $50-$75 range. Agents and managers say sellouts are typical for major stations.

“There’s not a lot of money in it for artists. The [stations] cover your expenses and pay you less than you would get normally,” Feinberg says, adding that tickets to see a regular Good Charlotte show do not cost more than $25. “We of our fans are under 20 and may not have jobs. Do they want to pay $75 to see Good Charlotte and other bands they don’t know?”

ONE-OFF PRODUCTIONS

Many agree that production can often be a concern at these shows, as the sheer number of performers at each event can make equipment changes for each act untenable.

“It can hurt when a radio station books a show at a venue that is not equipped or proper for a show like this,” Fermaglich says. “I’ve seen it.”

Ron VanDeVen, associate GM for the Meadowlands Sports Complex in East Rutherford, N.J., which includes Continental Airlines Arena, says that one-off events like radio shows are traditionally harder to put together. “The venue hosted New York rock outlet WXFK’s Clash Fest Dec. 3.

“With a touring show, they come in and put up the stage, it’s in and out, he says. “With a one-off, they are putting up the stage and sound for the first time.”

Tim Ryan, president/CEO of Anaheim Arena Management, which runs the Arrowhead Pond in Anaheim, Calif., says production for these shows is improving. The venue hosted Los Angeles stations top 40 KIIS’ Jingle Ball Dec. 3 and adult top 40 KYSY’s Not So Silent Night Dec. 6.

“The logistics have changed for the good,” he says. “Turnable stages that allow for quick set changes are probably one of the biggest improvements over the years.”

TBA Goes Global With New Direction

BY RAY WADDELL

TBA Entertainment is out of the management business and is focusing on its primary mandate: producing live events for major corporations.

The company also has a new name: TBA Global Events. "Part of the name change was a rebranding, and part of it is global events are our core business, what we do," executive VP Jeff Kline says.

In a deal that was first tipped in Billboard in February and finalized in June, Irving Azoff purchased the event production and management firm in partnership with veteran entertainment executive Robert Geddes and investment firm JHW Greentree to form TBA, an affiliate of Stanford, Conn.-based Whitney & Co.

The transaction, described as a “definitive merger agreement,” took the publicly traded TBA private.

Following the deal’s completion, Geddes assumed the post of CEO. Azoff and Mike Stone, managing partner of Whitney & Co. and JHW Greentree, are co-chairmen.

At the time it was purchased, TBA boasted a thriving management division that included such acts as Brooks & Dunn, Billy Bob Thornton, Styx, Tesla, Type O Negative and Sandi Patty.

Now those acts are handled by their respective managers, such as Clarence Spalding in Nashville (Brooks & Dunn) and Charlie Brusco in Atlanta (Styx).

Azoff manages the Eagles, Van Halen, Christina Aguilera, Journey and their records through his Azoff/Music management firm, but a management roll-up was not what drove the TBA deal.

“Management wasn’t part of [TBA’s] core business,” Kline says. “Part of that is because [Azoff] is one of the most influential artist managers in the world.”

Similarly, risk-taking concert promotion was not a core focus of TBA, which was purchased in July 2004 by veteran promoter/producer Steve Moore exited TBA and resurrected his Moore Entertainment promotion company (Billboard, Sept. 18).

TBA is back to doing what it always did best under founder Thomas “Jock” Weaver: producing sponsor-driven, high-profile events, like the Music in High Places series, Hard Rock Rockfest and Fruit of the Loom Country Fest, along with low-profile but profitable private corporate shows.

And, Kline asserts, marketing trends indicate that the timing is right for a renewed vigor in the marrying of the corporate world with live events.

“A recent report said companies are spending an average of 10% more on marketing next year, but they’re spending it differently,” he says. “They’re spending it on corporate and live events and consumer marketing.”

Recent corporate clients for TBA Global Events include Bristol-Myers Squibb’s Cycle for a Cure campaign with Lance Armstrong and a five-city tour for Viacom promoting its fall TV schedule to advertisers. TBA will also produce a series of events surrounding President Bush’s inauguration in January.

But TBA is still booking entertainment for corporate and private events. Bands at all levels are in demand, Kline says.

Kline says TBA will also expand its consumer marketing practice. Alongside Sandefur, the company’s new VP of consumer marketing, will spearhead that effort.

“Dominic works with major brands to help them determine, facilitate and produce entertainment marketing strategies, including live events, music or product launches,” Kline says. "I am thrilled with the new team and new direction of the company," Azoff says.

TBA continues to operate offices in Los Angeles, Nashville, Atlanta, Chicago, Salt Lake City and San Diego.
Pause For The Cause With 3 Doors Down

Last year, Mississippi rockers 3 Doors Down established the Better Life Foundation, which aims to make a positive change in the lives of children. In March, 3DD played a benefit concert in Mobile, Ala., that raised about $100,000 for the cause.

Now, the foundation has planned its second annual gala for Dec. 18 at the Grand Geneva Resort in Geneva, Ill. There will be a silent auction, dinner, dancing, and performances by 1DD, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and the band's Moman. Details can be found at 3doorsdown.com and betterlifefoundation.com.

Aaron Van Duyne III, business manager for 3DD, tells On The Road that tickets for the ball are still available, and donations are always welcome.

GETTIN' RED WITH TED: Hard rock guitarist Ted Nugent will join country headliner Toby Keith for about 20 arena dates in the first quarter of 2005.

The pair first worked together on a U.S. tour last summer. "Ted loves country music, and on this U.S. tour, he took us under his wing, and he was a ball," Keith's manager, T.K. Kimbrell, says. "They're real compatible."

Nugent will be backed by his own band on this tour.

We can see how Nugent and Keith, and even their bands, would be compatible. They might even go hunting. But Keith's fans, however edgy, are still a country audience. And country fans aren't accustomed to hearing an artist use Nugent's, shall we say, colorful onstage language. On the other hand, Keith's fans would probably love it if Nugent shot a flaming arrow into an effigy of Osama Bin Laden. Keith was one of the top 10
grossing artists in 2004, taking in $44.3 million from 75 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore. He is set to play the New Year's Eve bash at Nashville's Gaylord Entertainment Center; also on the bill are Terri Clark and Dierks Bentley.

SOUNDCHECKS: Classic Rock Entertainment has exclusive representation of the Austin Lounge Lizards and Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodgers for personal appearances.

Loretta Lynn had to either cancel or reschedule her six December tour dates on the recommendation of her doctor, who has prescribed treatment for a lower-back ailment. Philadelphia-based facility management firm SMG has signed a booking and marketing contract with the SBC Center in San Antonio and basketball team San Antonio Spurs. The $186 million arena opened in 2002.

Steve Hyman has left his long-time post as executive director of the Queen of the Quad Cities in Moline, Ill., to become president of CECO Entertainment in Chicago. CECO is a new national consultancy specializing in conceptual design and operation of arenas. The firm's first assignment is the $80 million Hoffman Estates Arena, a sports and entertainment venue to be built in the western suburbs of Chicago. The 11,000-seat project is being developed through a partnership between development firm Ryan Cos., U.S., and Sears, Roebuck.

A spring groundbreaking is scheduled, with opening in fall 2006. Hyman has been at the QQC since 1999. The 12,000-seat arena is one of the top venues of its size in the United States. This year, the QQC finished 11th among arenas in the 10,000-15,000 range capacity, reporting grosses of nearly $8 million from 36 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore.

Electronic act Front242 will now be booked exclusively in North America by Nickel Soligot of AM Only, which also co-represents Fisherman, Scarper Sisters and Weekend Players under a partnership with New York agency Little Big Man Booking. Artists Worldwide previously rep'd Front242.
A ‘Legend’ Starts To Create His Own

BY RASHAUN HALL

Everyone from pop rockers John Mayer and Maroon5 to hip-hoppers Slum Village and Dilated Peoples wants to work with multiple Grammy Award nominee Kanye West.

So the fact that John Legend is the first artist signed to West’s Sony Music Label Group U.S. imprint Getting Out Our Dreams says plenty about West’s faith in Legend’s talent.

The demos for Legend’s album, “Get Lifted,” due Dec. 26 from GOOD, were actually completed long before Legend signed his deal with West.

“Timing is important,” Legend (aka John Stephens) says of West’s influence. “I was getting turned down by labels for the songs that I am now releasing.”

Legend began his career playing keyboards and singing backing vocals for such artists as Alicia Keys, Lauryn Hill, Janet Jackson and Britney Spears. However, it was his work on West’s multiplatinum debut, “The College Dropout,” that boosted his profile.

“Clearly, it gave me a lot of experience working with great artists on classic albums,” Legend says. “Anytime you got that kind of experience, it will stick on you. So I learned to make the best of those opportunities, and it helped me to make my project better.

“The exposure was great as well,” he adds. “It all started to build excitement around my project for both consumers and labels. Kanye’s album really got things going, and now here I come.”

In addition to working on West’s album, Legend’s vocals have been featured on singles from Keys (“You Don’t Know My Name”), Jay-Z (“Encore”), Slum Village (“Selfish”) and Dilated Peoples (“This Way”), among others.

Legend recently made his solo debut with the single “Used to Love U.” The song, co-written and produced by West, peaked at No. 32 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart.

“It truly was my introduction to the music world,” Legend says. “It also reflected the number of levels, particularly with the hip-hop meets-soul-meets-gospel vibe.”

Legend worked with Will.I.Am of Black Eyed Peas for his current single, “Get Lifted,” which is being promoted as a duet with Nelly Furtado.

“It’s just the quintessential relationship song,” Legend says. “My parents were divorced for 12 years, and they got back together. The song shows that there are ups and downs in any relationship.”

Legend was first signed directly to Columbia, but when GOOD got going, he shifted to West’s imprint.

Sony Urban Music GM Lisa Ellis sees Legend as the next generation in the label’s long legacy of singer/songwriters.

“He’s transcends pop music—cany—he can do jazz, classical and hip-hop all at the same time.”

Sony capitalized on West’s recent tour with Usher by putting Legend on the road with the two artists.

He performed during West’s set, as well as on club dates throughout that trek.

“We took advantage of him being on the road,” Ellis says. “We wanted to maximize every moment we had for either field promo, street teams or marketing.”

Touring has been the main component in getting the word out on Legend. He is currently on a college and small-venue tour in support of the album. Since he is a classically trained pianist, he often performs alone with just a keyboard.

The label has also scored several TV appearances for Legend, including “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno” and “The Ellen DeGeneres Show.” Legend will also portray Steve Wonder on an upcoming episode of “American Dreams.”

The Wonder connection goes deeper. Legend covered his classic “Don’t You Worry ‘Bout a Thing” for the Will Smith film “Hitch,” opening in February. The song will be featured in the opening credits.

Legend’s success to this point has come as a featured artist. However, he is quick to note that he wants to be remembered as more than a hook singer.

“I want to break that mold,” Legend says. “And I did that by making a great album. However, if it doesn’t go well, I will still be the dude who sang this or that hook, and there are plenty of artists out there like that.”

Warwick’s Friends Are For Duets

After two years of preparation, R&B/Pop icon Dionne Warwick is in the middle of recording a duets album for a 2005 release. She is working with her son, producer Damon Elliott.

“My Friends and Me” is the title of what Warwick says will be a double-CD. It will feature such acts as Elton John, George Benson, Patti LaBelle, Ivan Lins, Gladys Knight, Stevie Wonder, Gloria Estefan, Mysa, Destiny’s Child (performing individually) and Pink, with Warwick on a song with the lady herself.

Warwick has collaborated to great effect before with the Spinners (“Then Came You”), Jeffrey Osborne (“Loves Power”) and Knight, Wonder and John (“That’s What Friends Are For”).

“This has been in the making since my 40th-anniversary celebration. Now I’m entering my 42nd year,” Warwick says with a laugh. She adds that Elliott—who has worked with Mysa, Pink and others—keeps her “up to snuff” on the contemporary front. The project is still shopping for a label.

Meanwhile, Warwick is promoting her first holiday album. “My Favorite Time of the Year,” The DMI Records set, reissue with lush arrangements by Tim Heintz and guest turns by Knight, Dave Koz and Bebe Winans.

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Wonderful Spirit: Alicia Keys, Angelina Winbush, Angie Stone, Joss Stone, Raphael Saadiq and Kim Burrell are just some of the artists who will be performing at Stevie Wonder’s ninth annual House Full of Toys benefit.

Hosted by comedian Dave Chappelle, the concert gets under way Dec. 18 at the Forum in Inglewood, Calif. It is sponsored in part by American Honda, BET, Coach, Hasbro Toys, Toyota and West Angeles Church of God in Christ.

Holiday Note: For the first time, Donny Hathaway’s seasonal signature “This Christmas” enters ASCAP’s updated list of the 25 most-performed holiday songs. Co-written by Hathaway and Nadine McKinnor, the tune has been recorded by Gladys Knight, Usher and Ruben Studdard, among others. Topping ASCAP’s list is the Mel Torme and Robert Wells-penned perennial, “The Christmas Song.”

Kudos: Kevin Black, national VP of rap for Interscope, will receive the Urban Hit-Maker Award at the ninth annual Multicultural Prism Awards. Other honorees include Jamie Fox, Chuck D/Public Enemy, Mary J. Blige, Fat Joe/Terror Squad and Cash Money Records.

This year’s fete celebrates the hip-hop culture’s philanthropic ventures, social and community efforts and sponsor contributions. It takes place Dec. 17 at the Henry Ford’s “Music Box” Theater in Hollywood.

Dionne Warwick, second from left, touts her new holiday album to the delight of, from left, Hastings board member Ann Lief, Radio One/TV One founder and CEO Kathy Hughes and DMI Records CEO Tenal Clark.
A Decade Later, 
Xzibit Makes A’List

This week’s column was written by 

Gail Mitchell in Los Angeles.

Nearly 10 years into his career, 

Xzibit is on a roll. Now in the 

second season of hosting the popular 

MTV series “Pimp My Ride,” the 

West Coast rapper has signed an 

exclusive worldwide publishing deal 

with BMG Songs.

Fresh from hosting MTV’s European 

Music Awards last month in 

Rome, Xzibit (born Alvin Joiner) is 

busy promoting his fifth album, 

“Weapons of Mass Destruction.” The 

Columbia set arrives Dec. 14. And if 

that weren’t enough, his acting 

chops are getting noticed, too.

His cameo in Eminem’s “8 Mile” 

has segued into a role alongside Ice 

Cuba in the upcoming “XXX” 

sequel, “XX State of the Union.” Xzibit also has a part in the forthcoming Jennifer Aniston/Clive 

Owen suspense thriller, “Derailed.”

While he enjoys the wider 

audience afforded by “Pimp My Ride,” 

Xzibit says the experience hasn’t 

altered his rap perspective. “I’ve 

been making records for my soul 

since 1996. This album is about 

what’s real: where I am as a man, 

a father and a creator. I never 

change the way or reason why I 

make music. If it’s about dollars 

and cents, I would have quit a long 

time ago. I believe in something 

more than the dollar.”

Xzibit’s album runs dates back to 

his 1996 Loud/RCA debut, “At 

the Speed of Life.” That was followed 


Machine” (2002). Besides his 

come with Nate Dogg on Snoop Dogg’s 

top 30 R&B hit “Bitch Please” in 

1996, Xzibit’s highest charting single 

is 2003’s “X,” which reached No. 32.

The Los Angeles-based rapper 

enlisted a cadre of talent for 

“Weapons of Mass Destruction.” 

