Funding Puts Front Line In Buying Mood
Azoff & Kaufman Seen In Hunt For Management Assets

BY RAY WADDELL

NASHVILLE—Front Line, the freshly capitalized and resurrected mega-management firm of Irving Azoff and Howard Kaufman, is apparently shopping in Nashville for potential management companies. And that has piqued the interest of Music City managers.

Nothing has been officially announced, but it is (Continued on page 54)

MTV2 Relaunch Changes Vid Pic

BY BRIAN GARRITY

NEW YORK—Almost 25 years after MTV gave birth to the video star, the roles of the network and the music video in artist development have reached a crossroad.

In a sign of the times, MTV Networks on Feb. 7 will unveil a revamped version of MTV2 that will move further away from its wide-open, all-music-video roots and focus almost exclusively on hip-hop and youth-oriented rock genres like emo and punk-pop—an initiative MTV2 is billing as its "two-headed dog" strategy.

As part of the relaunch, MTV2 later this year will roll (Continued on page 56)

A DVD EXCLUSIVE!
KELLY CLARKSON behind hazel eyes

IN STORES MARCH 29

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* CANDID INTERVIEWS * MAKING OF "BREAKAWAY" MUSIC VIDEO & MORE!
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RALPH VICINANZA
Stephen King’s publishing adviser
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Trent Gardner on iHoopla's peer-to-peer sharing strategy

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Billboard Events
March 3 at the St. Regis, New York. Information: 646-654-4660
Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards April 25-28 at the Hotel InterContinental, Miami. Information: 646-654-4660
Billboard/America Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference & Awards Aug. 3-5, Atlanta. Information: 646-654-4660
Billboard Dance Music Summit Sept. 19-21 at the Union Square Ballroom, New York. Information: 646-654-4660
Valentine Sales Could Lose Their Blush

By Margo Whitmire

Without a romantic darling to lure consumers, music retailers are skeptical that Valentine’s Day will warm up February sales this year.

“We’re certainly not expecting the same kind of week as last year,” says Mike Pratt, VP of purchasing at the seven-store Homer’s chain in Omaha, Neb.

Last year’s strong Valentine’s Day sales were fueled in large part by the release of Norah Jones “Feels Like Home” (Blue Note), which moved 1.02 million units for the week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “That’s what we’re competing against,” Pratt says.

Bryan Evrett, director of music purchasing at 150-store Hastings Entertainment in Amarillo, Texas, agrees. “There is a weaker release schedule this year, which could also be called ‘no Norah.’”

Total U.S. scans for last year’s Valentine’s Day week exceeded 17.2 million, a 35.9% increase from the prior week. Because expected studio sets by 50 Cent and Mariah Carey missed this year’s Feb. 14 deadline, retailers are counting on titles like 3 Doors (Continued on page 67)

Goldberg Splits Artemis; Glass Wears CEO Stripes

By Todd Martens

Following a change in direction, Artemis president Daniel Glass has been bumped to CEO of the New York-based independent label, while founder and chairman Danny Goldberg has left the company.

Goldberg will continue as a consultant with Artemis, a division of Sheridan Square Entertainment. He sold a minority stake of Artemis to Sheridan Square, which is headed by Joe Bianco and Anil Narang, in summer 2003. The investors eventually assumed full ownership.

“I needed to get new money into the company, and they were the people who wanted to invest it,” Goldberg says. “Their vision focuses more on catalogs than I wanted... I’m fond of them and I love Daniel Glass, but it...”

(Continued on page 68)
Sanctuary Maps Future Growth
After Acquisitions, U.K. Indie Aims To Bolster Core Businesses

BY LARS BRANDLE

LONDON—With a 360-degree business model that continues to spin new revenue streams, Sanctuary Group appears poised for organic growth. The independent British music company on Jan. 27 reported preliminary full-year figures in line with analysts’ projections, following continued investment in its core artist management, recorded music and merchandising activities.

Executive chairman Andy Taylor says Sanctuary has reached a point where “we believe we have a fully rounded business with a strong business structure,” thanks in part to an acquisitions strategy that has enhanced the company’s merchandising and urban interests.

Discussing the company’s next gambits, CEO Merck Mercuriadis says, “It’s going to be more organic than it is acquisitive. I see a lot more focus on our 360-degree model and from a greater number of artists being attracted to us as a result of us being able to exploit every income stream of their career.”

For the year ended Sept. 30, 2004, Sanctuary reported revenue up 45.7% from the previous year to £220.9 million ($416 million), as pre-tax profits dipped slightly to £16.1 million ($30.3 million).

In an investors’ note to accompany the financial report, London-based broker Numis reiterated its “hold” rating on Sanctuary stock, despite the music firm having issued a “shock warning” two days earlier.

Sanctuary’s stock took a hit Jan. 25 when it announced a £2.1 million ($3.9 million) loss at its book publishing unit. It also confirmed it would make a £11 million ($20.7 million) loss in 2005.

(Continued on page 67)

U2 Presale: Not What Fans Were Looking For

BY RAY WADDELL

Even in the concert business, the laws of supply and demand are irrevocable.

That harsh reality hit home for thousands of U2 fans when huge demand fueled the presale system for U2’s Vertigo tour, leaving many fans with less than desirable seats or no tickets at all.

As much as 30% of tickets were allotted for the presale, sources say, a generous percentage. Even so, demand greatly outstripped supply.

And as on-sales for the general public have now shown, the mania surrounding the tour rivals any in history.

Tour organizers walk a fine line between satisfying public demand and keeping u2.com members happy.

That could be a stiff mandate. Irrate fans who paid $40 to join the fan club site for a chance to purchase choice tickets on Jan. 25 prior to the general public have made their feelings known in vitriolic postings at U2’s official web site and elsewhere, including numerous e-mails to billboard.com.

Referring to the on-sale issues as “Tuesday, Bloody ‘Tuesday,’” one fan wrote, “What’s the point of spending $40 for the membership of the site and getting a lousy seat for more than $160?”

Another ticked-off fan wonders, “How are so many tickets already on eBay for thousands of dollars?”

In Europe, where problems seem to have been even worse, a U.K. fan writes, “What we have got is complete ineptitude, incompetence and disregard of U2 fans by U2’s management, the Web site, Ticketmaster and, dare I say it, U2 themselves.”

In response, U2 plans to make more tickets available when the tour returns to the United States this fall. “Don’t forget, if you have a subscriber code, it will still be honored when the band plays more dates,” was the official message posted Jan. 30 on u2.com. “There will be more tickets available for purchase as downloads.”

(Continued on page 25)

Hot 100 Adds Downloads; Pop Chart Bows

Effective this week, two important changes have been made to the Billboard charts.

The Billboard Hot 100, long the industry standard for song popularity, will now reflect sales of paid downloads, as well as retail sales and radio airplay in all formats. The download data will be the same information provided by Nielsen SoundScan for the weekly Hot Digital Songs chart.

At the same time, Billboard will offer a new view of songs’ popularity with the launch of the new Pop 100 chart. Concurrently, the Hot Digital Songs chart is being expanded from 50 titles to 75.

Like the Hot 100, the new Pop 100 chart rates songs by mingling audience impressions calculated by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems with the sales of digital tracks and physical singles. But the Pop 100’s radio panel will be confined to mainstream top 40 stations.

“We have eagerly anticipated the moment when we could begin to integrate digital sales into the Hot 100 and it makes utter sense to factor that data into the new Pop 100 too,” says Geoff Mayfield, Billboard director of charts.

“It has been a priority for labels, and even some music fans, that we derive more utility from digital sales data, but could not merge those numbers with other sources until Nielsen SoundScan could easily consolidate the sales of a song’s various digital versions. The recent launch of the Hot Digital Songs chart accomplished that goal.”

“We are absolutely thrilled that the advent of digital downloads brings a viable sales component back to The Billboard Hot 100,” says Hot 100 chart manager Silvio Pietroluongo, who will also oversee the Pop 100.

“Radio stations are programmed to reflect the wants of its listeners, but there is no substitute to measure a song’s true popularity than the purchase by a consumer,” he says. “The combination of accurate airplay data with a strong sales base further secures the Hot 100’s place as the definitive U.S. singles chart.”

The Pop 100 is the brainchild of associate publisher Michael Ellis, who oversaw the Hot 100 from 1985 to 1995. The new list complements the Billboard chart menu by wedding the Hot 100’s streams of sales data with the programming decisions from the format that—by its historic nature—must follow the desires of the mass audience: mainstream top 40.

“The Pop 100 gives us a chart of songs that have transcended various formats and are proving to be as popular with the mainstream top 40 audience,” Pietroluongo says. “The new chart will also provide exposure for those songs that are purely top 40 hits, and therefore at a disadvantage competing with multiformat tracks on the Hot 100.”

Mayfield adds, “The prism of top 40 stations will keep the Pop 100 focused on the songs with the greatest mainstream appeal, while the Hot 100 will be driven by songs with the highest song rotations. The Pop 100’s construction also makes sense when you notice the high correlation between the songs with the most top 40 plays and the best-selling digital tracks.”

For more information on the methodology behind these charts and the impact these new additions have on the charts section of the magazine, see Singles Minded on page 64.
Kanye West
Ray Charles
Norah Jones
Loretta Lynn
Al Schmitt
The Black Eyed Peas
Lil' Jon
Los Lonely Boys
John Adams
Basement Jaxx (PR)
T Bone Burnett
Joss Stone (PR)

NOMINATIONS
10
7
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5
4
4
4
3
3
3

2 NOMINATIONS
Anita Baker
Miri Ben Ari
The Blind Boys of Alabama
Eric Clapton (PR)
Ani DiFranco
Dr. John
Vince Gill
Al Green
Anthony Hamilton
Fred Hammond
Slide Hampton (SACEM)
Jenet Jackson
Toby Keith
Alison Krauss
Maroon5
Tim McGraw
Snoop Dogg
The Trak Starz
Shanina Twain
Keith Urban
Pharrell Williams
Brian Wilson

GRAMMY NOMINEES

Hall of Fame
America the Beautiful
Ray Charles
Let it Bleed
The Rolling Stones

Eddy Arnold
Art Blakey
The Carter Family
Jerry Lee Lewis
Pinetop Perkins
The Staple Singers

Tim McGraw
Snoop Dogg
The Black Eyed Peas
Lil' Jon
Los Lonely Boys
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Eddy Arnold
Art Blakey
The Carter Family
Jerry Lee Lewis
Pinetop Perkins
The Staple Singers
**Rice Goes With The Flo**

**Artist Leaves Rocketown For Label Partnership Role**

*By Deborah Evans Price*

NASHVILLE—Singer/songwriter Chris Rice, the flagships artist for Michael W. Smith's Rocketown, is exiting that label's roster to become a partner in EB + Flo Records, *Billboard* has learned exclusively.

Rice joins EB + Flo founder Monroe Jones and drummer Ken Lewis as partners in the Nashville-based label. EB + Flo will release Rice's new studio album in August.

Rice was the first signing to Rocketown in 1996, and his immediate success helped establish the fledgling label. He says the parting was amicable and resulted from his desire to broaden his audience. He will still create music that reflects his faith, but says, "I don't want to have it limited to how we market it and where we market it. I don't want it to be just for one group of people."

Jones, an acclaimed producer whose credits include Rice, Third Day, Mark Schultz and Salvador, launched EB + Flo in late 2002, partnering with Universal South for distribution of Steven Delopoulos' project and, most recently, Holly Williams' debut album.

Rice's new set will be released in association with INO Records, which will handle marketing and distribution to the Christian market. INO is distributed to the general market through a deal with Epic.

"It is not a typical label," Rice says of EB + Flo's distribution agreements. "We have a lot of freedom to connect with other labels and distributors to find other ways to create hybrid situations for each artist or project."

He looks forward to working with INO president Jeff Mosley, whose staff will handle promotion. "They've already proven to have an amazing track record," he says of the label's multiformat success with MercyMe. "We found someone who has a great way of working the Christian market but also has very good connections in the general market," Rice says. He adds that such an arrangement "makes sense for me, because I'm gearing myself up to try to communicate across the board and not just specifically in the Christian market."

**Traffic Drummer Jim Capaldi Dies**

*By Paul Sexton and Tom Ferguson*

LONDON—Jim Capaldi, solo artist, songwriter and drummer with British rock act Traffic, died Jan. 28 in London at the age of 60. He had been suffering from stomach cancer.

Capaldi was a member of Island act Traffic from its formation in 1967 until it disbanded in 1974. After initial U.K. success with the singles "Paper Sun" and "Hole in My Shoe," Traffic became one of the leading groups of the album rock era.

The band released four albums during the earth of all of which hit the top 10 of the *Billboard* album chart. It was "never 'next hit off the album; we were living what we did," Capaldi said in a 1989 interview. "It just came right out of what we felt, not what was expected or what could be marketed."

Capaldi wrote the majority of Traffic's material with frontman Steve Winwood. The band's original lineup also included guitarist Dave Mason and flutist Chris Wood, who died in 1983. Traffic was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2004.

Capaldi, born Aug. 2, 1944, in Evesham, near Birmingham, England, released his first solo album, "Oh How We Danced" (Island), in 1972. In Britain, he became known for a version of the much-covered "Love Hurts" in 1975 and enjoyed widespread airplay with the singles "Eve" and "It's All Up to You."

He remained in demand as a musician and writer, working with such artists as Bob Marley, Carlos Santana and Eric Clapton. He played at Clapton's "Come back" show at London's Rainbow theater.

Winwood and Capaldi maintained a working relationship. In 1994, they reunited as Traffic for the album "Far From Home" and a worldwide tour.

Longtime friend George Harrison played guitar on Capaldi's 2001 album, "Living on the Outside." His manager of 26 years, London-based John Taylor, says Capaldi "attacked life with energy and passion and surrounded a benchmark for today's writers and musicians to emulate."

Capaldi's final solo album—"Poor Boy Blue," released in November in the United States by Steamhammer/SPV—included appearances by Winwood and guitarist Gary Moore.

Capaldi is survived by his wife, Ariinha, and daughters Tabitha, 28, and Tallulah, 26. Tabitha Capaldi is a London-based executive at BMI.
Before they ever received a GRAMMY, someone taught them how to play.

The Recording Academy works year-round putting instruments and educational tools into the hands of kids. Over the past 10 years, The Recording Academy, through the GRAMMY Foundation*, has engaged 300,000 students across the country – planting the seeds of creativity and providing the tools for growth.

Add your voice to ours.

To find out more about joining The Recording Academy, visit GRAMMY.com
Publishers See Disparity In Digital Music Rates

Sharing The Royalty Pie

This page recently entertained an opinion from the executive director of the Digital Media Assn., criticizing the music publishing industry as the "single biggest hurdle" to "hockey-stick growth" in online music services (Billboard, Dec. 18, 2004).

Setting aside for a moment the fact that music publishers have generously underwritten online music services for more than three years—by licensing on a "use now, pay later" basis to combat Internet piracy—this broadside is based on several data myths that have long been disproved.

The first is that songwriters and music publishers are "double dipping" because they seek to be compensated for both the mechanical and the public performance value of their works. This argument ignores the terms of the Copyright Act, which has long recognized that music copyright owners possess several distinct rights in their works, including the right to reproduce and distribute copies of their songs (the mechanical right) and, separately, the right to perform those songs publicly.

The Copyright Act expressly entitles songwriters and music publishers to license and receive separate royalties from each of these rights.

Congress did not alter this basic principle of music copyright law in amending the Copyright Act to cover digital transmissions—in fact, it explicitly preserved the distinct income streams by providing that a digital transmission may constitute a mechanical right as well as a public performance right ("phonorecord delivery") regardless of whether it also constitutes a performance and vice versa.

It is true, however, to seize upon the advent of digital technologies as a reason to disregard these longstanding principles of copyright law. Each of the separate rights of reproduction, distribution and public performance guaranteed by the Copyright Act represents one piece of the whole value of a musical work. Ignoring one or more of those rights would deprive songwriters and music publishers of part of the value of their works.

The previously published opinion also suggests that songwriters and music publishers "profit from legal uncertainty," and that they have intentionally made it difficult for online music services to get licenses. The opposite is true. Songwriters and music publishers depend on the licensing of their musical works to make a living. It is in the economic interest of songwriters and music publishers to license their works for online delivery, and for those works to be played on the Internet. In fact, music owners are eager to enter into fair licensing arrangements that will allow their creative works to be distributed over the Internet.

While the influx of new online music companies that want to offer every song ever written has put an enormous strain on the music publishing industry in licensing mechanical rights, music owners have made a Herculean effort to satisfy that desire for immediate gratification. Indeed, millions of songs have already been licensed to numerous online music services.

The real issue, as always, is the money: how much online music services must pay copyright owners and how copyright owners will divide the resulting royalty pie.

In order to offer those services, online music companies need to obtain multiple rights from multiple copyright owners. From the record labels, online services need to obtain rights of reproduction, distribution and public performance with regard to the sound recording masters. From the music publishers, online services need to obtain the equivalent rights with regard to the underlying musical compositions.

Songwriters and music publishers were the innovators in creating ASCAP as a performing rights organization—and supporting BMI after it was founded as a competing PRO—and in creating the Harry Fox Agency (HFA) as a collective mechanical rights agency for the purpose of facilitating the licensing of musical works. Pursuant to the court decrees under which they operate, the PROs must license—and have licensed—non-dramatic public performing rights to any user who requests, including online music services.

Likewise, the compulsory licensing provisions of the Copyright Act require music publishers to license mechanical rights to all users, including online music services. And the HFA has, for more than three years, agreed to license mechanical rights on a "use now, pay later" basis, until rates are determined.

Moreover, the Copyright Office—with the support of the music publishing industry—recently adopted regulations simplifying the process of obtaining mechanical licenses for online music services by providing for the bulk licensing of multiple songs and the service of compulsory licenses notices on agents for the copyright owners.

In the case of master rights, Congress first recognized the efficacy of a compulsory license in 1995, but that compulsory license was limited to the right of public performance, and only for noninteractive digital transmissions. With regard to the rights of reproduction and distribution of master recordings in interactive digital transmissions, however, there is no compulsory license, no collective agency and no obligation to license whatsoever.

So far, the record labels have taken advantage of the unlicensed right to license their master rights for reproduction and distribution to demand a share—40%—50% of gross revenue from online subscription services. Those services, of course, also need to pay their expenses and make a profit. The result is that songwriters and music publishers, who are compelled to grant licenses, have been left with only a tiny sliver of the remaining revenue to cover all of their rights.

It is this disparity—and not any unfairness in the music publishing industry—that has created the hurdles online music services face and has left songwriters and music publishers in an impossible position of struggling to obtain fair rates for their creative works on an unfairly tilted playing field.

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The 5 Browns Receive Red-Hot Reception

Siblings' Classical Sound Has Mainstream Appeal

BY ANASTASIA TSIOULCAS

Desiree, Deonira, Gregory, Melody and Ryan Brown look like the kids next door. Despite their down-to-earth demeanor, however, the five pianists have a unique story that has already catapulted them onto "60 Minutes II," "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and the pages of People magazine: They were the first set of five siblings to simultaneously study at New York's hallowed Juilliard School.

The tale of how the 5 Browns, who range in age from 19 to 25, went from piano lessons beginning at age 3 in their hometown of Houston to a multi-album contract on Sony BMG's RCA Red Seal is already drawing huge attention. Their self-titled debut bows Feb. 8 as a DualDisc CD/DVD that includes two videos and an interview with the group.