Producers include RIC Rok, Rock- 

wild, Hi-Tek, Beatmatch and Sir 

Jinx. Busta Rhymes, MC Lyte and 

Strong Arm Steady round out the 

guest list. Among the noteworthy 

tracks are “Scent of a Woman” 

and “Cold World.” First single is 

“Hey Now.”

Having wrapped a two-month 

promotional tour that included Europe, 

Xzibit is looking forward to a third 

season of “Pimp My Ride.” Of his 

acting career, which includes roles 

in recent hits like “CSI: Miami,” Xzibit says, “I’m not ready 

to jump into a lead role yet. I’m just 

getting my feet wet.”

When asked about the possibility 
of endorsements or a clothing line, 

he laughs and says he doesn’t want 

to “pimp the system. This [recog- 

nition] was a long time coming and 

has prepared me to be level-headed.”

The second edition of “The Hip-

Hop Lifestyle” also found that hip-

hops was the radio format’s fastest-growing 

formats. Only six U.S. stations 

played r&b in 1995, but more 

than 150 stations program the 

format today. Further, the 

average quarter-hour listening to the 

adults 18-34 doubled from an 8% 

share in 1999 to a 15% share in 

2003. The audience is 45% African-

American, 26% Hispanic 

and 20% other (including non-Hispanic 

white), with slightly more females 

(54%) than males.

One out of two listeners has 

attended at least some college, 

and the station has a $50 billion 

household income. Two out of five 

own their residence.

Sherman Kizart, senior VP/direct-

or of marketing for Interep, 

likes hip-hop’s economic clout to 

everyday. “If you put its 

$300 billion buying power in that 

case, hip-hop would be the 11th-

largest country in the world. Artists 

like Jay-Z and Snoop Dogg 

are significant brand 

enterprises themselves. 

‘Advertising on hip-hop-oriented 

radio stations reaches the music 

being played,” Kizart adds. “These 

stations offer the ideal environment 

for product branding.”
Music Execs Look Back, And Forward

BY LEILA COBO

As 2004 comes to a close, we asked some of Latin music’s top executives to answer four questions about the year ending and the new one approaching.

Their answers provide broad perspective and insight into a year of Latin music’s most fascinating and pivotal moments. The questions: What was your biggest challenge for 2004? What were the best and worst of 2004? Where do you see the Latin music industry going in 2005? What are your personal wishes for 2005?

GABRIEL ABAROA, president, the Latin Recording Academy

Biggest challenge: 2004 seemed to be low in terms of spirit. There were few acts that broke through, and business/corporate issues continued to distract the players from their main goal: identify, sign and promote great Latin music.

Best/worst: The best: The U.S. census opened people’s eyes in reference to the size of the U.S. Hispanic market. Alternative acts emerged in the mainstream. Some Latin acts continued to improve against all odds. Ringtones, ringbacks and ringtones represent a great source of funds to promote new acts.

The worst: Downsizing, unemployment, low morale, conservative thinking.

Latin in 2005: Spanish singer-songwriter Joan Manuel Serrat says, “Blessed are those who live at the bottom of the well, because they have nowhere to go but up.”

Personal wishes: That no great song or songwriter goes unnoticed. That Latin talent and industry continue to support the efforts of the Latin Recording Academy. That indie companies give potential talent a chance to bring their music into perspective. That multinationals break big acts to reinvest in people.

NESTOR CASOJULI, regional managing director, EMIL Music Publishing Latin America

Biggest challenge: As the year ends, it looks like the decline in some music markets has finally stopped, and we have observed growth in some countries. But the biggest challenge has been to understand the new rules of the game and the new reality of the different markets and adapt our strategy accordingly.

Best/worst: The best: The most interesting new uses of music throughout Latin America—such as the increasing penetration of Latin music in the U.S., the synchronization market. The worst: Latin has been much more piracy, although we have seen improved effectiveness in the fight against it.

Latin in 2005: I expect that we will continue to see recovery in the different markets and that the industry will be able to start developing and exploiting the digital potential of the environment in Latin America. Also I think we will see the consolidation of the different urban music movements in each region.

Personal wishes: To conclude the negotiations currently under way to clearly establish each right-holder’s place in the digital field, as well as the economic compensation that each party is entitled to.

GUSTAVO LOPEZ, VP of Latin sales and marketing, Universal Music & Video Distribution

Biggest challenge: By far the biggest challenge of the year is not much different than that faced in recent years. We are struggling with piracy and imports at traditional, legitimate stores, especially the mom-and-pops and swap-meet locations.

The Recording Industry Assn. of America has stepped up its efforts, and we applaud their work.

Best/worst: Best: The reggaetón and pasito duranguense explosion.

Worst: The price of our good friend Ricardo Correoso. (Most recently VP of marketing for Universal Music Latino, Correoso died in August of pulmonary fibrosis.)

Latin in 2005: Solid growth in youth-loving music, especially in the urban area.

Personal wishes: For 2005, I expect improvement in all sales for Latin music worldwide.

Jorge Pino, president/CEO, EMI Music U.S. Latin

Biggest challenge: Our greatest challenge during this past year was to maintain EMI Latin as a source of fresh and exciting repertoire produced by our local and international roster.

Best/worst: The best thing that happened during 2004 was the improvement and growth of the Latin music market.

The worst factor was trying to achieve acceptable margins while offering greater content for lower prices.

Latin in 2005: I see the Latin industry continuing its pattern of growth as it continues to evolve, finding formulas to reach the Hispanic youth with such genres as reggaetón and regional urban.

Personal wishes: For 2005, I expect... (Continued on page 30)

Ana Bárbara Collaborates With Barba On Song

Fans of grupoero star Ana Bárbara may have been surprised to find a duet with pop singer Reyli Barba (formerly of pop group Elefante) on her new CD, “Loca de Amor” (Fonovisa).

Turns out these seemingly disparate artists have much in common. They met more than a decade ago at “Valores Juventiles,” a Mexican TV show for aspiring singers.

Twelve years later, Ana Bárbara asked Barba—who is now a solo artist and also writes for numerous acts—to pen a song for her album.

Barba’s “No Fué Casualidad” appears on “Loca de Amor” as a solo cut and as a duet with Ana Bárbara. It is an acoustic pop track that reveals a different aspect of Ana Bárbara, one that is more intimate and earthy than her better-known grupero and romantic side.

The track is most similar to the truly charming “Lo Busqué,” which Ana Bárbara wrote herself, on the guitar, during a studio session. That song was recorded with her brother, 20-year-old Jose Francisco (who is a part of a soon-to-be-signed duo, Los Elegidos, with brother Anfero), and of person they associate with the image of a songwriter.

While “Lo Busqué” and “No Fué Casualidad” may be the most distinctive tracks on this album, the single, “Loca,” was penned by Alejandro Vezani, who has long written for Ana Bárbara’s big hits. They include last year’s “Bandido,” which pushed Ana Bárbara’s appeal beyond the grupero and regional Mexican realms.

This more eclectic album, Ana Bárbara says, is also the result of that expansion.

“Of course I want to keep singing to my fans, but it’s great to keep moving, too,” she says. “I can’t keep doing the same thing all my life.”

This album has a lot to offer. “Time, I want to be more than the grupero queen who moves her hips. I have more to say. I want to sing some more ballads, and boleros, and, yes, release an album of my own material.”

OBSESSING OVER “OBSESIÓN”: I am willing to bet almost anything that the average European had no notion of what a bachata song was one year ago.

But earlier this fall, it was bachata with a bang, as “Obesión,” a track by New York-based contemporary bachata band Aventura, made its way up the charts of nearly every European country.

By October, “Obesión,” in its original Spanish-language form (a Spanishish version was eventually recorded), had managed to hit No. 1 in a slew of countries, including France, Germany, Italy and Austria. The track also topped the Billboard Eurochart, which is compiled from music sales in 18 countries.

Now, “Obesión” has earned a nomination for best international song of the year in the NRJ Music Awards, which will take place in January in Cannes, France, during the MIDEM conference.

All of this makes for a rather impressive feather in the cap of Aventura and its label, a small indie called Premium Latin Music that has offices in New York and the Dominican Republic. Self-distributed during the Aventura explosion, the label only recently signed a U.S. distribution deal with Sony.

“Obesión” is the first single from “We Broke the Rules,” which peaked at No. 56 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart in January 2003.

“Obesión” has not charted on the Billboard Hot Latin Tracks chart, but it peaked at No. 32 on the tropical airplay list. Since then, Aventura has released another album, “Love and Hate,” but “Obesión” caught fire in Europe, where a series of labels—including Planet Records in Italy and Up Music in France—signed licensing “We Broke the Rules” in September 2003.

“Europeans already knew the band and were very excited by them, says Marti Cueva, director of business and legal affairs at Premium. “They saw its potential, and many had tried in vain to license the product previously.”

Cueva cut deals country by country, and in Europe the band was promoted as mainstream pop.

Now, Aventura is preparing an album that will include duets with Nina Sky and Don Omar. As for “Obesión,” the track will be recorded in English by Frankie J.
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**LATIN POP ALBUMS**

1. LUCAS HAMMER - DADDY YANKEE  
2. MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS - MI AMOR  
3. JUAN LUIS GUERRA - CONTRA EL TIEMPO  
4. RICARDO ARJONA - SOLO  
5. CHRISTIAN CASTRO - HASTA EL FIN  
6. IVY QUEEN - PERPETUAL IMAGE INTERNATIONAL  
7. ALEXANDER SANCHEZ - GRANDES EXITOS 97-04  
8. MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS - MI AMOR  
9. JENNIFER PENA - HOUSTON RODEO LIVE  
10. JENNIFER PENA - MI HISTORIA

**TROPICAL ALBUMS**

1. JENNIFER PENA - VIVA EL PASITO DURANGO  
2. DON OMAR - LOS TEMERARIOS  
3. VICENTE Y ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ - PENSAMOS EN TI  
4. MI HISTORIA - MI HISTORIA  
5. THE LAMINATES - MI AMOR  
6. EL GRAN COMBO DE PUERTO RICO - MI BEAT  
7. VARIOUS ARTISTOS - MI HISTORIA  
8. DON OMAR - THE LAST DON Live, Vol. 1 & 2  
9. MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS - MI HISTORIA  
10. MARCO ANTONIO SOLIS - MI HISTORIA

**REGIONAL MEXICAN ALBUMS**

1. DON OMAR - LOS TEMERARIOS  
2. VICENTE Y ALEJANDRO FERNANDEZ - PENSAMOS EN TI  
3. DON OMAR - THE LAST DON Live, Vol. 1 & 2  
4. MI HISTORIA - MI HISTORIA  
5. VARIOUS ARTISTOS - MI HISTORIA  
6. EL GRAN COMBO DE PUERTO RICO - MI BEAT  
7. VARIOUS ARTISTOS - MI HISTORIA  
8. DON OMAR - THE LAST DON Live, Vol. 1 & 2  
9. MI HISTORIA - MI HISTORIA  
10. VARIOUS ARTISTOS - MI HISTORIA
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<td>Arnaud &amp; The Monds</td>
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**Latin America's Top Stories Of 2004**

We asked our correspondents in the Latin region to compile a list of the top stories of 2004 in their respective countries. They represent the most important Latin markets outside the United States. A list of top U.S. Latin stories will appear in the year-end issue of Billboard.

**ARGENTINA**
- "La Argentinita al Polo" (Universal) by rock band Bersuit Vergarabat and "MTV Unplugged" (BMG) by Diego Torres become the biggest-selling albums of the year. Both achieve double-platinum status with sales of 60,000 copies.
- "Floricienta," a musical soap opera by producer Cris Morena, spawns a top selling album, a series of sold-out theatrical shows and strong sales in related merchandise.
- More than 200,000 fans of Argentine rock are estimated to have attended the first edition of Quilmes Rock, a nine-day fest held at Ferroviario Oeste soccer stadium in Buenos Aires.
- Teen pop band Erreway, which emerged from TV reality show "Popstars," ends its career with combined album sales of 1 million units, a movie and a Latin American farewell tour.
- Music DVD sales continue to grow, with sales increasing fivefold from those in 2003.

**COLOMBIA**
- Warner Music shuts its offices and licenses its products to indie K Discs. The new label is headed by Wieland Kaufer, who opened Warner Colombia in Bogota eight years ago and led that company until 2004.
- With the release of the Latin Grammys, Idan Diemedeis released a CD in June and spent 32 months in jail for his role in the death of a young woman.
- A host of labels announce plans to directly collect performance royalties derived from music videos that air on national TV channels. Sony, EMI, Universal, Sum and Columbia label FM say they plan to no longer rely on local collection societies. Legal discussions regarding the matter are under way.
- Passings: Soprano Carmen Gallo, 65, one of the first classically trained singers who performed with traditional Colombian repertoire, and Paulino Salgado "Batata III," 75, longtime lead percussionist for folk artist Toto La Momposina.

**MEXICO**
- Music sales rise for the first time in several years. According to Brazil's Assoc of Record Companies, sales increase 9 percent from January and March compared with the same time period in 2003.

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**Execs**

Continued from page 27

a continued reduction of piracy, both physical and digital, and a persistent increase in legal downloads.

**RAUL VAZQUEZ**, regional director of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, Latin America.

**Biggest challenge:** The political/vendetta venders conversion program in Guatemala-La Jara, Mexico (which seeks to convert sellers of pirated music to sellers of legitimate music). It will probably be the challenge for 2005 as well.

**Best worked:** The worst I have seen in 2004 is a proposed copyright legislation in Venezuela [supported by the government] that essentially strips record producers of all rights.

The best would be the Brazilian Congress finally smoking out a major copyright piracy insurgency. Latin in 2005: I am very optimistic that we will see a great deal of creative activity next year as companies focus on developing new artists who will be distributed through normal retail channels as well as online.

**Personal wishes:** Of course, health and happiness. Also, I hope the difficult adjustments that the industry had to make in the last three years will begin to generate a new creative and exciting environment in Latin America.

**INIGO ZABAŁA**, president, Warner Music Latin America.

**Biggest challenge:** Company growth and artist development. We have done very well with Alex Ubago, but we need to do a better job of competing.

**Best/worst:** Best: the consolidation of the urban movement [reggaeton and hip-hop] and the emergence of new media oriented toward bilingual Latin consumption.

Worst: first, the persistence of rampant piracy in the Latin market. Second, the difficulty, as an industry, in developing a greater number of young artists... although the Latin media in the U.S. are more open to new genres, they are still very oriented toward the adult market.

**Latin in 2005:** I see three major trends: First, the definitive consolidation of Latin hip-hop as a massive musical genre. Second, a greater mix of music in Spanish and English, both in the media and in the artists. Finally, I see a year of good growth in sales for the industry as a whole.

**Personal wishes:** Significant growth of digital sales in the Latin market. Decline of piracy, both physical and online. That, as an industry, we are able to break a greater number of young artists to maintain the second and third generations of Latin in the U.S. and as consumers of Latin music, consolidation of new media... aimed at second- and third-generation bilingual Latin consumers. This is very good news.

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**Latin's Top Stories Of 2004**

- Sales of music DVDs more than double in the first nine months, according to ABPD. The growth spurt leads labels to strike licensing deals and partnerships with foreign and domestic film companies and distributors.
- Naron Maynard is named chairman of EMI Brazil.
- Warner Music shuts its offices and licenses its products to indie K Discos. The new label is headed by Wieland Kaufer, who opened Warner Colombia in Bogota eight years ago and led that company until 2004.
- With the release of the Latin Grammys, Idan Diemedeis is released from prison. Diaz spent 32 months in jail for his role in the death of a young woman.
- A host of labels announce plans to directly collect performance royalties derived from music videos that air on national TV channels. Sony, EMI, Universal, Sum and Columbia label FM say they plan to no longer rely on local collection societies. Legal discussions regarding the matter are under way.
- Passings: Soprano Carmen Gallo, 65, one of the first classically trained singers who performed with traditional Colombian repertoire, and Paulino Salgado "Batata III," 75, longtime lead percussionist for folk artist Toto La Momposina.