Desiree Brown, 25, believes it precisely her family's wholesome quality that will ensure the group's success. "There are so many kids taking piano or violin lessons or singing in the school..."

Kings Of Leon Set Out To Extend Reign To U.S.

BY BRIAN GARRITY

For Kings of Leon, fame is a relative thing. The four-piece rock outfit from Tennessee has achieved platinum sales in the United Kingdom, where the group is a bona fide sensation. The band served as the penultimate act at last summer's Glastonbury Festival, and it counts rock royalty like Mick Jagger, Bono and Elton John among its fans.

However, in its hometown of Nashville and elsewhere in the United States, the band continues to toil in semi-obsccurity as it waits on its first North American hit. "Fame is where you are," Kings of Leon drummer Nathan Followill says. "Obviously we would love to be huge in America, but we've had a blast touring the world, and we've already sold more records than we ever dreamed we would."

The band—a family affair comprising Followill, his brothers Caleb (vocals/rhythm guitar) and Jared (bass) and cousin Matthew (lead guitar)—is about to take its second shot at breaking in the United States with the Feb. 22 release of "Aha Shake Heartbreak" (RCA), the critically hailed follow-up to 2003's "Youth and Young Manhood."

Based on early indications, Kings of Leon's stateside profile may be about to change. The band landed the much-coveted opening slot on the spring leg of U2's tour that kicks off March 14 in Dallas.

(Continued on page 14)

Big Grammy Night Ahead For Usher, West

Given our utterly dismal track record, we couldn't go through the humiliation of predicting who will win Grammy Awards this year in a dozen or so categories, only to later review how miserably we did.

So this year, we're going for a smaller amount, but we're picking the juiciest ones! The Grammys air at 8 p.m. EST Feb. 13 on CBS.

RECORD OF THE YEAR: Usher's "Yeah!" was massive, and it truly reflects the contemporary music and production of the times. Will it be considered a "standard" 20 years from now? Who knows, but just try to get that insinuating riff out of your head. Winner: "Yeah!"

ALBUM OF THE YEAR: My personal fave is Green Day's "American Idiot," which captures a feeling in the country of disenfranchisement. But then, Kanye West's "The College Dropout" is a stunning album that introduces us to an amazing new talent. However, the trophy is going to either "Genius Loves Company," Ray Charles' final project, or Usher's "Confessions," depending upon how much of a sentimental favorite the late Charles is. Winner: "Confessions"—by a nose.

SONG OF THE YEAR: The Grammy folks and I love John Mayer, but this is not his year. "Live Like You Were Dying," performed by Tim McGraw and written by Tim Nichols and Craig Wiseman, is a stirring tune that has a message without being treacly. It should win, but I'm rooting for "Jesus Walks" by Kanye West (who co-wrote it with Miri Ben-Ari and C. Smith) just for the sheer intensity of the song. Winner: "Jesus Walks."

BEST NEW ARTIST: Despite everyone bemoaning the fate of the music industry and the lack of artist development, for the last few years this category's contenders have been really strong: i.e., not a "Shoeshine" among them. Kanye West received the most nominations of any artist up for a Grammy this year, so I don't see how he could possibly be denied this award. Winner: West.

SIGNINGS: Lava Records has picked up hot British band Embrace for North America and will release its current CD, "Out of Nothing," May 3. The album (on Independiente Records) debuted at No. 1 on the U.K. album chart. Coldplay's Chris Martin penned the first single, "Gravity." The band is on a sold-out tour through March, which culminates with two shows at the 5,000-seat Carling Academy at Brixton.

So Cal rock band Sinai Beach has inked a deal with Victory Records, which will release the band's second album, "Immersed," this spring. Eric Rachny (Atreyu, Dillinger Escape Plan) produced the set.

Vanguard Records has signed Los Angeles-based roots-rock quartet Shurman. The band, fronted by Aaron Beavers, has opened for such acts as Los Lonely Boys, Cross Canadian Ragweed and the Drive-By Truckers. Its label debut due April 12.

(Continued on page 14)
5 Browns
Continued from page 13

writer Joel Diamond.
"I first spotted Ryan on a Utah tele-
vision show nearly six years ago," Dia-
mond recalls. "I wanted to place him
in a boy band I was putting together." 
While the Browns declined Dia-
mond's original concept, they stayed in
touch. After all five children finished
high school, Diamond rented out New
York's Steinway Hall for a showcase.
Among the attendees was BMG North
America CEO Clive Davis, who in turn
sent the quintet to the attention of
Sony BMG classical division president
Gilbert Hetherwick, who at that time
was VPGM of BMG Classics.
The album features five-piano
arrangements of popular works like
Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story"
and Paul Dukas' "The Sorcerer's
Apprentice." There are also solo and
duo selections.
The media blitz includes appear-
ances on "Good Morning America" (Feb.
11), "Fox & Friends" (Feb. 13), "Weekend
Today" (April 2), NPR's "Per-
formance Today" and a second "60 Min-
utes II" profile slated to air sometime
around the album's street date.
Major print outlets have also caught
on, with pieces lined up in USA Today
Weekend, Time Magazine for Kids,
Marie Claire, Woman's Day and Parade.
The label's confidence in the 5
Browns is such that Hetherwick is
already planning their next two releases.
"The second one may revolve around a
television special," he says, "and the
third album may be a holiday record."

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The Beat
Continued from page 13

Charlie Sexton will release his first album in 10 years in July, through a
new deal with EMI-distributed Back
Porch Records.
Tracy Bonham releases her Zoe/
Rounder debut May 10. She co-
produced "Blink the Brightest" with
Joey Waronker and Greg Collins.
Decca Broadway will release the
original cast recording from "Monty
Python's Spam-a-lop" this spring. Pre-
views for the plug, which stars David
Hyde Pierce, Tim Curry and Hank
Azaria, begin Feb. 14.

MORE RELIEF: On Feb. 11, William
Music Group, the new label founded by
Black Eyed Peas' Will.I.am and
Venus Brown, will host a tsunami
benefit at the Avalon in Los Angeles.
Performers include the Black Eyed
Peas, Santana, Earth, Wind & Fire,
Justin Timberlake, John Legend and
James Brown. Proceeds go to the U.S.
Fund for UNICEF. Tickets are $150
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Golden Globes Don’t Always Equal Oscar Gold

The Golden Globe Awards often accurately predict Academy Award nominations. But that wasn't the case this year in the best original score category, as the nominees for the 71st annual Academy Awards widely differed from the Golden Globe music nominees.

Noticably absent from the list of Oscar nominees are Howard Shore, who won a Golden Globe for best original score for "The Aviator," and Mick Jagger and Dave Stewart, who won the Golden Globe for best original song for "Old Habits Die Hard" from "Aiolé" (Billboard, Jan. 29).

This year’s Oscar ceremony will take place Feb. 27 at the Kodak Theatre in Los Angeles. ABC will handle the U.S. telecast.

As expected, the Ray Charles biopic "Ray" picked up multiple Oscar nominations. The six nods for "Ray" are best picture, best actor for Jamie Foxx, best director for Taylor Hackford, film editing, costume design and sound mixing.


Only Kaczmarek received a Golden Globe nomination this year. For best original song, the Oscar nominees are "Accidentally in Love" (from "Shrek 2"), written by Adam Duritz, Charles Gillingham, Jim Bogios, Daniel Vickery, David Immegruick, Matthew Mallery and David Bysson; "Al Otro Lado Del Rio" (from "The Motorcycle Diaries"), written by Jorge Drexler; "Believe" (from "The Polar Express"), written by Glen Ballard and Alan Silvestri; "Learn to Be Lonely" (from "The Phantom of the Opera"), written by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Charles Hart; and "Look to Your Path (Vois Sur Ton Chemin)" (from "The Chorus/ Les Choristes"), written by Bruno Coulais and Christophe Barratier.

Of that list, "Accidentally in Love," "Believe" and "Learn to Be Lonely" also received Golden Globe nods.

Film scores from several prominent composers who might have been strong Oscar contenders were ineligible for a nomination for various reasons. Billboard spoke to Bruce Davis, executive director for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the governing body for the Oscars, about these notable music exclusions.

Davis confirms that the scores for "The Aviator" and "Ray" (featuring a score by Craig Armstrong) were ineligible because the Academy deemed the scores diluted or diminished in their respective films by other music not written by the films’ composers (Billboard.biz, Jan. 25).

Davis tells Billboard, “There was a long discussion about "The Aviator" score, and ultimately the voters really felt there wasn’t enough of an original score written for the movie. A full original score has to exist for it to be considered eligible.”

Davis also notes that Clint Eastwood’s “Million Dollar Baby” score was ineligible for a nomination since it missed the deadline to be considered.

As for the exclusion of "Old Habits Die Hard," Davis says it was eligible for best original song but did not receive enough votes to be nominated.

Davis elaborates, “PricewaterhouseCoopers, the accounting firm that handles our vote tallying, never reveals how many votes each entry receives, so we never know how close a vote was, or who placed second, third, etc.”

With 11 nominations including best picture, "The Aviator" leads all other Oscar nominees this year.

In addition to a best original song nod, “The Phantom of the Opera” earned nominations for art direction and cinematography. Meanwhile, the Tupac Shakur retrospective film “Tupac: Resurrection” is up for best documentary.

A complete list of nominees can be found at oscars.org.

SOUNDTRACKS: The soundtrack to "Sound of the Mask" due Feb. 8 on New Line Records, features exclusive tracks from Ryan Cabrera, Dr. John and Tony Award winner Marissa Jaret Winokur. The New Line Cinema film, which opens Feb. 15 in U.S. theaters, is the sequel to the 1994 hit comedy "The Mask"... Columbia/Sony Music Soundtrax’s "Hitch" soundtrack, due Feb. 8, includes new songs from John Legend and Amerie.
Wilson

Continued from page 1

him. He is still amazed that he will be feted as MusiCares' person of the year Feb. 11 at the Palladium in Hollywood, Calif.

"I'm very excited to be honored. It makes me feel very important and very good," he says, then smiles shyly.

The MusiCares accolade is bestowed on a member of the music community who has achieved greatness as an artist and a philanthropist. Wilson gives generously of his time to the Carl Wilson Foundation for cancer research (his younger brother died of the disease in 1998) and has lent his musical talents to such causes as the Adopt-a-Minefield benefit and Neil Young's Bridge School.

Additionally, Wilson took a personal hit in the tsunami disaster. Markus Sundland, cellist in his band, was in Phuket, Thailand, when the wall of water struck. He remains missing. To raise awareness, Wilson performed "Love and Mercy" on NBC's "Tsunami Aid Concert of Hope" special last month. We haven't found him yet," Wilson says. "We're really worried about him. We don't know what happened to him."

On hand to pay homage to Wilson during the MusiCares gala will be Michael McDonald, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Earth, Wind & Fire, Jeff Beck, India.Arie, Jamie Cullum, Barenaked Ladies and Neil Young, among others.

SMILING THROUGH

The MusiCares honor caps a stunning year for Wilson, who released his rerecording of the Beach Boys' "SMiLE" album to critical acclaim and staged a worldwide tour check-full of standing ovations. The original "SMiLE," recorded more than 37 years ago, was never released officially. Wilson calls the project a "nice, happy, joyful teenage symphony to God."

The Nonesuch Records release bowed at No. 13 on The Billboard 200. The set, whose full title is "Brian Wilson Presents SMiLE," has sold more than 300,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and has been nominated for three Grammy Awards, including best pop vocal.

Wilson is already writing songs for his next opus. "I think it will be a rock 'n' roll album," he says. "Wouldn't that be great? 'SMiLE' was a pop album. We need rock 'n' roll for sure. We just want to try to make something that makes people get out of their seats and dance."

He laughs heartily just musing about his new rock tunes, yet his eyes can turn to shadows quickly. Wilson has long received treatment for mental illness, and he says he still battles mood swings.

"SMiLE" was scrapped in 1967 as Wilson neared a mental breakdown. Drugs, pressure from the other Beach Boys—especially Mike Love, who reportedly harshly criticized the "SMiLE" songs—and Wilson's weak mental state doomed the project. Though the album was shelved, a few original "SMiLE" tracks—"Wonderful," "Heroes and Villains" and "Surf's Up"—found their way onto subsequent Beach Boys releases.

"People are much more ready for 'SMiLE' today," Wilson says. "It was ahead of its time. I'm glad I waited. Now it's finally time."

Wilson describes "SMiLE" as the American journey—it takes listeners on a magical mystery ride from Plymouth Rock to Hawaii. "It represents early America. The Beach Boys were very American, but 'SMiLE' is even more American, I think."

MIXED MEMORIES

The new "SMiLE" sessions were not all easy. Wilson admits he feared that the bad memories of 1967 would haunt him. "I had some of that," he says. "But I got through it... It brought back a lot of memories of when we were on drugs, stuff like that. And it brought back good memories because of all the creativity that went into it."

The demons, however, are never far away. "I've overcome a lot of them," he says. "Not all of them, but some of them... Most people don't understand my moods."

Wilson credits his perseverance largely to his wife Melinda, as well as the prowess of his publicists-turned-managers Ronnie Lippin and Jean Sievers and a dedicated band led by Darian Sahana.

"I found the spirit," Wilson says. "[Melinda] inspired me. She gave me a solo career. It was her idea. I owe my life to her."

Wilson adds that his current band is better than the Beach Boys. "I've never played with a band so good in my life."

Wilson enlisted the help of old friend and original "SMiLE" collaborator Van Dyke Parks. Wilson and Sahana were laboring to read a 38-year-old lyric sheet to "Do You Like Worms?" (renamed "Roll Plymouth Rock" on the new album). Wilson called Parks, who remembered the song verbatim, and the friendship was reborn.

Parks "created a third movement for 'SMiLE' with me," Wilson says excitedly. "So we have three movements instead of two."

During Wilson's performance of "SMiLE" last fall at Disney Hall in Los Angeles, Parks made a surprise appearance, receiving a standing ovation.

Wilson still can't grasp the impact and success that "SMiLE" had. "I wake up in the morning and I go, 'Oh, my God, I thank you, God, for another day of life.'"

With his career on an upswing, a new album on the way and more tour dates in the wings, Wilson has no intention of hanging up his musical gloves. "I'm not going to retire soon at all," he says.

Despite Wilson's embattled mental state, during the past few years he has learned to enjoy and cherish life's everyday joys.

"I love my kids and my wife," he says. "I take my kids to movies, and we go out to eat a lot. I like being a dad. My kids are a little bit hard to relate to for me, because my mind is on music a lot."

Are his three youngest children with Melinda musically inclined? "They dance. They dance really good," Wilson says. "They haven't started singing yet, but they are going to be good singers."
Winans Ready To ‘Celebrate’ New Album After Illness

You would be hard pressed to find someone with a more powerful testimony than Ron Winans. After literally dying on the operating table, he survived, thrived and now returns with a new album, “Family & Friends 5: A Celebration.”

Winans is joined on this musical celebration by siblings BeBe, Marvin and CeCe and friends Vanessa Bell Armstrong, Marcus Cole, Rance Allen, the Kalifins, Jesse Campbell and Gladys Knight.

The fifth in Winans’ successful “Family & Friends” series, the collection dropped Jan. 31 on Enthos Records, a Detroit-based label founded by producer Doreonne Stramler. With such songs as the autobiographical “I Shall Not Die but Live” and “Walking in My Season,” Winans proclaims his faith and his victory over failing health.

The artist, who rose to prominence performing with brothers Marvin, Carvin and Michael as the Winans, became ill in 1996. Doctors originally diagnosed him with bronchitis. “I just felt sicker each day and it got so bad,” recalls Winans, who was finally diagnosed as suffering a heart attack and having a torn aorta.

“The doctor told my family that he would not operate because he thought for sure I would die on the table,” Winans says. “He suggested that I [would] have the operation, but the Lord saw fit to . . . let my heart beat with more [regularity].”

But when Winans finally went in for the surgery he needed, his heart did indeed stop during the operation, as the doctor had feared. “But God is not limited to go to death’s door,” Winans says. “He can go behind the door and say, ‘Not yet,’ and pulled me back in.”

While Winans survived the surgery, doctors told his family he would likely never fully recover and that there had been too much damage to his lungs. He was only 39, and doctors said he would never sing again.

On his new CD he proves them wrong, and he plans to tour behind the new record.

“Once I got back, I said, ‘Lord, if you are able to do that, I want everything back,’” he says. “They thought I was going to be a vegetable.”

“Family & Friends 5” was recorded last May in Detroit at Greater Grace Temple. The event was also taped for a DVD that seráted the same day as the CD. The night of the recording, Winans says they “just had a wonderful time in God. We knew that if we could just transport that . . . onto the tape, the people that heard it afterward would be blessed.”

The project reverberates with the heartfelt gratitude of a man who has been given a new lease on life. “I Shall Not Die but Live” is a particularly powerful track. Winans says the song was “very easy [to write] because, of course, I lived it.”

Winans is joined by Lena Starks on “Walking in My Seasons,” Allen Cole, Shaun McLemore and Agee Smith guest on “I Made a Promise.” Gwen Morton is featured on “Signs of the Times.” Brother BeBe is spotlighted on “Safe From Harm,” and sister CeCe joins in on “My Help.”

Winans says he and his brothers will likely reunite for another project, as the Winans will celebrate their 25th anniversary next year. “We started in 1981,” he recalls. “We were going to try to do something last year, but it kind of got set back. Hopefully this year it will [happen].”

HALL OF FAME HONOREES: Walter Hawkins, Mylon LeFevre, Evie Tornquist and the Lewis Family will be among those inducted into the Gospel Music Assn.’s Gospel Music Hall of Fame during a ceremony Feb. 22 at Trinity Music City in Hendersonville, Tenn. Industry veterans Ron Huff, Don Light and Lou Hildreth will also be inducted as non-performing members. The event will be taped and will air as a one-hour TV special on the Trinity Broadcast Network.

Huff, an acclaimed arranger, has worked with Faith Hill, Charlotte Church, Celine Dion, Jewel, Keith Urban, George Strait and the Boston Pops. Most recently, he was president for the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

Light began his career as a drummer and worked as GM of Billboards Nashville office. He launched the first booking agency for gospel artists, Don Light Talent, and has also worked as a manager and record producer, with more than 50 albums to his credit.

Hildreth began her career in gospel music as a member of the Wills Family. She has been a speaker, songwriter, publisher and journalist, and was the first woman to own a gospel music booking agency. She is currently the host of “Hill Country Gospel TV.”

Kings

Continued from page 13

in March. In addition, influential alternative radio stations in Los Angeles, Boston, Seattle, San Diego and Portland, Ore., have been early champions of the album’s first single, “The Bucket,” by picking it up ahead of the track’s Jan. 31 radio impact date.

With a headlining club tour of its own in February, a 15-page photo spread in Rolling Stone’s spring fashion issue and TV dates on “Late Show With David Letterman” and “Late Night With Conan O’Brien” pending, RCA executives hope Kings of Leon will establish a stronger connection with American audiences.

To be sure, expectations at RCA are running high as the challenge to break the band in the States is formidable. The label reports it has sold 765,000 “Youth & Young Manhood” copies worldwide, including more than 408,000 units in the United Kingdom, while “Aha Shake Heartbreak” has sold more than $76,000 units in the U.K. alone since its release in November.