**Xavier’s Cuts Get Scissor Treatment**

New York indie label A Touch of Classic Recordings is responsible for signing acts like Scissor Sisters and the Ones to worldwide deals. Now, along comes ATOC’s latest discovery, Xavier, whose debut EP, "XX," arrived last month. It was produced by Scissor Sisters’ Babydaddy and ATOC co-founders Oliver Stumm and Dominic Claussen.

On a recent Saturday night, Xavier treated fans to a live performance at legendary New York club CBGB.

For the uninitiated, Xavier’s sound traverses ‘80s Italo-disco, dance-rock and electro-funk. Sure, such a musical hybrid works well in recording sessions. But transplant tracks like “Sunrise in Tokyo,” “Disco Twilight” and a wicked cover of George Benson’s “Give Me the Night” into a live setting, and pure magic occurs.

Backed by a four-piece band and two background singers, Xavier strutted across the well-worn stage with all the swagger of a young Mick Jagger and the abandon of Sylvester—while his sartorial statement was more Prince.

While he appeared confident, Xavier says he was nervous. “It was my first time playing with a full band while doing my own songs,” he tells Billboard.

Raised on the music of Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, the Beatles and Whitney Houston, Xavier spent his teen years in the Sisters of the Poor Choir of Harlem. A one-off track (“Stay Forever”) with Tutto Matto followed.


Although Renee released two independent albums (“Never Say Never” and “Let’s Make Love”) in the late 90s, she is best-known as the singer of Planet Soul’s 1996 crossover hit “Set U Free” (Strictly Rhythm Recordings), it went top 30 on The Billboard Hot 100. Because of her hits, the Italian/ Colombian Warner/Chappell songwriter had signed with MCA. Her self-titled album for the major (Billboard, Aug. 26, 1999) failed to see the light of day. A reworked version, “Oasis of Love,” was later released by digital distribution company the Orchard.

In late 90s, she contributed "Sueno Sensual" to the "Under Suspicion" film soundtrack.

Renee is survived by her daugher and her husband, John Shamir, and his three children, including a sister, Deborah Frangiamolinos; and a brother, Joseph Siliz. Funeral services were held Dec. 5.
DECEMBER 18  2004

BILLBOARD®
HOT DANCE SINGLES SALES

Data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan

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Nashville Club Tootsie's Now A Label

BY JIM BESSMAN

NASHVILLE—The fabled Tootsie's Orchid Lounge on Nashville's Lower Broadway has been a haven for established and budding country music legends since the 1960s.

In those days, Grand Ole Opry stars would drop by to refresh themselves between shows at the adjacent Ryman Auditorium, and young disciples like Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson would soak up the vibe, as well as the suds.

But with the September release of Tootsie's regular John Stone's "Meet John Stone," the famed venue has taken a big step in expanding its brand beyond the bar.

Stone, who last month presented Kristofferson with Tootsie's first-ever Orchid Award before a packed house, has the first major release from Tootsie's Records. The label was conceived in 2002, inspired by Stone's initial performance at the club's stage.

Owner Steve Smith and entertainment director John Taylor sensed an opportunity to meet their goal of an independent record label geared toward furthering Tootsie's country music heritage.

"The intention was to license some old masters and do some compilation CDs of popular tunes by some of the artists performing at Tootsie's," says the label's A&R VP, Greg Humphrey, an industry veteran who has produced acts like Jo-Ell Sonnier and Jonelle Mosser. Humphrey co-produced "Meet John Stone."

The first release from Tootsie's Records was a compilation of songs by Tootsie's regulars that was sold in-house with the T-shirts.

"They had built a recording studio [Tootsie's Riverside Studio] a couple years back in order to expand the club's stage," Humphrey says. "Then I came in, and we created a plan to do compilations and one-offs with artists who were between deals and not play the major-label, big radio, big money game and keep everything small and in-house.

Then John Stone came along and we switched our plan to more of an artist strategy, because we felt he had the potential to be a mainstream artist."

Indeed, Stone's first single, "Shame On Me," which was worked to secondary and tertiary markets when it was released in June, has been played on bigger country stations since mid-October.

"The record has had a much longer life than expected," Humphrey says. "I guess the name 'Tootsie's' opens a lot of doors at radio, because everybody at Country Radio Seminar has hung out there and knows the history of the place."

WDXB Birmingham, Ala., program director Bill Lawson sees the club's heritage and flagship artist Stone as giving the fledgling label an edge.

"John Stone's an astonishing performer on lots of charisma, like a 'Prampton Comes Alive' thing," Lawson says. "I played a Gretchen Wilson show and had the audience on fire, which is hard for a total unknown to do. But Tootsie's Records also has that strong tie-in with the historical name, and the guys that own it are hardworking and well-connected and have as good a shot as anybody."

Humphrey handles artist development and radio promotion activities in-house, though he is supplemented in the latter regard by several Nashville indie firms. The Select-O-Hits-distributed label is assisted by LiveWire Entertainment in sales and marketing to retail. Nashville PR agency Aristo-Media handles publicity.

Tootsie's has also launched talent acquisition efforts, which will be essential to book Stone and other national pop, rock, hip-hop and country acts.

Next on the table for Tootsie's is an album by the venerable Jimmy Salyer, who "does as good as Ray Price and Hank Locklin do at their age," Humphrey says. Salyer's duet single with Merle Haggard, "Haggard State of Mind," is available via CDA. Younger Saturday-night Tootsie's mainstay Steven Wesley will have an album out next year on the label.

"We plan on doing compilations and, possibly, Opry star-type tributes," Humphrey says. "It would make sense to do a Tootsie's tribute to Willie or Kris or something along those lines."

Good Morning, Iraq: Baghdad FM Breaks A Hit

Leave it to sunny Chey Wright to turn an ugly situation into a popular—and meaningful—song. Now, that song has helped her land a new label deal.

About a year-and-a-half ago, Wright was driving the Nashville streets when a motorist in a mini-van behind her noticed the Marine Corps sticker on the artist's bumper. Wright's brother is a Marine who sent her the sticker before he was shipped off to Iraq.

The agitated woman began honking, swerving and flicking her lights. "I look in the rear view, and she's flipping me the bird, hard," Wright says. "I thought I cut her off, because I'm a really bad driver."

When the woman finally pulled up next to Wright and motioned for her to roll down her window, she gave the artist an earful of opinions about the war in Iraq.

"Your war is wrong," Wright remembers the woman screaming at her. "You're a baby killer."

She went home and immediately wrote a song about the incident, "The Bumper of My S.U.V." She put a demo of the song on tape, then tucked the tape in a drawer and promptly forgot about it.

"Obviously, I didn't mean for it to be a single because it's 4 1/2 minutes," she notes. "I just wrote the song to get it out of me."

A longtime supporter of the U.S. troops, Wright decided to far away military bases to perform with the USO and the group Stars for Stripes. Wright was preparing to make another trip to Iraq when she remembered the song. She threw the work tape in her bag as she was packing.

She taught her band the song, and they played it the first time for the troops in Iraq this year. "Obviously," she says, "they loved it. That was the first time in my career I ever lost my cool onstage. I was crying, and everyone was crying. My band was crying," she says. "It was very moving." They performed it every night during their tour of Iraq.

Wright says hundreds of enlisted men and women met asked her to record the song and send it back to them so it could be played on the American Forces Radio and Television Service station Baghdad FM.

Wright has been without a label since her abrupt split with Vivaton Records earlier this year. Still, she says, she couldn't get the troops' request and her promise to record the song out of her head. So back in Nashville, she booked some studio time, recorded the song and sent it off to Baghdad FM.

"Then, Wright says, "there's where it gets weird." An MP3 of the song made its way back from Iraq to U.S. Army station WAVE Dayton Beach, Fl., which began playing it. Next, WEAR Cleveland, Miss., began playing the song, and from there it began spreading to other radio stations strictly by word-of-mouth.

Wright has no promotion team behind the single, and no indices are working it. Yet it continues to climb the chart. "The Bumper of My S.U.V." is at 44 on country singles & Tracks this issue.

"I've been working on a label deal," she says. "I'm feeling qualified to come home and write that song to that lady" in the minivan.

The irony of this song becoming a hit is that Wright is not necessarily a supporter of the situation in Iraq. "I'm very confused about this war," she says. "I have questions, but I get to ask them because I'm free."

"Nobody is pro-war," she continues. "Good God, what kind of an idiot is for war? But as long as we've got men and women on the ground risking life and limb to protect this country and to protect that lady's freedom to flip me the bird, I feel an obligation to take 10 days out of my busy life pretending to be a country music singer and go perform for the troops."

For the Record

Riders in the Sky was named entertainer of the year at the annual Western Music Assn. Awards Nov. 20 in Albuquerque, N.M., not Sons of the San Joaquin as had been reported to Billboard by the WMA.

Nashville Scene

By Phyllis Stark

Nashville, Tenn.

By Phyllis Stark


The album is the one she recorded for Vivaton, then bought back from that label when it was never released. "The Bumper of My S.U.V." will be added to the album. Since the song first began generating airplay, Wright has been concerned that it not appear that she is exploiting patriotism for money. "My initial fear was that someone would say 'OK, another country singer writing a song about the war.'"

"There are a couple of people who will want to believe this is my last bit of work to go on country radio," she adds. "It wasn't. I haven't [just] been doing shows for the troops since 9-11. I've been doing it my entire career. . . ."

"I wasn't paid to come home and write that song to that lady" in the minivan.

"I wish I had a devoted fanbase," she says. "I would make sense to do a Tootsie's tribute to Willie or Kris or something along those lines."

Wright: PGA-MILITARY NOT PRO-WAR
### TOP COUNTRY ALBUMS

**Artist** | **Title** | **Weeks at Number 1**
---|---|---
**SHANIA TWAIN** | Ultimate Alabamian: 20 41 Hits | 4
**TOBY KEITH** | Greatest Hits 1 | 3
**TIM McGRAW** | Here For The Party | 2
**ALISON KRAUS & UNION STATION** | Lonely Runs Both Ways | 2
**WILLIE NELSON** | Mud On The Tires | 2
**KENNY CHESNEY** | Be Here | 2
**JOE NICHOLS** | License To Chill | 2
**JIMMY BUFFET** | The Greatest Hits Collection II | 2
**LEANN RIMES** | What A Wonderful World | 2
**ALAN JACKSON** | What I Do | 2
**BLAKE SHELTON** | Blake Shelton's Barn & Grill | 2
**TOBY KEITH** | Shuck 'N' Jive | 2
**SARA EVANS** | Restless | 2
**MARTINA McBRIDE** | Have A Fun Christmas | 2
**LONESTAR** | Let's Be Us Again | 2
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** | Shiny Down The Chimney: A Country Christmas | 2
**DIERK BENTLEY** | Shakin' It All | 2
**TERRI CLARK** | Passing Through | 2
**RANDY TRAVIS** | Big & Rich: Super Galactic Fan Pak (EP) | 2
**TRACE ADKINS** | Comin' On Strong | 2
**SHADYDA** | Sweet Right Here | 2
**GARY ALLAN** | See If I Care | 2
**GEORGE JONES** | 50 Years Of Hits | 2
**REBA MCENTIRE** | Room To Breathe | 2
**MONTGOMERY GENTRY** | You Do Your Thing | 2
**JULIE ROBERTS** | Josie Roberts | 2
**JOHN DENVER** | Definitive All-Time Greatest Hits | 2
**SOUNOACK** | Blue Collar Comedy Tour: The Movie | 2

### GREATEST GAINERS

**Artist** | **Title** | **Weeks at Number 1**
---|---|---
**LEANN RIMES** | What A Wonderful World | 1
**ALAN JACKSON** | What I Do | 1
**BLAKE SHELTON** | Blake Shelton's Barn & Grill | 1
**TOBY KEITH** | Shuck 'N' Jive | 1
**SARA EVANS** | Restless | 1
**MARTINA McBRIDE** | Have A Fun Christmas | 1
**LONESTAR** | Let's Be Us Again | 1
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** | Shiny Down The Chimney: A Country Christmas | 1
**DIERK BENTLEY** | Shakin' It All | 1
**TERRI CLARK** | Passing Through | 1
**RANDY TRAVIS** | Big & Rich: Super Galactic Fan Pak (EP) | 1
**TRACE ADKINS** | Comin' On Strong | 1
**SHADYDA** | Sweet Right Here | 1
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**MONTGOMERY GENTRY** | You Do Your Thing | 1
**JULIE ROBERTS** | Josie Roberts | 1
**JOHN DENVER** | Definitive All-Time Greatest Hits | 1
**SOUNOACK** | Blue Collar Comedy Tour: The Movie | 1

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*Note: The data includes albums with sales of 10,000 units or more. Market sales figures are based on sales of albums for the first week of the chart. The sales figures are compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.*
ALBUMS

Edited by Michael Paolletta

POP

DIANA DeGARMO
Blue Skies
PRODUCERS: various
RELEASE DATE: Dec. 7
RCA 82876 64490

“American Idol” finalists abound in the fourth quarter from Kelly Clarkson’s triumphant sophomore disc and Clay Aiken’s holiday love fest to Fantasia features Jadakiss and 50 Cents. And the diva who gravitates toward the pop pagant of the show will find their heroine in Diana DeGarmo’s trustworthy debut, “Blue Skies.” The 16-year-old is perhaps singular among the group to truly feed her fans what they hunger for: timeless pop melodies that dis- cover the voice we’ve come to love. The sturdily sung stretches her wings throughout the 12 songs presented here. DeGarmo is highlighted by the gospel “Go On and Cry” and singable “Cardboard Castles.” Less stirring are songs like “The Difference in Me,” which borrows from the songwriters who have pro- duced Ashlee Simpson and Hilary Duff, with their increasingly clichéd girl-against-the-world signature. Among so many heavily hyped artists, DeGarmo is playing to her audience, instead of a desire to be cooler than the room. It is radically refreshing.—CT

R&B/hip-hop

MARIO
Turnin’ Point
PRODUCERS: various
3rd Street/161885
RELEASE DATE: Dec. 7

Mario’s vocal talent attracted attention two years ago with breakout single “Just a Friend 2002” from his self-titled album, Sophomore set “Turnin’ Point” represents the 18-year-old’s development in both age-wise and musically. His more mature sound and opposite-sex look, expressed with R&B/pop crossover ballad “Let Me Love You,” has already struck a chord with listen- ers. A remix, included on the album, features hip-hop star T.I. Throughout the set, Mario calls to mind a younger version of Usher or Michael Jackson. That comparison works to full effect on ballad “How Could You,” reggae-fla- vored midtempo charmer “Girl I Need” and the uptempo “Call the Cops.” One glitch in the proceedings is “Boom” with rapper Juvenile. Produced by Lil Jon, it’s too derivative of Usher’s 2004 megahit, “Yeah!” Overall, though, Mario’s staying power has passed the sopho- more huddle.—GM

JAZZ

PONCHO SANCHEZ (DualDisc)
Postmodern Blues
PRODUCERS: John Burk, Jack Wiener
Silverline 294147
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 16