By contrast, “Youth” sold 122,000 units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “It’s our goal to get them to a place as big here as they are in the U.K., which sounds funny because they are an American band,” RCA marketing director Brad Oldham says. (Continued on page 20)
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Kronos Quartet Brings Ali-Zadeh To Its Audience

The Kronos Quartet has long been in the vanguard of bringing new and diverse music to an audaciously adventurous public. Its latest release, “Mugam Sayagi” (Nonesuch, Jan. 11) introduces many listeners to one of the most distinctive and exciting composers today: Franghiz Ali-Zadeh. Born in 1947 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Ali-Zadeh now makes her home in Germany. The Kronos disc includes four of Ali-Zadeh’s works, written between 1989 and 2001, that show off her prowess as a composer and a pianist: “Quso” and “Mugam Sayagi” for string quartet; “Music for Piano, featuring Ali-Zadeh playing solo; and “Ashkenon Quartet” for piano and string quartet.

“I first heard Franghiz’s music around 1998,” Kronos violinst and ensemble founder David Harrington says. An interviewer at the BBC told him about her. “He sent me a tape of her music, and I loved it,” he says. “At that point, Franghiz spoke Azerbaijani, Turkish and Russian, so our first communications were through a Turkish translator.”

In 1990 Kronos offered her a commission; she wrote “Mugam Sayagi.” Harrington continues: “We came to us in 1991 to rehearse the piece, and we’ve been working with her ever since.” Harrington says one of the most attractive aspects of Ali-Zadeh’s music is her ability to see the world through multiple cultural lenses.

“There’s a quality of real, total and deep involvement in the essence of the music of her native country, Azerbaijan,” he observes. “At the same time, she’s thoroughly aware of music we grew up with here: George Crumb, John Cage, Olivier Messiaen. As a pianist, Franghiz was the first Kronos Quartet. Harrington says this is an especially fruitful time in the 30-year-old act’s life.

“The distinct point of view that each composer we work with brings to our rehearsals and to our concerts—it’s fantastic,” he says. “Each musical experience gives us new words for our vocabulary.”

TALK OF THE TOWN: Last month’s Assn. of Performing Arts Presenters and Chamber Music America conferences, both held in New York, provided food for thought for an industry at a crossroad.

For their event, CMA organizers published a list of the “101 Great American Ensemble Works,” nominated by CMA’s membership. Such lists are arbitrary by their nature, and any is likely to invite heated debate. (Examples: No Gunther Schuller, Virgil Thomson or Meredith Monk.)

But two themes jump out. A cursory check shows that about 20% of the cited pieces are not readily available as recordings—perhaps some enterprise label would like to investigate this further? And more than 15% of the pieces are jazz works, from artists ranging from Louis Armstrong to Andrew Hill. CMA has shown a commitment to jazz. Board members include Derek Gordon, president/CEO of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and vibraphonist/marimba player/composer Stefan Harris.

PASSAGES: After several troublesome years, the Troy, N.Y.-based audiophile and early music-savvy label Dorian Recordings (which acquired another well-regarded independent, Reference Recordings) is filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The label is soliciting bids in hopes of finding a buyer for all of its holdings.

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Digital Music Forum is the premier event for music industry decision-makers focused on business models and legal issues impacting music. The annual event brings together decision-makers from record labels, music publishers, producers and distributors, technology companies, wireless companies, rights organizations, industry bodies, radio, advertising, attorneys, artist investors and venture capitalists to examine the role of digital technologies in the future of music.

KEYNOTES + FEATURED INTERVIEWS

SHAWN FANNING
Co-Founder, Napster

TERRY MCBRIDE
CEO, Network Productions

DAVID GOLDBERG
VP & GM, Music, Yahoo!

MIKE CONTE
General Manager, MSN Music

Wired Editor-In-Chief Chris Anderson chats with Napster founder about his new venture and the future of music.

Hear from the master manager and promoter of such acts as Avril Lavigne, Sarah McLachlan, Barenaked Ladies, Dixie and Coldplay.

Yahoo's Music GM discusses the company's vision of how music fans connect with artists and discover new music through a variety of interactive mediums.

MusicAlly's Paul Bradlely chats with MSN's Mike Conte about the company's efforts in the music space.

PANELISTS

BRAD DUEA
President, Napster

JEFFREY BRONIKOWSKI
VP, Bus. Dev., 4Labs, Universal Music Group

TEC COHEN
COO, Digital Development & Distribution, EMI Music

THOMAS GEMECZE
CTO, Digital Business Group, Sony BMG

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GERD LEONARD
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SAHID KHAN
Managing Director, BearingPoint

DAVID KUSEK
VP, Berklee Media, Berklee College of Music

DCN TEAGUE
VP of Sales & Marketing, PaymentOne

PANELS ON CUTTING-EDGE TOPICS

THE STATE OF THE DIGITAL UNION
The Outlook for Online & Mobile Music Markets

LAWYERS, GEEKS & MONEY:
The Clash Between Technology & Copyright Law

THE ONLINE MUSIC MARKET:
Competition, Business Models & Courting Consumers in a Crowded Market

THE MOBILE MUSIC MARKET:
What Does the Future Hold for this Booming Market?

For agenda, registration and event details, please visit www.digitalmusicforum.com

DETAILS

WHEN: March 2, 2005, 8:30am - 6:00pm
WHERE: The Franch Institute, 55 E. 59th St., New York, NY 10022
REGISTER: Online at www.digitalmusicforum.com
or by phone: 323-822-3936
REGISTRATION FEE: $395
INQUIRIES: Tzar Than Sherman VP, Marketing & Events,
tzar@digitalmediawire.com

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ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEW
ANDREW LACK
CEO, SONY BMG Music Entertainment
AND
JOHN FRANKENHEIMER
Co-chairman, Loeb & Loeb

CONFIRMED PANELISTS
subject to change

Ken Antonelli, President, RED Music Distribution
Martin Bandier, Chairman & CEO, EMI Music Publishing
Michael Elkin, Partner, Tishman Reid & Priest
Chris Lighty, CEO, Violator Management/Reccrecs
Kenny Meiselas, Partner, Grubman
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Music Artists Are In Fashion

A Growing Number Of Stars Are Slipping Into A Different Kind Of Label Deal

BY CARLA MAY

The roster of names on designer labels reads like the Billboard charts as a growing number of music celebrities become fashion entrepreneurs.

At retail and on the runway, several fashion lines launched by music stars have made an impact. But which have been hits and which have been misses?

Since almost all of these businesses are privately owned, their financial figures are not readily available. However, according to various sources, Jennifer Lopez has scored the biggest success with the meteoric rise of her J.Lo line.

Since J.Lo’s launch in 2001, the brand’s revenue has skyrocketed, from $130 million in 2002 to $250 million in 2003 and $375 million in 2004, according to published reports.

Also at the top of the hit list of music-celebrity clothing lines are two brands that started in 1999: Sean John (from Sean “P. Diddy” Combs) and Rocawear, co-founded by Jay-Z and Damon Dash. According to published reports, Sean John and Rocawear each had an estimated $300 million in revenue in 2003.

As the fashion industry gathers Feb. 4-11 in New York for Olympus Fashion Week, music celebrities are certain to be among the high-profile attendees.

Music celebrity clothing lines trying to catch up to the industry’s leaders include Shady (from Eminem), Fetish (Eve), Vokal and Apple Bottoms (Nelly), Screamline (Scott Stapp), L.A.M.B. (Gwen Stefani) and Shaggy (Bow Wow).

Phat Farm, launched in 1992 by Def Jam Records co-founder Russell Simmons, is a pioneer brand in the business of mixing music and fashion.

Gwen Stefani’s L.A.M.B. line of handbags is a strong seller at Le Sportsac stores.

Olympus Fashion Week: Fact File

What: A preview of the fall 2005 collections from top designers
Where: New York
When: Feb. 4-11
Who: Attendees include an international roster of fashion designers, celebrities, sponsors and press.
Web: Olympusfashionweek.com

(Continued on page 24)
Lines Must 'Transcend Artist's Name'

Macy's is one leading retailer that carries several clothing brands from artists, including J. Lo, G-Unit, Shady, Fashion, Rocawear and Sean John.

Macy's West men's fashion director Durand Guion says several factors determine whether Macy's will carry a clothing line by an artist. The company considers the artist's popularity, if the artist has an established fashion identity, pricing and if the brand works with a reliable manufacturer.

As for how the retail sector markets and positions these brands, Guion says, "Our idea isn't to hammer away to the consumers the artist's involvement in the brand. If you overpromote the artist and underpromote quality, you do a disservice to consumers. The products have to transcend the power of the artist's name." CARLA HAY

A SWEET DEAL

In April 2001, Lopez partnered with Andy Hilfiger to form Sweetface Fashion, which owns the J.Lo brand for fashion and beauty products.

"It takes time to really develop a lifestyle brand," Lopez tells Billboard. "We have definitely gone through our share of growing pains, but there are a lot of girls and women out there who can identify with the lifestyle our brand embodies."

Sweetface co-founder/director Hilfiger adds, "You need the right infrastructure, and you've got to get in business with the right people."

"For, whose Felt line is relaunching this fall under a new deal with Marc Ecko Enterprises, agrees. "It takes a lot of money to launch a fashion line," Eve says. "A lot of people who are in this business don't know what [artists] are about. As an artist, you really need to pay attention to all the decisions that are made, even when you're tired and stressed out. You have to be a hands-on decision-maker."

"Nelly's Vokal and Apple Bottoms clothing brands have had their ups and downs, including deals that went sour and changing distributors. Vokal, which launched in 1997 and is distributed by Check Group, resulted from Nelly's past experience as a fashion entrepreneur, before he had a record deal."

Ian Kelly, COO/managing partner of Vokal/Apple Bottoms says, "We learned from our mistakes. Unlike the music business, where a lot of artists have short careers, the garment industry is about being in it long term."

Hilfiger believes that the most successful fashion brands started by music celebrities are those that sell not only the image of the artists but also an entire lifestyle.

Kelly agrees. "Not everyone is a fan of P. Diddy's music, but people buy Sean Jean clothes because they like the collection."

But a celebrity name can take the business only so far.

Lopez says a big mistake that artists can make is thinking that "success in one area of their careers can carry them through the success of a fashion company."

Yomi Marti, president/managing partner of Vokal/Apple Bottoms, adds, "We have to prove that Nelly could sell clothes. You need to be more design-oriented than artist-oriented. The artist should be a complement to the line, not a substitute."

For that reason, although the artists often initially appear in advertising to launch their own clothing line, they do not want their personal image to overpower the line. Eventually, other people appear in the ads.

Because fashion is a fickle and trend-oriented industry, presenting the same images and spokespeople for a marketing campaign year after year would be considered detrimental to a brand.

Martin explains, "Nelly is very involved in the design process. But the clothing line isn't just about his favorite colors. It's about the hot colors in the market right now."

Artists often do their best promotion for their clothing lines by wearing them in music videos, at public events or other instances in which they are in the media spotlight.

Hilfiger believes product placement and advertising are equally important and neither should be sacrificed in favor of the other.

Designer Marc Ecko adds, "With G-Unit, we try to bring the marriage between fashion and music full circle, creating ads that have the same dark and moody feel as one of its careers."

Sometimes an ad campaign can get extra mileage when it generates a lot of media attention.

"Apple Bottoms, which its founders says for "women with curves," had a provocative ad campaign with Nelly posing with a topless model. There was also a well-publicized Apple Bottoms contest in which women competed to be the new model for the clothing line."

MUSIC MANIA

So why is there such a high concentration of music stars starting their own clothing lines, more so than other entertainers?

Vibe's Moore believes it is because unlike actors, who play different characters, music celebrities' art is usually a reflection of their personalities, and their fashion choices are extensions of that.

"These celebrities are constantly marketing themselves," Moore says. "The music industry is a little oversaturated with artists' clothing lines, but I don't think traditional designers feel threatened. But celebrities should be aware that overexposure could lead to the clearance rack."

For many of these brands, the business trends for 2005 and beyond are to offer more upscale clothing, extend the brand names and increase alliances with successful partners.

Hilfiger says Sweetface wants to start a very strong partnership with a major record label. The company is also planning a music-and-fashion event for later this year in which Lopez is expected to be involved.

Rocawear has acquired licensing rights to Vokal/Apple Bottoms, and has teamed with Kanye West for his upcoming Pastel line. Vokal is in discussions with rapper E-40 to start his own fashion wear.

Ecko says, "Whether we admit it or not, a lot of success in fashion is directly tied to music, if not in the lines themselves through the use of artists in marketing campaigns. The fact is that when done right, the stuff sells. When done wrong, it doesn't."

Passionate Involvement Necessary

Designer Marc Ecko says the most important lesson he has learned in working with such artists as J. 50 Cent and Eve is "having an artist who's selective about what they put their names on and is passionate about making everything they touch successful."

"Too many artists have slapped their names on lines, then completely stepped away from the design process," he says. "There are so many styles that they don't feel comfortable wearing on stage or in videos. It defeats the purpose of having a line in the first place."
Merchandise Company Builds On Success

BY RAY WADDELL

Built from the ground up by pastry chef/punk rocker/entrepreneur Jeffery Bischoff, Oakland, Calif.-based Cinder Block has evolved into a full-service merchandising and licensing company.

Cinder Block grossed $25 million in 2004, a year that also saw the launch of Cinder Block Ticketing.

Steered by founder and president Bischoff, the privately held company has grown continuously since it launched in 1989 on a Berkeley, Calif., sidewalk table, where Bischoff hawked manually printed T-shirts.

“We didn’t have a master plan to become a big merchandiser. We just wanted to make a few shirts and sell them doing the street vending thing, which enabled us to do music,” Bischoff says. “About three months after that I quit my job as a pastry chef.”

Bischoff describes Cinder Block’s subsequent growth as organic. “We started as a screen printer, and being a musician I knew a lot of other musicians, and my friends and I started printing T-shirts,” he says. “Once people found out that I was silk-screening T-shirts, they immediately started asking us to make hand band shirts.”

East Bay bands like Green Day and Rancid were early clients of Bischoff, who was then the guitarist for the band FIII. “As these bands grew, specifically Green Day and Rancid, they moved on to other merchandisers that were doing things that we weren’t doing,” Bischoff says.

So Cinder Block started offering retail distribution, sending people on the road, controlling the inventory and calculating projections, among other full-service details. In 1996, Bischoff bought the first of the company’s automatic presses, started a retail sales program that now extends to accounts worldwide and began to significantly boost the firm’s staff, which now numbers 130.

Cinder Block is a vertically integrated company. Centralized in a 30,000-square-foot facility, its departments oversee art design, production, e-commerce, retail sales and distribution, full tour service and purchasing, in addition to other functions.

“I want this company to be a one-stop, where someone can make one phone call and get all their needs done, all the tour services you need,” Bischoff says.

GETTING THE BACK GREEN

The ticketing operation was a result of the same way of thinking. “It was like, ‘OK, need to start doing ticketing because this is a service we can provide, a revenue stream we can create for our clients.’ It’s just another part of our controlling service, to hang on to clients. I hated when we lost Green Day in 1994. So we worked like hell and got ‘em back.”

Cinder Block is doing more than just hang-on. It hosts more than 300 clients, including Radiohead, Green Day, the Pixies, the Darkness, Jet, Weezer, Lou Reed, R.E.M., the Vines, Sugar, Kisses, Goo Goo Dolls, Death Cab for Cutie, the Killers, the Stills, Rise Against and Flogging Molly.

At a time when many bands are seeing diminishing revenue, tour merchandising has become increasingly important.

“With a lot of these bands [merchandise sales] is where they’re getting the gas money for the van,” Bischoff says. “So they have to have good quality and good pricing so they can make good margins. And they can’t run out of merchandise.”

Cinder Block’s client list boasts more than 300 bands, including Green Day, Jet and the Killers. Its product line features such new items as messenger bags.

The company keeps broadening its product line, recently developing such items as messenger bags and screen-printed patch hoodies.

“People are definitely more fashion-conscious than they have been in the past,” Bischoff observes. “They want things that are higher quality and are more consistent with just the run-off-the-mill type of merchandise.”

Apparel-wise, the trend is toward smaller shirts that have a nicer fit and feel, Bischoff says. “Also, smaller sizes are a trend going on for four or five years….[There] was a time when it was extra-large shirts only, and now for a lot of our bands XL is the worst seller.”

IN THE TICKETING GAME

The company’s newest venture, Cinder Block Ticketing, was created in partnership with Base-Line Ticketing to offer online presales.

Baseline was formerly known as String Cheese Incident Ticketing.

Cinder Block Ticketing’s initial outing was a presale program for Green Day’s American Idiot tour. The new division is also overseeing presales for the upcoming Epitaph tour and the Hurley International Presents Sub City Take Action tour.

According to Bischoff, providing presales for major and developing acts and themed tours enables Cinder Block Ticketing to bolster the artist-fan bond. The division is generally allotted 8%-10% of the house, and only before tickets go on sale to the public.

“I knew this something bands were looking for, or should be looking for,” Bischoff says. “What we bring to the table is a lot of marketing opportunities, because we have a lot of data from all these artist stores we run. It’s about providing fans with a little extra something.”

Fans are in the works for Cinder Block to move from its current headquarters into a 90,000-square-foot Oakland facility this spring, tripling its space. A Los Angeles office just opened.

“We are very much actively seeking more bands,” he says. “Our infrastructure has grown so we can handle more and we can give better deals to the artists.”

U2 Continued from page 6

be more tickets for u2.com subscribers.

Data captured by u2.com and Ticketmaster during the presale process will show who used their unique password and whether they succeeded in obtaining tickets. Most fans affected have or will be contacted, and attempts are being made to resolve these issues, sources say.

The surest way to address a demand issue is by upping the supply, and U2 will be on the road for most of 2005.

HOT BEYOND BELIEF

U2 worldwide promoter Arthur Fogel, president of TNA International, insists the snafus and disappointed customers are just symptomatic of an incredibly hot tour.

“These fan club presales go on all the time, but they’re usually under the radar,” Fogel tells Billboard. “This one [was] beyond belief. There’s no question there have been some technical glitches and some dissatisfied people, but people are working as best as possible to sort it all out.”

Clearly, ticket brokers and scalpers added to the problem. Their modus operandi is to buy as many tickets as possible, then resell them at a much higher price. With tickets offered by brokers topping $1,000, single a $40 fan club fee is a small investment.

“The reality is, there’s nothing to stop a broker from joining a fan club and being part of a presale,” Fogel says. “As a broker, you spend every day of your life trying to figure out how to beat the system.”

Indeed, US alone is not in its presale presale. On a much lesser scale, the five Black Crowes shows scheduled for New York’s Hammerstein Ballroom in March also frustrated that band’s fan club members.

“‘The presale tickets went on sale [Jan. 25] at 9 a.m., but the loyal fans were locked out by 9:01, and they were told that all nights were sold out,” a fan wrote to billboard.com. “The fans have been speculating that ticket brokers got the tickets allotted for the presale and only very few fans got through.”

U2’s official site acknowledged the scalper issue: “We are very aware that some people seem to have abused the system to scalp on eBay or similar sites…We are currently looking into the possibility of identifying these people and withdrawing their tickets. Any help you can give us on this we would be greatly received.”

In retrospect, insiders say, the biggest mistake may have been not cutting off membership—some estimate 100,000 fans signed up—to the presale at u2.com. But there was no way of knowing who would buy for which, if any, shows, and bands have barely been faced with the prospect of turning away fans from fan sites.

“[There is] no question the demand, both here and in Europe, is as high as I’ve ever seen, and with that comes difficulties in managing that kind of volume,” Fogel says.