The 515 Entertainment Group, a lead- ing proponent of high-resolution, mul- tim-channel sound offered by DVD-Audio, has adopted the DualDisc CD/DVD hybrid with similar enthusiasm. This live recording from the 2003 Montreux Jazz Festival is an ideal example of the creative possibilities such next-generation formats offer. The added dimension of a surround-sound speaker configuration makes any musical genre more fully alive and present, but the multiple percussion instruments featured in this Latin jazz performance really come to life when enveloping the listener. True to typical DVD-Audio composition, the DVD side of “Poncho at Montreux” is light on video content. It offers the entire album in S.L.-channel sound and stereo, photos, a discography and biography. Also included is a video of “Batet Cha Cha,” perhaps the most satisfying component of the DualDisc. The high-resolution video married to a sparkling recording presented in surround sound far surpasses any experience possible on a CD. But being a DualDisc, it is back- ward-compatible, playable on any CD player. Also released by Silverline Nov. 16 are DualDiscs featuring Bob Marley & the Wailers, Ministry, ‘38 Special and the Fixx.—FW

DANCE/ELECTRONIC

DIRETVEGAS
One
PRODUCER: Dirty Vegas
Capitol 63743
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 30

British trio Dirty Vegas owes a lot to Mitsubishi and the Deutsch advertising agency, which used its “Days Go By” in one of the car company’s TV advertisements. Thanks to the spot, radio responded to the house-flavored track in a big way, resulting in the act’s 2002 self-titled debut album entering The Billboard 200 at No. 7. Well, with this follow-up album, there is no ad—and no buzz. This is unfortunate, as “One” shows artistic growth, with Dirty Vegas situating itself between U2 and Coldplay, replete with strings and gui- tars (both jangly and unplugged). Lead single “Walk into the Sun” holds its own next to current dance-rock hits by the likes of the Killers and Franz Ferdi- nand. Still, it cannot seem to escape the confines of the dancefloor, which is a huge hit. While the album loses steam midway, potent songs like “Home Again” and “Human Love” help save the day.—MP

LATIN

EDUARDO OSORIO
En Evoluciona
PRODUCER: Eduardo Osorio, Fernando Osorio, Juan Carlos Perez Solo
Respek 73699
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 23

It’s impossible to listen to Eduardo Osorio and not think of how he evokes Carlos Vives. With his gener- ous dose of accordion, earthy sound and colloquial lyrics, Osorio harks to the Vives pattern—both regional and international. But in his solo debut, Osorio, an accomplished songwriter (whose brother is Grammy Award winner Fernando Osorio), also dis- plays a guileless charm. There’s little that is contrived in this joyful, sim- ple but not simplistic—disc. Osorio sings of love in direct, catchy phrases and melodies, accompanied by mostly acoustic instruments for a tradition- ally minded sound with just tinges of rock and electric. He is best at upbeat material like “En Evoluciona” and “Ano Clasificada,” yet falters on slower tracks like “La Flor,” which is beautiful but requires better vocal chops to carry off the bare arrange- ment. But that doesn’t mar the over- all effect of this lovely effort.—LC

VITAL REISSUES

BILLY BACON & THE FORBIDDEN PIGS
Still Smokin’ After 20 Years
PRODUCER: Billy Bacon
Triple X Records 0016
RELEASE DATE: Oct. 19

Veteran genre-bending road hog Billy Bacon assembles some choice cuts of eight previous releases in a package that nicely captures the diverse Pie sound. Bacon and the boys are all over the musical meat market, offering infectious Mexican cantina tunes (‘Una Mas Cerveza,’ “Hasta Mahana Iguna”), rockabilly rave-ups (“Battle With the Bottle,” “Bon Ton”), Van Morrison-styled R&B (“Closer,” “Can’t Knock Them Tonight”) and hard-charging swing (“When It’s Cold Outside,” “Jump for Jive”). There’s also some banjo from country with wifty pitchy vocals. So if you like the good, you can’t go wrong.—RW

DVD

BILLIE HOLIDAY
Jazz Memories: The Genius of Lady Day
EFD Films/DVD 28690283NT
RELEASE DATE: Oct. 26

Anyone who is unfamiliar with Billie Holiday’s life story but wants to learn about her can’t go wrong with this flick. She will not get as much out of “Jazz Memories: The Genius of Lady Day” as those who are better educated about her background. The documentary is light on narration and does not contain commentary from Holiday scholars, instead focusing on still photography and performance footage to tell her story. The DVD is more of an audio and visual scrapbook that aficionados will appreciate for the 14 rare TV and film clips it counts among its special features. They include Holiday’s scenes in the film “New Orleans” and a musical short with Count Basie & His Sextet. The years haven’t been kind to some of the footage, but that doesn’t dis- tract from Lady Day’s genius. Her unique voice is particularly potent when she performs on a date like “Strange Fruit”; her mournful warbling makes this song about lynching even more chilling.—CLT

CONTRIBUTORS:

Leila Cobb, Raeshan Hall, Katy Kroll, Gail Mitchell, Michael Paolletta, Chuck Taylor, Christa L. Titus, Ray Waddell, Christopher Walsh. ESSENTIALS: Releases deemed by the review editors to deserve special attention on the basis of musical merit and/or Billboard chart potential. VITAL REVIEWS: Reissued albums of special artistic, archival and commercial interest and outstanding collections of works by one or more artists. PICKS: New releases predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format. CRITICS’ CHOICE: New albums, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended because of their musical merit. All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies and singles review copies to Michael Paolletta (Billboard, 770 Broadway, 6th floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate box.

www.americanradiohistory.com
**The Global Sound Of Souad**

Algerian music star Souad Massi’s hopeful international hit “Amessa” (“A Day Will Come”) is the theme of the United Nations’ newly declared International Year of Microcredit, 2005.

This caps a big year for the enchanting and intriguing (“irresistible,” said The New York Times) Paris-based songstress, who has been likened to Joan Baez and Tracy Chapman.

“Our work is now paying off,” says Jean-Christophe Bourgeois, GM of Sony/ATV Music Publishing France, Massi’s publisher. “We signed Souad back in 2000, and since then—and along with Universal Records France—we have been building her international profile. She has toured to critical acclaim in several territories this year, including the U.K., Germany, Australia and the U.S., and we are very excited by the great reaction to her music in the U.S. We are intensifying our focus on developing her career over there.”

Bourgeois cites a three-pronged global effort: to be behind the intense folk-rocker, who sings in Arabic and records domestically for Wrasse Records/Rykodisc.

**“First, we are sustaining our investments to make sure that Souad will be able to tour in the best possible conditions and spend the time required to properly work the U.S. market,” he says. “We are convinced that Souad’s great live performances are instrumental to her success. We are also aiming to build the U.S. film community’s awareness of Souad’s music. Her songs have already been used in several European films, which has been a great tool to help her cross over to a wider audience.”**

Lastly, Sony/ATV is looking for suitable songwriting partners for Massi in the United States.

“Souad’s unique songwriting style makes her an ideal candidate for collaborations with American writers, which we will definitely set up for her next album,” Bourgeois says. “We are also investigating possible duets that would be artistically relevant while bringing her music to a new audience.”

At the International Year of Microcredit kick-off reception Nov. 17 at the United Nations, Massi performed “Amessa” with 12-year-old Dominican vocalist Karina Pasian. The lead singer of Quincy Jones “We Are the Future” concept theme, Massi, who was designated the campaign’s singer laureate, also sang the song the next day with the U.N. International Year of Microcredit set’s Cold Heart,” which was Bennett’s first chart-topper, in 1951. Legendary Columbia A&R man Mitch Miller, who signed Bennett, asked him to cut it after establishing him with first hit “Because of You.”

“I told him, ‘I’d love to sing it, but I’m from New York City—and this is a country song!’ Mitch said, ‘If I have to tie you to a tree with rope, you have to sing this song—like it or not.’”

After the song became a hit, Bennett received a phone call from the writer.

“‘What is it, Mr. Williams?’ I said Tony, what’s the idea—truing to ruin my song?” Hank Williams replied. That’s a true story.”

Bennett also related his response to sound and manager Danny Bennett’s suggestion that he write lyrics for Django Reinhardt and Jacques LaRue’s instrumental jazz tune “Nuages” (Billboard, Nov. 5).

“I leave the music alone,” Bennett replied. He later came up with the lovely titles to “All for You” (the title of “Nuages” with lyrics), which is on his new RPM/Columbia album, “The Art of Romance.”

**MORE MUD: Pete Seeger’s “Waist Deep in the Big Muddy” is enjoying a minor comeback, what with the allusion to it in John Fogerty’s “Deja Vu All Over Again” (Billboard, Oct. 8) and Richard Shindell’s version on his new Koch album, “Vuelta.”

Shindell introduced the tune last month at Joe’s Pub in New York by recounting how he was to perform on the Lexington, Ky., CBS affiliate’s news show, but the station was preoccupied with coverage of a gas main-break. So Shindell ended up doing “Big Muddy” as “revenge,” he said, for CBS cancellation of “The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour.” The cancellation was fueled by Seeger’s rendition of the controversial anti-war song on the “subversive” show in 1968.


**New Residential Studios Sprout**

Through good times and bad, there are always studio openings. Consider it a good sign that a number of new facilities are on the horizon.

Two of these facilities, both stocked with state-of-the-art gear, reflect the rising diversity.

**Godsmack vocalist Sully Erna and Dan Catullo, president/CEO of TV/DVD production and distribution company Coming Home Studio, are opening Spiral Recording on the site of Studios B and C of Music Grinders Studios in Los Angeles. Scheduled to open this month, Spiral features a Solid State Logic 9000 J Series console, the centerpiece of an equipment package provided by Rockland, Mass.-based Professional Audio Design.

Spiral Recording will benefit from its principals’ projects, chiefly Godsmack’s recording sessions and Coming Home Productions’ DVD and video work. These interests sometimes overlap: Coming Home has filmed concert and videos for the band, including its “Changes” DVD-video.

“We’re building it to be the first studio mainly geared for DVD and 5.1 mixing,” Catullo says, “because that’s my primary business.”

Catullo envisions their immediate circle of associates and friends as additional clients and has spared no expense to outfit the facility with the amenities found in the world’s elite studios.

“This has been two years in the making,” he says, “and after discussing with all the artists we work with what they look for, we geared it to be the exclusive private studio that has personal touches, down to the little details.”

Those details include a spa, massage room, meditation lounge, library, game room and apartment.

“I understand bands these days would rather take their record budget and buy a Pro Tools rig and rent a mansion in Malibu or [record] at their own house,” Catullo says, “But I think a lot of bands still like the creative atmosphere and like to go somewhere with a cool vibe and be secluded from the world to do their project. That’s what we offer here.”
Don't look now, but Tower Records' owners have stopped shopping the chain and are investing in its stores.

West Sacramento, Calif.-based Tower relocated its Seattle store to a 14,000-square-foot space, almost doubling its size. The new store includes TouchStand listening kiosks throughout. "This is the first store that the new leadership group put together," Tower executive VP Kevin Cassidy says. "We have basically re-created a retro Tower look with a 1960s and 1970s feel and married it with current technology."

As most readers know, it has taken this long for Tower to redesign its first store because management has spent the last few years turning around the chain and didn't have the resources for growth, let alone to refurbish individual stores.

In fact, the company issued a press release touting its "successful turnaround" under its new owners and describing the Seattle relocation as the beginning of a "reinvigorated Tower." Cassidy says the owners plan to upgrade existing stores shows they are committed to the chain.

Tower filed for Chapter 11 protection Feb. 9 to overcome a technicality and emerged 35 days later, setting an industry record. Tower president Alan Rodriguez was unavailable for comment on the turnaround.

In the last two months, the company's bondholders — who agreed to convert that debt into an 85% stake in the chain — turned down bids from Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst and Yucaipa, sources say.

It is clear that at some point the bondholders will want to cash in their investment. In the meantime, they are apparently committing resources to keep the chain attractive to potential purchasers.

(Continued on page 39)

**Holiday Catalog Finds New Life Online**

Labels Go Digital With Event-Themed Music

**BY ANTONY BRUNO**

The fourth-quarter sales season always breathes new life into holiday catalog, but as digital distribution comes of age, labels are finding new ways to quickly and effectively sell their classic and contemporary holiday tunes.

Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas Is You," which logged in at No. 7 on the Billboard Hot Digital Tracks chart this issue, remains among the top three for Apple Computer's iTunes Music Store, where Christmas titles comprised one-third of the top 100 downloads as of Dec. 6, according to the Web site.

This trend continues in the mobile space, where Boris Karloff's "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" and the classic "Jingle Bells" made this week's Billboard Hot Ringtones chart at Nos. 4 and 5, respectively.

"Deep-catalog holiday classics are what really sell," says David Dorn, senior VP of new-media strategy at Warner Strategic Marketing. "The advantage of the digital world is that you can put everything and anything out there at minimal cost."

Dorn admits that Warner Music Group has relatively few classic Christmas titles, but the company has embraced the digital-distribution model by releasing several "mini-bundles" of holiday music featuring four or five tracks each. The packages are available for $3.61 through all online download outlets. WMG also released "The Frank Sinatra Christmas Collection," with a digital-only bonus track offered exclusively through Microsoft's MSN Music store.

This holiday season, Dorn says, the industry is only scratching the surface of its plans to utilize the digital channel for theme- and event-based music.

"We really haven't spent much time on it this year because we've been busy getting all our [current titles] out there," he explains. "Once all that is done, we'll..." (Continued on page 38)
Breaking Acts, High-Tech Efforts Spur Upturn

The holiday mood at indie retail is one of cautious optimism, despite Nielsen SoundScan numbers that show overall sales at U.S. indie merchants were down 7.1% as of Nov. 28. In fact, that figure represents a major improvement compared with years past: In 2003, indie merchants were down 14.9%, and in 2002 they were down 21.1%. Further, most indie retailers Billboard contacted saw a slight sales increase this year or stayed on par with their 2003 totals.

The improved numbers can be traced in part to strong performances by a number of acts typically associated with indie retail. Modest Mouse, for example, had spent a grand total of three weeks on The Billboard 200 prior to 2004. Yet its Epic album “Good News for People Who Love Bad News” has tallied 35 weeks on the chart and will finish as one of the top 100 sellers of the year.

Additionally, such indie-friendly acts as Los Lonely Boys, Franz Ferdinand and Taking Back Sunday hit it big, and the list of smaller indie surprises is also impressive. From TV on the Radio to Sufjan Stevens.

The indie world is doing so well, in fact, that the majors are paying as close attention to the underground as they did in the early ‘90s, gambling on such diverse acts as Le Tigre and Death Cab for Cutie.

“It worries me, actually,” says Rand Foster, who owns Fingerprints in Long Beach, Calif. “These are the kind of artists we’ve been playing for the past 10 years. It’s great to see them exploding, but that just means they’ll all be candidates for lowball pricing next time.”

The sales decline may have slowed and the mass closings of indie stores have leveled off, but predatory pricing tactics by the likes of Best Buy and Wal-Mart remain the top worry. Even retailers who experienced a sales increase in 2004 are struggling with how to stay competitive in the new year.

Today’s indie community is as vibrant as we’ve ever seen, thanks largely to the Internet. Indie focused blogs such as Weezer and OurStage are spreading the word on acts ignored in the Sunday advertising circulars.

“We had the least amount of major-label releases in our top 100 ever this year,” says Dan Matherson, owner of Philadelphia’s Repo Records. Matherson says sales at his store are up by two or three points. Foster says Fingerprints will finish the year with an increase in the back catalog.

“The improved figures are encouraging,” says John Timmons, owner of Ear X-Tacy in Louisville, Ky., says his holiday sales are beating 2003’s by 15%. Timmons points to a major increase in catalog sales, especially albums from Universal’s Jump-Start program. He also says the store was aggressive in building its Web site and creating a strong e-mail database.

“I’ll give credit to the big-box stores with the Sunday circulars,” he says. “They make it known what’s coming out, and I hope our e-mail database does that. We went from 3,000 to 6,000 names.”

A search for new ways to increase traffic led Criminal Records owner Eric Albright to make some major investments in 2004. He sprung for a $10,000 TouchStand kiosk and recently dropped $1,800 on a customized gift card. “I’m going to keep competing with Tower and Best Buy. I have to do these things,” he says. “I had to choose whether or not I was going to stock our shelves a little better or have this fancy-pants thing.”

So did Bob Fuchs, owner of Minneapolis’ Electric Fetus. His sales are matching those of last year, and in the hopes of gaining an edge, he purchased a couple of Mix & Burn kiosks from local distributor Navare. So far, he says, they’re a hit.

“We got them in right before Thanksgiving, and that weekend we had about 400 people burn discs. People are going to burn with or without me, so it’s another resource. Or it could be the first nail in the coffin, especially if these show up in grocery stores.”

Indeed, technology and the Internet are on everyone’s mind. Scot Diamond, a sales rep for indie distributor Southern Records in Chicago, says, “In terms of overall sales, our key accounts maintained their 2003 business. But we had record sales with online sites like InTeiPun and Injusd.”

Innovative founder Matt Wishnow says the site will tally annual sales of close to 2 million units, with its biggest market being Los Angeles. Look for InTeiPun to increase its online marketing efforts and begin promoting more shows in 2005.

“We’re trying to become a company that doesn’t just live online,” Wishnow says.

So is the swift rise of online retailers even on the radar of brick-and-mortar owners? “Yeah, definitely,” Levin says. “We need Web sites that are entertaining. The problem is, that’s another hire.”

Catalog

Continued from page 37

McGuire says, “Consumers aren’t just sitting there anymore. They’re involved. They’re what we call foragers. They don’t just go in a straight line to the store and so on. They’re using the power of Internet searches and going wherever they can to find what they want.”

Labels that tap into this activity stand to gain, he adds, given the instant gratification of the digital medium provides.

“It’s that gap between being made aware of something and the ability to do something about it,” McGuire says. “It’s very powerful.”

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield in Los Angeles.
Ecast Jukeboxes Hit 100 Million Downloads

BY STEVE TRAUMAN

Ecast's digital jukebox network recently downloaded its 100 millionth song, downloaded at one of its nearly 3,000 devices in bars, restaurants and other venues across all 50 states.

That equates to revenue between $40 million and $50 million after three years in the digital jukebox business, Ecast senior VP of business development John Taylor says.

The company's jukeboxes grant users access to a vast virtual library of music, and some labels believe that the concept has definite marketing potential.

A vending operator buys the jukebox from Ecast, which has two major suppliers. Prices range from about $5,500 for a compact Rock-Ola Wurlitzer jukebox to $8,000 for larger floor models like the NMM Music Group Chameleon and include the hard drive and router installed at each location.

Typically, the operator and venue owner strike a revenue-sharing deal, and both have input on new-release additions.

The operator can place 100-300 albums at each location, and the Ecast weekly update offers $50,000 new releases on the server. A video "attract loop" goes onscreen at each jukebox with new releases, and patrons can use a single song download to play any new track. The operator and venue jointly decide which new albums go into the local network.

This process has worked well for Steve Lipkin, whose Skytop Vending operates 55 jukebox locations in Las Vegas, including the Golden Gaming-owned PT's Pub chain.

The 100 millionth Ecast song was downloaded at a PT's Pub. On hand for the event was Golden Gaming marketing director Scott Eldredge, who remarked, "We were delighted with [the] reception to our first Ecast jukebox in 2002 and made it part of our marketing plan to add them to all our locations here. Guests love the excitement and the music."

For November, Eldredge reported 61,321 paid plays (or 2,044 per day) at an average price of 45 cents each, for almost $27,600 in revenue.

Ecast's online database contains more than 150,000 tracks, according to Taylor. "This attracts a younger audience that is Internet-minded and likes the idea of this access versus a traditional CD jukebox," he says.

With regard to licensing, Taylor says Ecast is responsible for clearing all rights. "We license masters from each label and clear with publishers, artist/songwriters and the recording right organizations. It's a completely secure and encrypted network, so there's no chance of anyone 'stealing' a download."

The company tested an unsigned-artists program this past year. The artists sign a three-year, nonexclusive agreement to provide masters of all songs or albums in that period, with a license fee/royalty of 1 cent per paid play and an added 1 cent for the songwriter or publisher. "We have been approached by more indie artists and their managers as word got around," Taylor says, "and we hope to officially launch early next year."

Taylor believes Ecast is breaking ground for the music business. "As we see it, this is the first time that the jukebox industry is delivering accurate reporting and timely revenue back to the music industry, while increasing consumer choice by marrying the Internet with the more traditional jukebox environment."

COOL EXPOSURE

"This is a cool way to expose and market an artist," Courtney Holt, head of Interscope's new-media strategic marketing, tells Billboard.

In Ecast's first major-label prerelease promotion, the Wallflowers' fourth album, "Red Letter Days" (Interscope/UMG), debuted on jukeboxes nationwide one week before its Nov. 5, 2002, retail release. This strategy allows a label to reach a desirable demographic, Ecast CEO Robbie Vann-Addie says. "We can present new music to a target audience that is already very happy to pay for music."

Holt says Interscope "jumped at the chance to promote the Wallflowers CD through Ecast. During the four-week promotion for "Red Letter Days," the album could be downloaded for free on every Ecast-powered jukebox. An attract loop offered the video for the first single, "When You're On Top." Using the touch screen, patrons were given directions on how to play any album track.

In a more recent promotion, an Ecast-powered Rock-Ola E-Bubbler jukebox was featured in Anita Cochran's music video for her Warner Bros. single "I'll Wanna Hear A Cheatin' Song," which features a posthumous contribution from legendary country singer Conway Twitty.

"The Ecast jukebox was perfect for my video," Cochran says, "because just like the song itself, it is something brand new that blends the traditional with modern technology. This is definitely the coolest jukebox I've ever seen."

COCHRAN: VIDEO STARRING ECAST JUKEBOX

Think of the new Dijammer from Hewlett-Packard as an air guitar for DJs—call it "air scratching." Only with this gadget, now in development from HP Labs, the feigned scratching movement actually creates sounds. The device is worn over the finger and communicates wirelessly with networked computers and Wi-Fi-enabled portable devices. Users can replicate complex scratching effects over music, change the tempo of a song and adjust the pitch, all within a series of finger wags.

HP chairman/CEO Carly Fiorina says the intention of the device is to allow anyone to be a DJ. To be sure, in the era of the iPod, the notion of the bedsit DJ is changing. Instead of amassing vinyl collections, music fanatics are accumulating massive digital music libraries that can't be easily manipulated in ways similar to analog formats.

No retail release date or pricing for the product has been set. However, HP executives are looking to devices like the Dijammer to serve as the next front in the digital entertainment experience: products that let consumers interact with their music and personalize it.

NEWTECH

NO. 9: Queens, N.Y.-based rapper Nas catalyzes up the list during the first week of release for his double-disc-set "It Was Written."
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South Korea Split

Labels Cautious About New Download Service

BY MARK RUSSELL

SEOUL—The record industry in South Korea—the third-largest music market in Asia—has given a mixed welcome to the territory's first download subscription service. South Korea's leading mobile-phone service operator, SK Telecom, launched an online music service MelOn (short for Melody Online) Nov. 15.

Subscribers pay 5,000 won ($4.30) per month for unlimited access to a catalog of 570,000 local and international songs from more than 80 labels, including the local affiliates of Sony BMG, Warner Music and EMI. The subscription allows users to download or stream songs to their home computers or mobile phones. However, the digital-rights management system SKT uses means that all downloaded tracks stop playing one month after purchase.

MelOn is part of SKT's business strategy to combine online and mobile phone music services. "Through the convergence between online and offline, SKT aims to gain a stronger leadership position among mobile operators in Korea," a company spokesman says.

SKT is a major player in the mobile music business here. The company "gets much revenue from the phone music business, so we cannot ignore the importance of mobile services," the spokesman adds.

Still, many in the local industry have doubts about MelOn. Several of Korea's biggest domestic music companies—including SM Entertainment, Yedang Media and Doremi Media—have not signed on with the service, nor has the local arm of Universal Music.

Park Kyung-chun, chairman of labels body the Music Industry Assn. of Korea, says he "does not welcome" MelOn. He insists that the service's monthly rate is too low to compensate for the amount of music available and fears it will discourage people from buying CDs.

As broadband access and mobile phone use in South Korea have increased in recent years, the retail value of record sales has steadily fallen. In 2001, sales totaled $287.9 million, while in 2003, the total was down to $162.4 million, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry.

In comparison, the Korea Assn. of Phonogram Producers—which collects digital music revenue for labels here—estimates that Koreans spent up to $238 million on music services for their mobile phones in 2003.

SKT predicts that most of the current 3 million subscribers to its premium services will also subscribe to the MelOn music package.

SPLIT ON ROYALTIES

SKT has reached agreements with KAPP and some individual labels on a split of revenue from MelOn. The telecom also has a blanket royalties agreement with authors' body KOMCA.

Under those agreements, 25% of MelOn's revenue will go to KAPP for distribution to labels, and 10% will go to KOMCA.

MIAK's Park is also a director of KAPP. He says an agreement has not been reached with the body about how the revenue it gathers from SKT will be divided among the various labels, although discussions are continuing.

The issue is complicated by the fact that several of Korea's largest music companies are not members of KAPP and must negotiate individual deals with SKT.

James Whang is president of music publishing at Doremi Media, which is not a KAPP member. He says Doremi and other leading Korean companies plan to meet with MIAK "as soon as possible" to discuss the MelOn service.

"The service looks OK," Whang says. "But we're concerned about the rate they are offering and about their kind of monopoly position here.

SKT insists that its offer of inexpensively priced, 'timed-out' subscriptions will lead to a "strong and vigorous" Korean music industry in the long term.

"Nowadays, most Koreans are downloading their favorite songs for free, not paying anything," the SKT spokesman says. "In this situation, offering a service for a low price will help the health of the Korean music business. We expect that agreements with the remaining labels will be made in the near future.

Nikki Han, director of international business at SM Entertainment, explains that labels are reluctant to embrace MelOn partly because they feel they were wronged in previous deals struck with telecoms regarding master ringtones revenue.

According to sources, the labels' and publishers' combined share of master ringtones revenue in Korea could be as low as 20%. The bigger labels here are keen to avoid a similar scenario with downloads.

"It is important to reach a deal that is fair to the labels," Han says. "But I think we'll be able to get something done."
### JAPAN

**SINGLES**

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<th>Track Name</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>THE GOSPELERS</td>
<td>&quot;Lift Every Voice&quot;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>KYODAI KUHAN/EMI</td>
<td>&quot;Rainbow Sky&quot;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>ORANGE RANGE</td>
<td>&quot;Color Avenue&quot;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>SOUTHERN ALL STARS</td>
<td>&quot;All About Us&quot;</td>
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### UNITED KINGDOM

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<td>2</td>
<td>RAY</td>
<td>&quot;Shine A Little Light&quot;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SANDY</td>
<td>&quot;I'm Not Gonna Be&quot;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>JILL</td>
<td>&quot;Break Every Rule&quot;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>MARIANNE</td>
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### FRANCE

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<td>2</td>
<td>CLIQUE ENANANTE</td>
<td>&quot;Enamore&quot;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>FOUR TO THE FLOOR</td>
<td>&quot;Four To The Floor&quot;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>LAISSÉZ-MOI DANGER</td>
<td>&quot;Le Jardin&quot;</td>
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<td>GÉNIALE</td>
<td>&quot;Géniale&quot;</td>
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### GERMANY

**SINGLES**

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<td>CALL ON ME</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>LADY SINGS</td>
<td>&quot;Everything's Gonna Be Alright&quot;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>PERFEKT WELLE</td>
<td>&quot;Perfektes Wieder&quot;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Was Ich An Ein Dir Mag&quot;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>BITTER SWEETNESS</td>
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<td>&quot;Waiting For A Miracle&quot;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>YOU &amp; ME</td>
<td>&quot;Liking It&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ALL I NEED</td>
<td>&quot;Say You Will&quot;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Just One Of Those Girls&quot;</td>
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### ITALY

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<td>&quot;Fabiola&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Say You Will&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;E Man&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;La voce&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I Can See Your Voice&quot;</td>
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### SPAIN

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<td>&quot;A Love Affair&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;No te Dejas&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Enamore&quot;</td>
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### AUSTRALIA

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<td>&quot;I Can't Help Myself&quot;</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Just One Of Those Girls&quot;</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>&quot;Turn On The Love&quot;</td>
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### THE NETHERLANDS

**SINGLES**

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**Political Protest Shines Spotlight On Okean Elzy**

Political principles have unexpectedly led to international exposure for the Ukraine’s leading rock act, Okean Elzy.

The band came out in support of Western-leaning opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko as the political crisis in its homeland following November’s disputed presidential election. Okean Elzy began performing nightly for the demonstrators gathered in Kiev’s Independence Square and was featured in news worldwide.

Lead singer Slava Vakarchuk publicly decried the election won by Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych — a new vote is scheduled for Dec. 26 — as “not democratic.” Yushchenko acknowledged that support: His web site declares, “If you like Okean Elzy, you believe in Yushchenko.”

The band, influenced by Queen, has toured Russia, Germany, Poland and France during its 10-year career. Current album, “Supersimetría” on Kiev-based indie label Sound Machine includes local airplay hit “Dajak,” hailed in the press as an anthem of the “chestnut revolution.”

**NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

**HOLIDAY HITS:** Danish rock veteran Kim Larsen shows no sign of losing his touch, more than 30 years after his first hit album.

The vocalist/guitarist was a founder of Copenhagen rock band Gasolin’, which dominated the Danish scene from 1971 to 1978. Larsen’s solo career has been similarly successful. His latest album with backing band Kjukken is “Glennemhagen—Jul & Nytaar” (Medley/EMI), featuring traditional holiday songs. It entered the International Federation of Phonographic Industry Denmark’s chart at No. 1 Nov. 16 and has shipped more than 74,000 units, according to the company.

Meanwhile, “Black Box,” a nine-CD set of Gasolin’ material issued in November 2003 by Sony Music Denmark, has shipped 111,000 copies, according to the company. “Gasolin’ and Larsen are in a class by themselves as the only [local] artists to consistently remain at multiplatinum levels,” Okean Elzy Denmark marketing director Jesper Bay says.

The IFPI says material by Larsen and Gasolin’ should account for at least 10% of Danish domestic repertoire shipments in 2004.

**CHARLES FERRO**

**GAGA FOR SIX:** Detroit rock quintet Electric Six is mounting a pre-Christmas return to the United Kingdom, where it flourished in 2003. The band’s idiosyncratic cover of Queen’s 1984 hit “Radio Gaga” arrives Dec. 15 on start-up Rushmore Records, which is distributed by Warner Music U.K. The single precedes the album “Ferocious Smoke,” due in January 2005. Warner has global rights for the set, Rushmore founder Steve Allen says.