He adds that high demand for general public on-sales sometimes “fries” the system, but as U2 tickets began going on sale in Europe and the United States, the system appeared to handle the load.

“I heard of no problems,” he says. “And every last ticket was sold.”

All U.K. shows sold out, with more than 260,000 seats gone, and 55,000 sold for the June 10 European opener in Brussels.

Sellers in the United States include four shows at Chicago’s United Center and three at Boston’s FleetCenter. In total, more than 600,000 tickets sold in less than a week. Such box-office activity points to U2’s seriously underplaying certain markets on this first leg, a fact not lost on Fogel.

“When we had to rejig the tour, we lost some of our walls,” Fogel notes, referring to routing issues that flipped vertigo for Forstigo’s initial run and delayed the tour’s start. The band has scheduled only one show at New York’s Madison Square Garden. That, Fogel says, “is a joke.”

But it’s doubtful U2 will leave much money on the table when the band returns to the United States. “We hope to add shows, particularly in markets we seriously underplayed,” Fogel says.

It looks like U2 is well on its way to realizing a potential gross in excess of $200 million. And if its doubtful relationships with fans will be seriously harmed. Shows history shows much will be forgotten once the first note is played.

“One thing,” Fogel says, about U2 and the U2 organization, whom he has worked with since 1980: They will do whatever they can to make sure people are taken care of.”
Levinstone’s New House

Promoter Stan Levinstone, former principal in Concerts East, will be talent buyer for the new House of Blues in Atlantic City, N.J. It is HOB’s 10th club and will be its largest. It is set to open during the Fourth of July weekend (billboard.biz, Jan. 6). The club is located in the Showboat casino, a subsidiary of Harrar’s Operating Co.

Levinstone says he first began conversations with HOB in November at the Billboard tour conference. “Things just took off from there,” he says. HOB senior VP Kevin Morrow “approached me about Atlantic City and I met with them Jan. 6 at the press conference announcing the HOB location at the Showboat.”

Levinstone says an agreement was reached last weekend, and he will report to Morrow.

“We at House of Blues are excited to have Stan join our ranks in book- ing the new House of Blues Atlantic City,” Morrow says. “For the past 25 years, he has been a mainstay on the New Jersey music scene and his passion for music has diminished. We believe he will be a great fit with our other buyers.”

Concerts East, the Red Bank, N.J., concert promotion company Levinstone previously headed, will continue under principals Jerry Bialik and Tony Pallagrosi, who also own and operate the Starland Ballroom in Sayreville, N.J. They will continue promoting in the region.

Meanwhile, HOB has named Diana Martinez talent buyer for the new HOB in San Diego, scheduled to open in May. “Having known Diana for the past 20 years, I know her passion for music fits perfectly with House of Blues and our approach to booking clubs,” Morrow says. “She has extensive experience working with both developing artists and national artists.

Since 1995, Martinez has served as talent buyer for the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach, Calif.

WELCOME BACK, MAC: As first tipped on billboard.biz Jan. 26, Sir Paul McCartney will take advantage of the media focus surrounding his half-time performance Feb. 6 at Super Bowl XXXIX to announce his upcoming tour of North America, sources say. McCartney will play 38 North American cities beginning Sept. 16 in Miami and running until the end of November.

The concerts will be promoted in a fairly even split between AEG Live/Concerts West and Clear Channel Entertainment, in association with longtime McCartney touring associate Barrie Marshall’s Marshall Arts.

Tickets for the tour are expected to go on sale the last week in February. McCartney last toured the United States in 2002 as part of a global out- ing that grossed more than $129 million and drew 1.1 million fans.

The touring landscape will be relatively crowded with superstardom this fall, as $2m will be on the second U.S. leg of its Vertigo tour and the Rolling Stones are believed to have an outing in the works.

VIRGIN TERRITORY: The second annual Virgin College Mega Tour will feature Cake as the headliner with support from Brit-rock quintet Gomez (billboard.biz, Jan. 28).

Presented by Dentyne Fire & DennyIce, the 20-market tour also features a daytime village on campuses that will include an emerging-artists stage, karaoke booth, contest giveaways and the latest games, new product demonstrations and gadgets for the college market.

Jaime Kelsal at APA is booking the tour, and will be adding markets. Ann Edgaroff at Virgin Entertainment is booking General Manager Berman. Integrate Marketing are coordinating sponsorships.

IT’S NEARLY OVER: Cher’s nearly three-year Farewell tour will officially end April 30 at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles after 325 shows. She has reported close to $200 million in grosses to Billboard Boxscore.
LOS ANGELES—Brian McKnight recalls that it was once easier for someone like himself to be considered a mainstream artist.

“Seven years ago, maybe, there were eight or nine formats I could be played on,” the singer/songwriter says. “But you know what? I’m not going to be pigeonholed. Miles Davis and Marvin Gaye made the music they wanted to make. And I’m getting back to that way of thinking, versus fitting a mold. I’m just going to be me.”

That’s the intent of “Geminii,” McKnight’s latest Motown offering, due Feb. 8. His eighth studio album couples his signature love ballads with uptempo songs that reveal the artist’s fun, risqué side. Along the way, he also injects some doo-wop and jazz. And, as he did on his last album, “I Turn,” McKnight shares the mic with guests from the rap/hip-hop arena, including Juvenile, Akon and Talib Kweli.

“I am my past records,” he declares. “But there are parts of me that just want to ‘hit it.’ I can’t worry about people saying I’m being something I’m not.”

The project’s first two singles—already bona fide adult R&B hits—illustrate McKnight’s musical dichotomy. The flirtatious “What We Do Here” is about a performer preparing to go onstage while trying to get his groove on with a woman in his dressing room. It’s a current Grammy Award nominee for best R&B male vocal performance. “Every Time You Go Away,” meanwhile, takes fans back to McKnight’s romantic “Back at One” heyday.

“Back at One” was McKnight’s last major R&B/pop crossover hit. The 1999 single reached No. 7 at R&B and No. 2 at pop. The musician is best-known for 1997’s “Anytime” (No. 1 at R&B/No. 6 at pop).

Both hits were the title tracks to multiplatinum albums. His 1992 self-titled debut is also multiplatinum, while “I Remember You” (1995) and “Superhero” (2001) went gold. “I Turn,” however, has sold only 440,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Originally slated for release last year, “Geminii” was planned as a double-CD: one side love songs, the other devoted to the jazz McKnight loves. However, the exit of former Motown president/CEO Kedar Massenburg placed the project in limbo until successor Sylvia Rhone was appointed last September.

Then, McKnight says, it was decided that it “wouldn’t be cost-effective” to release a double-CD. The Jazz CD, however, is waiting in the wings.

In the meantime, he and Motown are in heavy promotion mode. Before the end of last year, the label—in conjunction with black treasured magazine Essence—invited journalists on a Paris junket to meet McKnight and hear the new songs.

Though videos weren’t made for McKnight’s first two singles, Universal/Motown president Michael L. Ostin was filmed for third single “Grownman Business.” It will feature Bad Boy/Universal artist He-Ad (formerly known as Heavy D).

TALKING KALEID

Further boosting his mainstream presence, McKnight has embarked on a new sideline. He will be covering the Grammys for syndicated entertainment series “X-Tra.” He made his TV journalism debut last year, reporting on the Billboard Music Awards and the American Music Awards.

He and manager Silas White are also exploring the possibility of McKnight hosting a talk show. He co-hosted “The Vegas Show” with Sheena Easton last summer at the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas.

But McKnight still harbors one dream that will bring together his R&B/Pop and jazz alter egos, “My goal is to play both the Hollywood Bowl and Universal Amphitheatre on the same day.”

R&B Foundation Regroups

Between the Grammy Awards and the Soul Train Awards, the music honors season is in full bloom. But what’s going on with another longtime annual event, the Pioneer Awards, and its sponsor, the Rhythm & Blues Foundation?

The Pioneer Awards, which honor legendary R&B artists, were traditionally one of the season’s hottest tickets. The last ceremony was held two years ago in New York, paying tribute to the Supremes, George Clinton and Dionne Warwick, among others. However, owing to a tight economy and fewer contributions, only partial honorariums were given out at the ceremony.

Foundation board member Bonnie Raitt later performed a benefit concert to make up the balance (Rhythm, Rap and the Blues, Billboard, April 26, 2003).

Good news: The awards will be back in 2006. In addition, the foundation is slated to open new headquarters in Philadelphia in three to six months.

Supporting these efforts is producer Kenny Gamble, in tandem with Philadelphia Mayor John Street and Pennsylvania Governor Edward Rendell.

Entertainment attorney Kendall Minter, who succeeded Jerry Butler as chairman of the foundation, says it will keep a branch office in Harlem.

The Rhythm & Blues Foundation was established in 1988 to provide financial support, educational outreach and historic preservation for the genre. The organization relocated to New York from Washington, D.C., in 2000 under former executive director Cecilia Carter. When the current move is completed, Minter says, a search for Carter’s successor will begin.

INDUSTRY BRIEFS: Impact magazine is back. The former Vanguarde Media publication is now under the Impact Ventures umbrella, backed by American Pacific Financial.

Chief executive Shawn Bryant is publisher with his brother Wayne. They oversee an editorial team headed by former Source editor in chief Carlito Rodriguez. Covering the spectrum of the urban entertainment business, the magazine re-emerges this month as a quarterly.

In the meantime, the foundation (rhythm-n-blues.org) is working with organizers of Philadelphia’s annual “Sunny’s Welcome America” celebration to co-host a June R&B festival. “We’re getting support on a variety of different levels,” Minter says.

That support includes the upcoming H.E.R.B.I.E. Awards (Honoring the Evolution of Rhythm & Blues in Entertainment), created and produced by Denise Pendleton. Proceeds from the awards show/concert will benefit the foundation. The Chi-Lites are among the honorees; confirmed attendees include Betty Wright and Cuba Gooding Sr.