Electric Six crashed into the British consciousness in January 2003, when “Danger! High Voltage” (XL Recordings) peaked at No. 2 on the Official U.K. Charts Co. singles list. A second top five hit, “Gay Bar,” followed in May 2003. Debut album "Fire" was released a month later, and U.S. shipments passed 100,000 units, according to XL.

**PAUL PXTON**

**CONTE ON TOP:** Debonair Italian jazz singer/pianist Paolo Conte set a personal best with his 17th album, “Elegia,” debuted at No. 1 on the FIMI albums chart Nov. 15. "Elegia" is the first album in the artist’s 30-year recording career to bow at the top. Warner Music Italy president/CEO Massimo Giuliano says: “This was his first original studio album in nine years,” he adds. “The fans were clearly looking forward to it.”

Warner Italy has shipped 70,000 units of the album so far. Giuliano says, “with a view to reaching 100,000 by Christmas.”

Conte has a sizable international fan base, notably in France and the Netherlands. The album is already out Warner in continental European territories and will appear in the United Kingdom in March 2005.
Hanson

Continued from page 41

Managing director, Martin Goldschmidt, "This is a completely new departure for us, and it is stretching us to the limit, but it's nice to be stretched, to be planning Europe-wide radio and TV campaigns and going for hits."

Keyboard player Taylor Hanson says "Cooking Vinyl is a company with great relationships across Europe and indie credibility, along with strong distribution and the most important thing: passion for this project."

After leading with the "Underneath Acoustic EP" in early November, the label will release the single "Penny & Me" from the album Jan. 24 in the United Kingdom.

"So far they've been fantastic to work with, professional and hard-working," Goldschmidt says. "Some of the original fans have gone away, as always happens, but some of them are definitely still there. There are a lot of Hanson fans in the media."

Emphasizing the point, the London gig received a four-star review from the Times newspaper, which enthused about Hanson achieving "the almost impossible jump from teen poppers to credible rockers."

Three nights later, the band played at Glasgow club King Tut's. Michael Kennedy, a supervisor at the city's Virgin Megastore, says, "The gig was pretty packed; there was quite a lot of interest, by all accounts. Radio stations up here will play the new stuff, on the back of VMNMs, and say, 'This is their new sound.'"

Drummer Zac Hanson credits the Internet with playing a huge role in nurturing the band's fan base during the quiet years, "especially internationally, in places we haven't spent enough time touring."

"It has given us an opportunity not only to build a direct relationship with our fans around the world and fuel them in times of drought, but also allow them to communicate with each other and create a powerful community. Our currency with them has always been trust and passion, and that relationship is also our future."

Madrid's Musical Web

SGAE Program Funds Rehearsal Time, Online Promotion

BY HOWELL LLEWELLYN

MADRID—Authors society SGAEG says positive reaction to a plan aimed at helping up-and-coming musicians in the Spanish capital could lead to a national expansion of the program.

"Locales por la Cara" launched Nov. 12 here. The campaign helps young musicians by providing free rehearsal time on an online promotional platform.

The program is funded and operated through the Portalatino portal (portalatino.com), which is part of SGAEG digital arm SGAEG.

"People are ringing us from all over Spain to ask, 'Why only Madrid? What about us?'

Portalatino campaign coordinator Javier Esteves says, "Portalatino, which also has offices in Barcelona and Seville, is considering expanding the campaign to other regions of Spain if the popularity continues," Esteves says.

Each act that joins "Locales por la Cara" receives four free 10-hour sessions at a Madrid rehearsal complex.

For the initial run of the program, SGAEG has booked rehearsal space until April 2005. Esteves stresses that the project is a "work in progress," with no set budget or time constraints. He declines to divulge costs.

About 50 Madrid acts—mainly bands—are involved in the program, according to Portalatino.

"It's great to get so much free rehearsal time, especially for younger groups who can't afford studio time," says Pedro Aparicio, singer of pop-rock quintet Dulce Apalapa.

"Normally, we pay 300 euros ($390) a month to share a studio with another group," he explains. "But other bands pay by the hour, and that's more expensive."

An added attraction for participating acts is that rehearsals are broadcast live at lateleatina.com. Portalatino is also organizing free concert webcasts every two weeks that feature bands from the project. The shows are held at a club attached to the rehearsal complex.

This means a wonderful promo opportunity," Aparicio says.

A three-hour edit of each act's rehearsals will be available through lateleatina.com for 30 days after an act finishes its last session, courtesy of Portalatino. Each act also will have its own site set up through the portal and receive a DVD of final rehearsal highlights.

"We decided to do this," Esteves says, "because Madrid has too few rehearsal studios at a reasonable price and very few small venues for new groups."

Participating acts must be registered members of portalatino.com. Esteves adds, "There are currently 4,000 of those, of which 60% are in Spain and 40% in Latin America," he says. Registration is free.

Esteves adds that, although Madrid's nightlife and bar scene is world-renowned, the local government has been exceedingly strict during the past 10 years when it comes to licensing live-music venues, especially small ones. Licenses are "complex and near impossible to acquire," Esteves claims.

"The last two generations of music fans in Madrid now have a real culture of live music, apart from big concerts," he says. "This initiative is aimed at raising awareness of the rehearsal- and live-venue crisis and (offering) a partial solution."

Marks Revisits ’60s Hits

Toronto-Based Guitarist Covers Local Favorites On ‘Big Town Boy’

BY LARRY LEBLANC

TORTON—As a teenager, Danny Marks would lock himself in his room with a Seabreeze record player and a stack of 45s and try to play along on his guitar.

Today, as a seasoned and lauded guitarist, he has deftly captured the feisty spirit of vintage Toronto recordings on his album “Big Town Boy.”

“I have carried these songs with me for years,” says Marks, who also hosts the blues program “BLUZ.FM” on Toronto jazz station CJRT. “These were local hits. I remember where I heard a lot of them for the first time.”

Set for release on Marks’ Cabaretunes label in January, “Big Town Boy” will be distributed by IndiePool in Canada.

Marks has previously issued three albums: “Guitarchaeology” (1997) and “True” (2003), both on Cabaretunes, and “Surfin’ Safari” (1999) on Avalon Records.

The new album draws mostly on Toronto radio hits from 1963 to 1965. It includes his renditions of such R&B-styled hits as “Charlena” (Ritchie Knight & The Mid-Nighters), “Take Me Back” (David Clayton Thomas & The Shays), “Keep On Running” (Grant Smith & The Power), “Love-Its” (the Mandala), “Any Other Way” (Jacksie Shane), “Mama Lou” (Ronnie Hawkins) and “Big Town Boy” (Shirley Matthews).

There are also versions of such ’60s rock hits as “Nothing” (the Ugly Ducklings), “If You Don’t Want My Love” (Jack London & the Sparrow, precursor to Steppenwolf) and “It Was I” (Big Town Boys). The album also features Domenic Troiano, Terry Bush and Freddy Keeler.

“My guy was Freddy Keeler, who played with the Shays,” Marks says. “I can remember being in the back of my dad’s car and hearing Freddy’s guitar solo on ‘Take Me Back’ and remembering how great it was.”

Keeler says, “Danny mentions me in interviews, which is neat. It’s impossible that so many years have gone by since then.”

Also included on the album is “You, Me and Mexico,” a 1970 Canadian hit by Marks’ blues rock band Edward Bear. “I felt it was important to address my past,” Marks says. “It’s a beautiful song.”
HELP WANTED

Billboard Seeks Interns...

We are currently seeking interns to assist The Music & Literary division of VNU Business Media. Qualified candidates will have the opportunity to work with Billboard Magazine, Billboard Radio Monitor, and Kinkus. We currently have internship opportunities available in the following areas: editorial, charts, marketing, sales, and special events.

Qualified applicants must be from undergraduate or graduate institutions that agree to grant academic credit to students in return for program participation. The candidate should have a strong desire to pursue a career in the B2B arena. We seek candidates with proven records of leadership and achievement who demonstrate the capacity for continuous development. Additionally, candidates must have strong computer skills including Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint.

Candidates should e-mail a cover letter and résumé to: entertainerrecruit@vnunyphubs.com. Visit our website: www.vnunybusinessmedia.com.

VNU Business Media publishes over 50 business publications, stages more than 50 trade shows and conferences and operates approximately 200 business-to-business electronic products. We operate around the globe, covering some of the most powerful industries in the world including entertainment, retail, media, travel and design.

Only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted. No phone calls or agencies please.

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Independent Marketing And Distribution company, located in New York, wants you on the team. Positions:

Import Buyer and Label Liaison

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- Purchasing Management
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BILLBOARD DECEMBER 18, 2004
Chappell Music chair/CEO Les Bider said in a keynote address Nov. 18 at Consect's MobileMusicConfere-
cence in Miami.

In an effort to avoid that pitfall, companies like Warner Music Group are developing formal collaborations between their recorded-music divisions and publishing houses on master ringtone and ringbacks. The WMG deal has led to the release of more than 2,000 tracks for ringback distribution through such carriers as Verizon and T-Mobile (see story, page 6).

EMI Music Publishing also said to be exploring more extensive ringtone-related licensing opportunities, though nothing has been announced.

But by and large, acknowledge-
mement of the high stakes involved is that labels and publishers can find common ground on the debate over business models for new technology.

The situation highlights a fundamental challenge the music business faces in responding to new technology opportunities.

“There’s a general lack of clarity on digital transmission rights, and because of that all the parties are trying to get as much money as possible for them- selves,” says Keith Bernstein, CEO of the Royalty Review Council, a California-based independent music royalty administration.

The assertion by publishers that the new formats and distribution channels in question are not bound by the same compulsory mechanical licensing rate that governs their CD and digital download royalties represents the major negotiating rift between the two sides.

Publishers have long been frustrated by the economic limitations of the congressionally regulated statutory rate for licensed content. The rise of new digital formats has presented an opportunity for them to expand their revenues and push the Music’s richer percentage of revenue deals.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in the monophonous and polyphonic ringtone business, where publishers are earning between 10% and 15% on every ringtone sold. With ringtones going for $1-$2, this is a significantly more favorable arrangement than the statutory 8.5 cents they col-
llect on sales of full songs.

Nowhere are the differences between labels and publishers more stark than in the negotiations over master ringtones.

Some labels contend that publishers should be paid at a standard mechanical rate on master ringtone sales since the format is derived from the master recording.

Therein lies the rub. Publishers are not interested in moving backward on ringtone revenue—especially when mobile carriers are fetching upwards of $3 per master ringtone and splitting roughly half the profits with the labels.

As Jody Gerson, EMI Music Pub-
ishing executive VP of creative, noted Dec. 20 on a keynote panel in Los Angeles, “With masterstones the consumer is getting more, and we should be compensated more as well.”

**MORE FORMATS DEBATED**

Publishers’ reluctance to be relegated to the statutory rate is not limited to ringtones.

Similar conversations are occurring during negotiations about ringbacks—which have a similar economic structure to master ringtones—and formats with “second sessions” like copyprotected CDs and the DualDisc format in living rooms, on top of the base audio, carry additional versions of the music for transfer to computers or portable devices or for playback via advanced audio formats like DVD-Audio.

In the case of new physical formats, publishers are said to want a mechanical rate closer to a statutory-and-a-half per track to account for second sessions, publishing sources say. Meanwhile, the subscription-based digital music and video services ranging from on-demand song streaming to video on demand, publishers are said to be seek-

ing as much as 16% of revenue.

But will the publishers agree to take this as an opportunity to ensure that a lot of these new uses don’t fall into the stat-rate category,” Bernstein says. In video-related formats like the DualDisc and in VOD services, there is also the matter of establishing standardization around ringbacks. Labels want standard rates so they can cut catalog deals to supply new VOD serv-

ices with content. However, publishers currently negotiate those types of deals on a case-by-case basis.

Despite the frustrations, labels and publishers are showing small signs of progress in the master ringtone debate. With the WMG show and the NMPA's final agreement between companies and who have controlled and distribution agreements.

Windup Publishing president Evan Melow says the real challenge is getting companies to agree to a new business model that is controlled and can be negotiated by the same corporate parent to work together.

“My guess is what will end up hap-

pening that a lot of short-term deals will be made,” he says. “The fear is that they’ll become precedent-setting, and that’s really the issue holding them up right now.

Still, executives say such pacts have the potential to get labels and publish-

ers moving in the right direction.

“A few companies need to take the plunge,” says Peter Brooks, VP of legal and business affairs for BMG Music Publishing. “If those companies can make the individual agreements get done, I think that would be a significant way for a lot more deals to happen.”

Additional reporting by Anthony Bruno in Los Angeles.

The forum, scheduled to take place in St. Paul, Minn., is also expected to include current FCC commissioners Jonathan Adelstein and Michael Copps hearing two hours of public comments on two subjects: local news and information, and media diversity.

In the week leading up to the event, FCC chairman Michael Powell made a pair of public statements that will likely help set the agenda.

During a speech at the Practicing Law Institute's annual conference, Powell said it could take five to seven years to reach a final settlement on media-ownership rules, according to a Reuters coverage of the speech.

One FCC source told Billboard Radio Monitor's Tony Sanderson, "That is certainly not a good message to send" to those who plan to attend the forum. Another FCC source added, "I'm not sure exactly what [Powell] means when he says that."

Among the questions raised: Will it take five to seven years to get a new set of rules out of the FCC? Or will the Appeals Court process and Congress cause that long of a delay?

Then there was the Dec. 3 opinion article Powell wrote for The New York Times. In it, he addressed the decency issues that have surrounded broadcasting and his office, especially free speech," Powell wrote.

He pointed out, however, that the FCC's role in regulating indecency "is not optional; it has been required ever since Congress first made the broadcast of obscene, indecent and profane material illegal more than 70 years ago."

That does not mean, though, that the FCC should function as the "federal bureau of indecency," Powell said. He said his agency's job is not to monitor every broadcast that comes over the airwaves, but it is to pre-approve programming before it airs.

The trigger for an investigation is always a complaint filed with the FCC. Critics have said the number of such complaints has been inflated in the recent past. That is a moot point, Powell claimed, remarking that the law maintains that "we must independently evaluate whether a program violates the decency rules."

Despite the program's success, Powell wrote, "we have failed to make a significant impact on indecency issues.""}

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Despite the program's success, Powell wrote, "we have failed to make a significant impact on indecency issues."
SoundScan. As of Dec. 5, year-to-date sales were just 2.6% ahead.

In fact, as widely reported, weekly unit sales have been below those of the comparable 2003 period for the last 12 weeks in a row. And this during the crucial fourth quarter. Sales for the last 12 weeks totaled 151.7 million units, vs. 165.9 million in the same period last year, a difference of 8.8%.

Some observers point out that if 2004 ends flat to slightly ahead, at least the U.S. industry would be out of the tailspin of negative numbers it has racked up since 2000. But others say that talk of a recovery was premature. Still others feel that album unit sales are no longer relevant, and that traditional metrics of measuring success have become obsolete as business models evolve.

Harold Vogel, head of Vogel Capital Management and author of "Entertainment Industry Economics," says the music industry became "too optimistic, too soon."

"The first-quarter comparisons were very easy against the year prior," he says. "Progressively, they become U-norm negative over the year. That's an indication that we are not in a strong, sustained up-trend. We may be moving sideways."

The growth in the first three quarters of the year, he says, can be largely attributed to a shift to a few steady sellers like Norah Jones's "Feels Like Home" (Blue Note/Capitol), No. 2 album of the year so far, at 3.6 million units sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan. (Usher's LaFace/Zomba set "Confessions" is No. 1, with 7.1 million.)

A distribution executive adds one other factor that helped keep this year ahead of 2003. In February, a confluence of factors—the Grammy Awards, Valentine's Day and the long President's Day weekend—came together in the same week to produce 17.3 million scans, by far the strongest week outside the holiday selling season in the history of SoundScan. The comparable week in 2003 garnered 13.9 million scans.

"If you pull out the big releases from the beginning of the year and the triple-whammy week in February," the executive says, "I wonder if the whole year would have looked the same as last year."

Sales may also have gotten a boost early in the year from publicity of the industry's lawsuit against illegal file sharers. Vogel says the effects of that are waning. "I don't think downloading ever went away; I think it shifted offshore," he says. "The litigation had a temporary dampening effect, but I never believed it was going to reverse the tide."

CHANGE IS NEEDED

While most in the U.S. industry have been upbeat about the sales strength of the first half of the year, the second half, rather than JumpStart, good or bad, everyone is doing business like they had. It's not going to get better without people looking at the way they do business and being willing to make changes.

National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers chairman Glen Ward says the biggest challenge facing the industry remains how to "change the model. It is something we have never addressed head-on."

Meanwhile, discretionary spending continues to go elsewhere—to DVDs, computers, videogames and iPods," Ward says. "The problem is not just the age-old battle of continuing to develop new artists, it's making sure we get our fair share of discretionary spending. That's the customer, and we ignore them at our peril."

Since the consumer is looking elsewhere for value, merchants are moving with them. "At retail, you are seeing a large-scale substitution of DVD for music. Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese says the retailer's flagship store on Boston's Newbury Street carries upwards of 20,000 DVD SKUs—more than it has ever stocked for music, according to the shift toward DVD has to have a be a challenge for mall stores, he suggests. "The price/value relationship between DVDs and CDs is askew. It's very challenging to sell full-price catalog CDs next to near-mid-priced movies."

Others are questioning the strength of the fourth-quarter release schedule and product flow. In the latter part of this year, "some of the big records didn't perform like they were supposed to," one merchant says.

Steve Harkins, VP of music at wholesaler Baker & Taylor, agrees. "With all of the last-minute street-date changes recently, I think it cost us business collectively."

Trans World Entertainment chairman/CEO Bob Higgins says the industry still sticks to the trend. "Says me, peaked at No. 12 on the Billboard Radio Monitor active rock chart, while follow-up "Pride" reached No. 27. Walter O'Brien was Pantera's manager from 1989 until after the split. Addressing reports that Pantera's breakup may have aroused the killer, O'Brien tells Billboard, "To do something like this for a reason like that is too horrifying to even imagine."

O'Brien admits that the breakup was easy for the band members or fans. "The fans didn't take it all so well. They were upset, and that really came down to some of the members of the band feeling those flames. The singer [Phil Anselmo] caused a real division in the band, and fans picked up on that and chose sides."

Drowning Pool issued a statement through its label, Wind-up Records. "Dimebag" Darrell was the epitome of rock 'n' roll. He wasn't just a player that all guitarists aspired to be... but the genuine article and a true friend. Darrell inspired us and we lived and we carried ourselves as musicians out on the road as well as friends."

"I wanted to be a single person who didn't love the music Dime created," Chimaira vocalist Mark Hunter says. "I am so thankful for all of the music he gave us, and I am truly upset about this. I immediately broke into tears when I heard the news confirming that Dime's music gave me so much to live for when I was younger, and he truly changed the face of metal with his unique style of guitar playing."

There isn't a real band that hasn't borrowed a riff or three from him," Hunter continues. "My heart goes out to the Abbott family, their friends and all the fans that had to witness this tragedy in Columbus."

O’Brien adds that Abbott "would do anything I could make people laugh and have a good time, even if it meant being dragged off to jail a couple of times. He only wanted to make people happy."

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Busy As A Jay-Z

Jay-Z proves to be busier in his self-proclaimed retirement than most recording artists are during their active careers. In the same week his appointment as president of Def Jam Recordings was announced (see story, page 51), Jay-Z’s collaboration with Linkin Park gives the rapper his second No. 1 on The Billboard 200 in six weeks.

The set with Linkin Park, "MTV Presents Ultimate Mash-Ups: Collision Course," rings a healthy 368,000 in its first week. That’s 71% more than the start for "Unfinished Business" (215,000 copies), his leftovers set with R. Kelly, which also bowed at No. 1 just as their tour together fell apart. That title now stands at No. 112.

Linkin Park’s "Meteora," which bowed at No. 1 in April 2003 with an opener of 80,500 units, hangs in this week at No. 88. Last issue marked the first time in 88 chart weeks that it had ranked lower than No. 77.

This outing with Linkin Park cooks up a bigger start than "Unfinished," even though the lead track has garnered relatively modest airplay at radio. "Numb/Encore" drew 21.6 million audience from a range of 200 stations that included modern rock, R&B/hip-hop and top 40 formats. While a lot of artists would be thrilled to receive that much radio attention from such a broad range of formats, both Jay-Z and Linkin Park typically draw bigger numbers.

Then again, the first letters in this album’s title are MTV. Exposure from the show that spawned this album makes up for the cool reception accorded at many of the acts’ core-format stations.

Over the Counter

By Geoff Mayfield

HISTORY REPEATED: When first "American Idol" champ Kelly Clarkson hit stores in April of last year, first-day numbers suggested that her debut album, "Thankful," would lose out to "The New Breed," the DVD/CD combo by 50 Cent. However, that tracking week ended with Easter’s traffic, and a strong finish by Clarkson found her overtaking the rapper by a score of 297,000 to 246,000.

Although her new "Breakaway" does not keep pace with the Jay-Z/Linkin Park collaboration or runner-up U2 (No. 2, 289,000, down 65%), she found enough horsepower to overtake Nas, whose "Street’s Disciple" had a faster start when it arrived in stores Nov. 30.

Just as her first album caught 50 Cent, Clarkson, who looked like she might also trail T.I. this time, ran past both rappers.

Chart watchers predicted Nas would start in the range of 240,000-250,000; T.I.’s "Urban Legend" and Clarkson were both (Continued on page 52)
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VARIOUS ARTISTS  Lifetime Of Romance: Christmas 195

SOUNDTRACK  Doa Explorer 313

SOUNDTRACK  That's So Raven 44

VARIOUS ARTISTS  Vol. 3: The Sublime Versions 2

ROCKSTAR  Passing Through 127

SHERRY CROW  The Very Best Of Shelby Crow 2

JIMMY FALLON  Where You Want To Be 3

VARIOUS ARTISTS  Unique Characters (Horse-Collar 16)

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Over The Counter
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anticipated in the ballpark of 200,000, with an edge to the hip-hop title. The sales were turned around, though, as it was Clarkson who rang up 250,500, good for No. 3, while Nas settled at 232,000 (No. 2) and T.L. swung 193,000 (No. 7).


In the last year, though, the floodgates opened. A plethora of albums now include virtual-programming either as limited editions or for the life of a title. That trend has obscured the very intent of the Top Music Videos chart, billboard.com's Comprehensive Video Music charts and the other music video lists that reside at Nielsen SoundScan.

Back out the combo titles, and Elton John's "Dream Ticket," exclusive to the DreamWorks Dreamworks.com's website, would have been the best-selling DVD-only music title of November (58,000), followed by Britney Spears' "Greatest Hits: My Prerogative" (54,000). But the flood for the month has been the DVD-enhanced version of U2's "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb," which has moved 206,000 in two weeks.

With the advent of DualDisc certain to further cloud the picture, Billboard and SoundScan are giving serious consideration to significantly revising the dual-charting policy at the start of 2006.

SINCE WHEN: In case you didn't notice it last issue, Interscope was the distributing label for four of this week's top 10 titles on The Billboard 200. The company's hand included U2's chart-topping "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb," which has moved 206,000 units so far.

That was the first time one distributing label had four in the top 10 since the summer. In the issue dated July 3, Sony Music Label Group had Gretchen Wilson, Prince, Les Lonely Boys and Celine Dion riding at Nos. 4, 6, 9 and 10, respectively. I almost hate to point that out, knowing how Sony kingpin Don Ienner and Interscope chief Jim Levine have to compete with each other.

If you subscribe to the electronic newsletter Billboard Chart Alert, you would have already known a week or so ago (depending on how long it takes the post office to deliver your magazine) that last issue's chart saw a noteworthy start for Nirvana's "With the Lights Out." It opened at No. 1 with 186,000 units sold. That is the best rank and biggest Nielsen SoundScan week by a boxed set since 1998, when Garth Brooks' "The Limited Series" opened at No. 1 with 372,000 unit sales. Last issue also saw a significant changing of the guard on Top Contemporary Jazz, as Kenny G's aptly titled "At Last... The Duets Album" opened a 143-week streak at No. 1 by Norah Jones' rookie set, "Come Away With Me.

During the time she led the list, 23 albums by 19 artists (including two various-artists titles) peaked at No. 2. Kenny G, who still leads the pack, must feel a sense of relief, because he was the artist who spent the most time stuck at No. 2. During Jones' streak, three of Kenny G's albums had to settle for No. 2. Those three combined for 43 weeks at the chart's runner-up spot, more than any other artist during Jones' tenure.

Jones' first album still enjoys staying power on The Billboard 200, where it bullets 99-97. By staying above No. 100, it remains eligible for this chart, even though it has passed its second birthday. It is the second title on the big chart, having logged 145 weeks.
### Billboard Top Blues Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Imprint &amp; Number/Distributing Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>GEORGE THOROGOOD &amp; THE DESTROYERS</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2) 19 Weeks At Number 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>ERIC CLAPTON</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>AEROSMITH</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>SUSAN TEDESCHI</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KEV MO'</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
<td><strong>LITTLE WALTER</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td><strong>GREGORY ALLEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>STEVE VAUGHN &amp; DOUBLE TROUBLE</strong></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>MARVIN SEASE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ETTA JAMES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KELLY STAPLES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>VARIOUS ARTISTS</strong></td>
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### Billboard Top Christian Albums

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>CLAY AKEN</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2) 2 Weeks At Number 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>SWITCHFOOT</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2)</td>
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<td><strong>VARIOUS ARTISTS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MICHAELE W. SMITH</strong></td>
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<td><strong>JEREMY CAMP</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TOMMY IOMMI</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2)</td>
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<td><strong>STEVEN CURTS CHAPMAN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NEWSBOYS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>IVY QUEEN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DJ NELSON</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DON OMAR</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MOSA</strong></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>DON OMAR</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BOB MARLEY</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BEEFIE MINNIE</strong></td>
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### Billboard Top Gospel Albums

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<td><strong>VARIOUS ARTISTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2) 2 Weeks At Number 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>RUBEN STUDDARD</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>DANIEL O'DONEL</strong></td>
<td><strong>NUMBER 1</strong> (2) 1 Week At Number 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td><strong>VARIOUS ARTISTS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DANIEL O'DONEL</strong></td>
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**Note:** This page includes information about various music charts, including Top Blues Albums, Top Christian Albums, Top Reggae Albums, Top Gospel Albums, and Top World Albums, with data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.
McGraw, Chesney Tie For Weeks At No. 1

Tim McGraw nabbed his 21st No. 1 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks as “Back When” rises 2-1. With a total of 10 weeks atop the chart so far this calendar year, this achievement places McGraw in a tie with Kenny Chesney for most weeks at No. 1 in 2004.

While McGraw could still move ahead of Chesney by holding at No. 1 next issue, Chesney appears to be out of contention for the top five, since his “The Woman With You” dips 180 detections and falls one place to No. 4 after peaking at No. 2 two weeks ago. Keith Urban has accumulated the next-best No. 1 tally during the year with six weeks at the top.

Meanwhile, the top 10 on the country chart changes some movement, but no new titles crack that part of the list. While McGraw leads the detections chart, Blake Shelton’s “Some Beach” dips 4-2, gaining more than 2 million listener impressions and shooting 41-1 on Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems’ audience tally. On that score card (which will become the basis of our country chart early next year), McGraw holds at No. 2 with 35.8 million impressions. Shelton’s single dominates with more than 36 million impressions.

On the chart’s lower end, three of the five new debuts are independently released titles. They are Cedus T. Judd’s “Blame Me a Country Ham” (Roch) at No. 58, Deryl Dodd’s “Let Me Be” (Dualtone) at No. 59 and Victor Sany’s “Tell Me What You Wanna Do” (WCI) at No. 60.

SOMETHING OLD, NEW: While Josh Groban’s holiday-themed “Believe” holds at No. 1 on the now Christmas-flavored Adult Contemporary chart, the spins detected for the track are dwarfed by the more traditional fare at the format.

Sister publication Billboard Radio Monitor has been compiling a weekly Holiday Tracks chart culled from airplay from all Adult Contemporary stations, most of which have gone all-Christmas programming.

Unlike the AC chart, on which we allow only current holiday tracks, Monitor’s Holiday Tracks list permits all seasonal tunes to chart. This year, this year’s top current Christmas single, Groban’s “Believe,” falls below the holiday chart’s 20-position threshold, ranking at a would-be No. 217 with 899 detections.

The top song on Holiday Tracks, BURL IVEY’S “A Holly Jolly Christmas,” posts more than double that total with 1,821 plays. Rounding out the top five are Nat “King” Cole’s “The Christmas Song,” Bobby Helms’ “Jingle Bell Rock,” Brenda Lee’s “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” and Bing Crosby’s “White Christmas.” All of these songs were recorded between 1942 and 1964.

The two most recently recorded songs on the holiday chart are NewSong’s “The Christmas Shoes” from 2000, which ranks at No. 18, and Mariah Carey’s 1994 track “All I Want for Christmas Is You,” which comes in at No. 14.

CHART-FRIENDLY: Continuing its rapid ascent on the Hot R&B/ Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks chart, “Lovers and Friends” by Lil Jon & The East Side Boyz featuring Usher & Ludacris joins the top five and earns Greatest Gain Airplay honors for a third consecutive week. Since its debut, the track has yet to post an increase of less than 10 million audience impressions at R&B/Hip-hop stations. Only in its fourth chart week, the track’s climb is the swiftest move into the top five by an airplay-only title.

Ruben Studdard’s “Superstar” jumped 61-2 in June 2003, but that rise was propelled by the single’s retail launch. The last hip-hop-led title to hit the top five of that chart since the March 13 issue, when Incubus’ “Megalomaniac” held a 5-7 spin lead over Blink-182’s “I Miss You.”

The largest lead on this chart occurred in the July 27, 2002, issue, when 742 spins separated Red Hot Chili Peppers’ “By The Way” at No. 1 from Hootie & the Blowfish’s runner-up “Running Away.”
Impala
Continued from page 5

son Graham & Jones. “Sometimes people don’t make a point because they don’t think that point will get anywhere. Occasionally, you have to take action in order to set a precedent, make a point or have a precedent not set.”

Since it was established in 2000, Impala has steadfastly opposed attempts at consolidation among the recorded-music majors. Through its latest challenge, Impala is endeavoring to break new ground: Never before has there been an appeal of a merger approval in the entertain-
ment sector.

“The track record of commission clearance decisions being entirely overruled is absolutely zero,” Brussels-based entertainment lawyer Stephen Kinsella of Herbert Smith notes. “But then again, there haven’t been many appeals. That is generally because third parties or competitors looking at these deals have got through the analysis and said, ‘Look, we haven’t really got a hope.’ But you would be a fool to try and predict what the court might say about a case, because there’s always a degree of uncertainty.”

In its complaint, Impala argues that the EC made a “whole series of errors of law, assessment and reasoning in relation to collective dominance in the recorded-music market,” as well as having underestimated the impact of the merger in relation to the online and music publishing sectors.

Impala also argues that the EC erred by not fully analyzing collective dominance and by failing to examine all areas of collective dominance.

In 2003, third parties used a similar argument to appeal the EC’s decision from the previous year to greenlight the amagelation of electrical appliance firms Moulinex and SEB. The Court of First Instance found that the EC had not sufficiently established that its probe had resolved competition concerns in a handful of markets. The EC was forced to relaunch an in-depth inquiry into the merger’s competitive impact in those territories. In the end, the court upheld the EC’s unconditional approval.

For the Sony BMG merger, Impala argues that the EC did not exhaust all avenues of inquiry into suggestions that further consolidations among major music companies would damage European culture, consumer choice and diversity.

The Sony BMGiasco makes Europe neither logical nor comprehensible for its citizens,” says Impala president Michel Lambot, who is also co-chairman of Belgium-based label and distribution company PIAS Group.

“The EC does U-turns and contra-
dicts its own priorities,” he claims. “The result here is a merger [that is] a legal, economic, cultural and polit-
ical disaster.”

Fellow Impala board member Horst Weidenmueller, who is CEO of Berlin-based dance specialist K7, explains that the indies’ action is essential to clear the route to trade.

“The window of market access for the indies will get smaller and smaller,” he says, “and we will all be forced to release less music and experiment less” to try and keep rev-

enue stable.

In a statement, Sony BMG replies: “The European Commission reached its decision after an in-depth, six-
month investigation and diligent review process, and we are confident that the court will reaffirm their deci-
dion to clear the merger.”

Impala is asking the court for an expedited hearing that would reduce the appeal procedure to nine to 12 months from the standard two years. After receiving a formal complaint, the court typically takes one to two months to decide whether to grant the hearing.

An EC spokesman says the body “took the decision it did because it thought it was the right decision. We shall see in court.”

P2P Study
Continued from page 8

who have not gained much traction on the music scene and use the Internet to get their work exposed.

Musicians’ unions, the Nashville Songwriters Assn, International, CD Baby and networking group Just Plain Folks helped get the survey to artists through links on their Web sites.

Neither the Recording Academy nor the RAC was asked to participate. Both have long held that illegal P2P file sharing jeopardizes their members’ business. They recently filed amicus briefs with the Sixth Circuit Court to review a case involving P2P network Grokster.

Two survey results in particular raised eyebrows at the Recording Academy and the RAC.

Two-thirds of respondents said file sharing posed “a minor or no threat to them,” and less than one-third said file sharing was a major threat to creative industries. And only 9% said the Internet hurt their ability to protect their creative works.

The Pew Project based its report on a phone survey of 809 “self-identified” artists in December 2003. A second study used for the report was conducted in February 2004 and reached 2,755 musicians and songwriters recruited through e-mail notices, announcements on Web sites and flyers distributed at musicians’ conferences.

UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION
Daryl Friedman, VP of advocacy for the Recording Academy, says he is happy to see the opinions expressed by many of the respondents that the members of the respondents may be entry-level musicians more eager to use the Web for publicity.

By contrast, he points to a recent Recording Academy e-mail asking for new copyright laws to prevent the pending Induce bill, which would take on “bad player” P2P networks.

“First of all, these are dues-paying professionals, so there’s a threshold there,” he says. “You’d have to send a letter to your senators.” More than 3,300 musicians sent letters of support. You know how many wrote back saying “We don’t agree?” Four. So I think the survey may not adequately reflect the overall music community on these issues.”

Jay Rosenthal, counsel for the RAC, says the group views the study as “severely flawed, and it does not accu-

rately reflect the opinions of professional recording artists.”

Future of Music Coalition executive director Jenny Toomey, herself an indie artist, says the point of the survey “is that people who are making music but are not making money through the exist-
ing structures are less afraid of the peer-
to-peer networks than those who are.”

Still, he says this study is “one of several independent studies that haven’t been adequately reviewed by people with expertise in the field” and was a “very interesting read” to the RAC.

“Technically, if you’re going to rid your house of pests, you have to bomb the whole house, even if you’ve kept a clean room.”

Additional reporting by Paul Heine in New York, Tony Sanders in Washing-
ton, D.C., and Ken Tucker in Nashville.

Indies
Continued from page 6

labels they represent.

“If radio stations are precluded from air ing records from us, and we are the sole conduit for music from our client labels to those stations, it smacks of restraint of trade,” the indie says.

“There are a number of larger indepen
dent labels, and major labels, who do not have a person in-house to serve the secondary stations, and the large radio companies are making sure that these companies, and their artists, never get a chance to be heard at their stations,” he concludes.

Other promoters are more sanguine about the radio group moves. “I don’t see this as a ban as much as an oppor-
tunity for the industry to re-evaluate particu-
lar relationships,” says Skip Bishop of New York-based promotion firm Bishop Bait and Tackle. “The responsible companies will emerge as stronger. It will be more effective because every business needs to continue to critique and improve itself. We’re see-
ing the wheel turn again now.”

Bishop sees another kind of upside. He says “many of the large inde-
tiaindies would give small labels and developing artists a better chance to compete for airplay.”

“I get out of bed every morning believing I can make a difference, and by having the ‘toll-takers’ removed, that will only improve my chances to do so,” Brown says.

Texan songwriting country indie Peter Swendsen, who lost some Infinity stations in the latest ban, says he is willing to take the hit if it cleans up record promotion.

“I am putting my business to make the business better, so be it,” he says. “Sometimes, if you’re going to rid your house of pests, you have to bomb the whole house, even if you’ve kept a clean room.”

Additional reporting by Paul Heine in New York, Tony Sanders in Washing-
ton, D.C., and Ken Tucker in Nashville.

Grammys
Continued from page 5

release “American Idiot” is the lone rock contender in the album of the year field.

“Don’t know if we were expecting anything special, we were just hoping for anything like that,” the band’s Billie Joe Armstrong said. “It’s really great. Everyone feels a high right now. You learn to appreciate these things the older you get. We really wanted to put art back into a rock record.”

Also in the album of the year cate-
gory, West will go head to head with his tour mate Usher. Usher’s “Contes-
tors” (LaFace/Zomba) has sold more than 7 million units in the United States, according to Nielsen Sound-

The album of the year field is round-
out by Charles’ “Genius Loves Company” (Heart/Concord) and “The Diary of Alice Keys” (J). In her two-album career, Keys already has five Grammys and has now received 14 nominations.

In the record of the year category, Charles’ “Here We Go Again” featuring Nas is in another category with hip-hop artist and the Super-

in the latest album categories, the artists and the awards as excited by the nominations as she was the company at the press conference. “Anita Baker is one of the reasons I sing,” Stone gushed as her idol stood just a few feet away.

West, Stone, Wilson, Los Lonely Boys and Maroon are up for best new artist.

The 2005 Grammys introduce the bes t-electronics/dance album category.

The inaugural nominations are Basem aint X’s “Kish Kash” (XL Recordings/ Atlantic), the Crystal Method’s “Legion of Bloom” (252, Paul Oce-

den’s “Creamfields” (Thrive), the Prodigy’s “Always Outnumbered, Never Outgunned” (XL/Americab and Paul Van Dyk’s “Reflections” (Mute).

Former Billboard senior writer Chris Morris, now music editor for siter publication The Hollywood Re-
porter, received a nomination in the best album notes category for his notes on the Rhino Records boxed set “No Thanks! The 70s Punk Rebellion.”

Nominations were chosen by the voting members of the Recording Academy, which presents the Grammys.

Recording Academy president Neil Portnow said voting members will have access to nominated songs this year through a deal with Apple’s iTunes.

The 2005 Grammy Awards will take place Feb. 14, 2005, at the Staples Cen-

For a select list of nominees, see page 59-61. The full list can be found at grammy.com.

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Nominations For 47th Annual Grammy Awards

Here is a partial list of the 47th annual Grammy Award nominations. For a complete list, including nominees in the classical, compositional, surrounding sound and music video categories, visit grammy.com.

GENERAL FIELD
Record of the Year: "Let's Get It Started," The Black Eyed Peas; Willi Am, producer, Black Eyed Peas, willi Am, engineer, Willi Am. Arista/LaFace/Zomba


A R I Z O N A

Robert Fernandez, John Harris, Terry Howard, (Arista/LaFace/Zomba
"Heaven," Dare, producer, Erwin Bach, engineer (Arista/LaFace/Zomba

J U N I O R H ES C O

Jason Kenney, Matt Whitley, producer, Matt Whitley, engineer (Lost Highway Records). "You Were My Only Love," Jason Kenney, Matt Whitley, engineered (Lost Highway Records)

T E X A S

Lauren Alaina, producer, Jimmy Febson, engineer (11th Street Records). "We're Not Gonna Stop," Lauren Alaina; Blake Shelton, producer. Blake Shelton, engineer (11th Street Records)

H O U S T O N

Lauren Alaina, producer, Jimmy Febson, engineer (11th Street Records). "We're Not Gonna Stop," Lauren Alaina; Blake Shelton, producer. Blake Shelton, engineer (11th Street Records)

P O P

[Best Female Pop Vocal Performance: "Octane," Björk (Epic/Atlantic); "Fever," Fherd (Epic/Atlantic); "Bloodhound," Fherd (Epic/Atlantic)

M U S I C/EPCIC


B E S T M A N UAL/VOCAL PERFORMANCE


B E S T P A R T I C I P A T I O N IN A Duo or Group With Vocal


C O U N T R Y

Best Country Female Vocal Performance: "You Will Be My Own True Love," Alanis Kronus (Capitol Nashville)

B E S T C O U N T R Y M A L E V O C A L P E R F O R M A N C E


B E S T C O U N T R Y M A L E V O C A L P E R F O R M A N C E


C O U N T R Y

Best Country Female Vocal Performance: "You Will Be My Own True Love," Alanis Kronus (Capitol Nashville)
LONDON—Jason “Jay” Berman’s well-worn passport is taking him back to the United States next month.

A relentless global ambassador for the music industry, Berman is stepping down after six years as chairman/CEO of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. He will leave London to relocate to New York and become a free agent.

Berman, 66, was the first full-time appointed chairman of the IFPI. Previously, chairmen were elected by their peers and the IFPI function came in addition to their day job.

An American, Berman took the IFPI position immediately after leaving his job as chairman of the Recording Industry Assn. of America. He is widely credited with bringing to the IFPI a more efficient and business-like mind-set and for building a structure capable of reacting to the industry’s challenges, especially in the area of piracy, both physical and online.

EMI Music chairman/CEO Alain Levy describes Berman as “one of the most committed and intelligent executives the music industry has been fortunate enough to have in its ranks.”

David Munns, vice chairman of EMI Music and CEO of EMI Music North America, says, “I have loved working with Jay. He is a true leader, he knows when to use his diplomacy and when to shout, and he has also been a great travel companion on our anti-piracy excursions to Moscow, the People’s Republic of China, South America.”

Berman met with Billboard in late November in his London office.

Q: When you took over six years ago, there was a sense of euphoria in the industry, with high year-on-year growth. Then the industry was hit by what you called two years ago “a perfect storm.” Was this something you could see coming?

A: No. Did we think that things were changing in some respect? Yes. Six years ago we saw that there would be a series of alternative platforms for the delivery of music. But when I arrived six years ago I don’t think there was a vision about what they would be, how they would materialize and how you would be able to monetize them as record companies.

Q: What are your key achievements at the IFPI?

A: I think we did achieve the principal goal that we set out to do six years ago, which was to make it an organization that represented the commercial interests of its member companies and make it a little less like an external civil service organization. No doubt in my mind that we succeeded on that score, and I believe that the companies feel that that’s the case. I believe that they are well-served by the people who work here.

Q: How did you change the nature of the organization?

A: Six years ago, the idea was to create an organization that in some ways mirrored the way the international companies were structured, particularly on a regional basis. We did spend a great deal of time thinking about the nature of the regional operations of IFPI and the regional offices.

Q: You have beefed up your anti-piracy task force in London and in the regions. Have these efforts paid off?

A: In the absence of them we would have had a more severe problem. It will continue to be a significant aspect of what we do, and it’s not just the effort from us. We’ve just expanded it to include a pretty comprehensive Internet anti-piracy effort, and I believe those will be long-term features of IFPI going forward.

Q: Regarding legislation, have you seen a shift in the way the case for the industry is perceived by policy makers?

A: I’d like to think that what we’ve done was to impress upon elected officials the fact that there is a music industry [and] that its very livelihood is governed by how effective copyright laws are and the willingness of governments to enforce them. The test of that, if we concentrate on Brussels, is that in the major battles over the course of the last few years, we’ve been fighting against pretty stiff odds—the telcos, the Internet service providers, the consumer electronics companies, a whole host of big players. We’ve more than held our own in all of those major battles.

Q: Is it fair to say that there is better synchronization between the RIAA and the IFPI?

A: I hope it is. There is no reason why it shouldn’t be. We basically represent the same companies. We have developed a very, very close relationship with RIAA and through a whole host of different mechanisms. Increasingly it is the result of the companies themselves having a greater level of participation in the lives of both RIAA and IFPI.

Q: One thing IFPI has in common with the RIAA is the policy of legal action against file sharers. Was that step absolutely necessary?

A: Beyond the shadow of a doubt it was absolutely necessary. It was absolutely necessary as part of an overall campaign that had other elements to it as well, which included all the educational steps that led up to the actual lawsuits, the instant messaging in which people were informed, the development of legal services and the need to clear some room so that these would have an opportunity.

Q: Are the problems of the industry just the result of illegal file sharing, or is there a wider crisis?

A: It is very rare that in a complicated business environment there is one singular thing that accounts for everything else. I think that illegal file sharing was the defining transition for our industry. It had a greater traumatic effect on us than any other single thing. But we would be hard pressed to say it is the only thing that can be accounted for the decline.

Q: Can services like iTunes and Napster bring excitement back?

A: We’ve seen it to some extent with the launch of the iPod. It did create a buzz and a stir. So I do think it is possible to recapture some of that excitement, and a device like the iPod helps do that and convince some people that you can find ways to re-energize your consumer. But we still have ways to go.

Q: Will the growth in the online business compensate for the loss of physical sales?

A: There will be increasingly a significant legitimate online business. At the same time we are a smaller industry globally. I don’t believe all we lost over the past four years will be recaptured, to be honest with you. We are primarily a smaller industry, but our companies have adapted to that.

Q: Your successor at the IFPI is former Universal Music International president/COO John Kennedy. What advice can you give him?

A: To be conscious of the fact that it is a very large world and that there are a lot of differences and different places, and you have to account for those and you have to be mindful of them. The pace of achieving legislative success depends upon where you are in the world and what represents success differs upon where you are in the world.

Q: So from Jan. 1, what’s life going to be like for Jay Berman?

A: I hope I’ll have time to take piano lessons, play some tennis, take my grandchildren to school, maybe do a little skiing and find time to answer the call of the industry whenever and wherever they want. I don’t think I will be disappearing. I’ll be around, and I will be involved. I’ll keep myself busy. I am too young not to be busy. And it will be pretty much related to the music industry.

Q: Your final word?

A: It has been a great experience having exposure to a global business and understanding how different the world is. It is very hard if you come with preconceived notions, particularly for an American, as we are so universally regarded as being so American-centric.
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