The event will take place Feb. 14 at the Century Club in Century City, Calif. For more info, go to herbeawards.com.

MORE EMPOWERMENT: The Artist Empowerment Coalition will host its third annual artist celebration and pre-Grammy Awards brunch. Grammy nominees Kanye West and Ray Charles will be honored, along with actor Danny Glover and model Tyra Banks. It all takes place Feb. 12 at the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles. For details, go to artistempowerment.com.
This week's column was written by Rashawn Hall in New York.

Hip-hop artists and fashion have become as interconnected as the MC and the DJ. But with more artists launching signature lines, how does a brand make a name for itself in today's crowded fashion arena?

If you're California-based Lifted Research Group, aka LRG, you adopt a variety of approaches—from using producers and video directors as representatives to sponsoring concerts.

"We tend to naturally gravitate toward artists with a personal style that complements our brand, and vice versa," LRG head designer Robert Wright says. Wright founded the brand in 1999 with partner Jonas Bevacqua.

"I also look at the next generation of artists who aren't even a blip on the radar yet," Wright says. An early example was artist/producer Kanye West.

"Rather than just capitalize on the popularity of artists already selling millions of albums," Wright continues, "we work with new artists to help expose more consumers to great music that we feel should be promoted."

LRG ad campaigns have featured Anthony Hamilton, the Roots, De La Soul, Jim Jones, John Legend, Biz Markie, Little Brother, Kool G Rap and Smif-N-Westem.

Just Blaze isn't the only producer to appear in an LRG campaign.

"We try to keep a good balance between artists and behind-the-scenes types," Wright explains. "In fact, our current ad campaign features [producer] Alchemist, Just Blaze and [Little Brother DJ/producer] 9th Wonder. In another print ad, we feature video/film directors Coodie & Chike."

The company's incorporation of musical talent—whether they are behind the mic or behind the boards—goes beyond traditional print ads. LRG sponsors concerts and events featuring its endorsers.

"We then make custom banners, featuring the LRG logo and the artist, to hang at the shows," Wright says. "Sometimes we also do co-op T-shirts and other point-of-purchase items. And we usually release a couple of CDs a year featuring music from many of the artists that we work with. We use them as soundtracks when we release new designs."

It's the grassroots approach, as well as LRG's diversity, that will propel the company into the major leagues, Just Blaze believes.

Look at the different range of artists who either appear in advertisements for or wear LRG on a regular basis," he says. "From myself to [actor] Rick Gonzalez to MTV's Sway to [cable TV personality] Tom Arnold. Each of us are from different areas of the entertainment business, yet we all have a genuine love for the brand."

"I definitely see LRG as a young company that has the potential to be in the same position as a Polo or a Tommy Hilfiger in a few years," he adds. "This is something that no other predominantly 'urban' clothing line has done yet."

DREAM GROUP: Loop Dreams is the name of the first initiative being spearheaded by the Kanye West Foundation. The artist/producer's organization launches Feb. 10, the one-year anniversary of the release of his album "The College Dropout."

As part of its goal to reduce dropout rates, Loop Dreams will give at-risk students the chance to learn how to compose and produce music in tandem with improving their academic performance.
Industry Debates Venezuelan Content Law

BY LEILA COBO

The Latin music industry is wary observing the implementation of a new Venezuelan law that stringently regulates the music content that broadcasters can air.

Article 14 of the Law for Social Responsibility in Radio and Television, approved by the Venezuelan Congress in December, states that at least 50% of all music programming for radio or TV must come from Venezuelan “musical works.”

In addition, at least 50% of all Venezuelan programming must fall under the category of traditional Venezuelan music.

Stations must also dedicate at least another 10% of their programming to authors or artists from Latin America or the Caribbean.

The law went into effect in January. The nationalist nature of the programming guidelines is similar to laws in place in Canada and France. It is also reminiscent of the so-called “1 x 1” decree enacted in Venezuela in the 1980s, which stipulated that radio stations had to play one track by a Venezuelan artist for each track played by a foreign act.

The difference, critics say, is that back then, the intention was to revive the local music industry. This time around, they say, President Hugo Chávez is aiming to control media content for political reasons.

“We think [the law] is in conflict with free commerce,” says Raúl Vázquez, the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry’s regional director for Latin America. “They should let the media decide what to play based on market forces.”

Juan Luis Marturet, director of legal and business affairs for IFPI Latin America, adds, “On its own, it wouldn’t be negative, if it weren’t part of an authoritarian government system.”

Indeed, what music to play or not to play is a minuscule part of the extensive and complex law, which regulates all aspects of the media, to the degree that critics are openly calling it the “gag law.”

The law’s objective, as stated in its opening article, is to establish “social responsibility” in the diffusion and reception of messages through radio and TV, and to foster “Democratic equilibrium” and “promote social justice.”

As far as music is concerned, Venezuelan executives agree that fostering national acts and authors is not a bad thing.

“I think 50-50 is a little bit exaggerated,” says Miguel Sierralta, founder of download site emusicultino.com and manager of Venezuelan group Los Hidalgo, which is receiving local airplay of its track “Café.” “But it benefits local talent, because it forces radio to program artists that they would perhaps not program otherwise.”

Sierralta, like many other Venezuelan executives, lived through the “1 x 1” decree and cites it as the driving force in the development of many Venezuelan artists who would become international stars, including Franco De Vita, Ilan Chester and Ricardo Montaner.

“From a purely artistic point of view, the balance is initially positive,” says Jose Antonio Asuaje, U.S. director of Venezuelan indie label Latin World Entertainment, whose artists dominate the country’s radio charts.

“There has always been national talent that was outstanding but had little support.”

The new law, Asuaje says, will force labels and radio stations to seek local talent, just as the previous one did 20 years before.

INDUSTRY DROP-OFF

While labels like Latin World are devoted entirely to Venezuelan artists, very few local acts have been picked up by multinationals in recent years.

In fact, the Venezuelan music industry is in dire straits.

According to the IFPI, there were 6.5 million units sold in Venezuela in 2000, the year Chávez came into power. By 2003, that number had plummeted to 700,000, thanks to Venezuela’s deep economic crisis. There was a rebound in 2004, and although final numbers aren’t yet available, the IFPI calculates that the year-end count will stand at 1.5 million units.

Major labels including Sony and Universal that once had thriving offices in Venezuela have reorganized those units, which now report to their Columbian offices. Moreover, piracy in Venezuela is rampant, and local repertoire, which in 1998 accounted for 68% of sales, had shrunk to 25% in 2002.

“The ‘1 x 1’ worked in Venezuela at a time when piracy levels were lower,” Marturet says. “You can do that if you have an industry and a local catalog that can respond to a quota. The Venezuelan industry now needs fiscal incentives and a national anti-piracy campaign. This doesn’t help right now.”

For labels like Latin World, it’s business as usual.

“Really, for us, it makes no difference,” promotion director Hving Flores says. “Radio here is the same as radio anywhere. They play what’s good. As a music executive, I refuse to believe that artists like Franco De Vita or Jordino became popular because of a decree. I think they were played because they were good.”

Daddy Yankee’s ‘Gasolina’ Fires Up The Charts

What exactly is up with Daddy Yankee? His album, “Barrio Fino” (El Corte VI), debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart last summer, a position it kept for one week.

Now, seven months later, “Barrio Fino” has notched its eighth consecutive week at No. 1 on the same chart. A few weeks ago that position could have been attributed to the holiday sales surge, but at this point there’s obviously something else going on.

That something is “Gasolina,” the Daddy Yankee single that impacted radio in October.

It started climbing the mainstream charts in December and now appears on multiple charts this issue.

On the Latin end, “Gasolina” is No. 18 on Hot Latin Tracks and No. 4 on the Latin Tropical Airplay chart, where Daddy Yankee (aka Raymond Ayala) has two other tracks as well.

The surprise, however, is the single’s mainstream chart activity.

On The Billboard Hot 100, “Gasolina” peaked at No. 32 and is now No. 42. On Hot 100 Airplay, it’s No. 37. The track is on the airplay charts for rhythmic top 40 (No. 12), rap (No. 15), top 50 (No. 44), and No. 45 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks.

Once again a reggaeton song has jumped to the top of my research so much that, yes, I have to spin it,” says Kid Curry, PD of rhythmic top 40 WPKS (Power 90) Miami. Curry cites last year’s Ivy Queen release “Yo Quiero Bailar” as “the last reggaeton super-hit.”

To this day, “Gasolina” is among Curry’s top five requested tracks. Everyone I know who has any Latin audience is playing the song,” says Curry, who is favoring the original Spanish-language version over the remix, which features Lil Jon and Pitbull.

Interest in the song has been fueled by Daddy Yankee’s collaboration with N.O.R.E. on “Oye Mi Canto.”

“The artist is just like Jay-Z at our station. He’s a core artist for us,” says Jill Strada, assistant PD at WPYO (Power 95.3 FM) Orlando, Fla. The station has been playing “Gasolina” since September.

The artist’s publicist, Mayna Nevarez, credits such key TV programs as Univision’s “Don Francisco Presenta” for spurring sales.

A PITBULL DEAL: BMG Music Publishing’s Miami office has signed rapper Pitbull to his first contract. The deal covers the artist’s debut album, “M.I.A.M.I.,” which peaked at No. 14 on The Billboard 200, as well as songs used in the film “2 Fast 2 Furious.”

According to BMG Music Publishing U.S., Latin VP Rafael Artero, Pitbull is planning to release a Spanish-language album aimed solely at the Latin marketplace.

Also signed to BMG is singer/songwriter Serrallde and guitarist Sergio Valin from Mexican rock group Mana. Valin’s catalog includes tracks from the band’s last studio album, “Revolución de Amor” (Warner), as well as tracks on its upcoming release.

In other publishing news, Peermusic has inked deals with alternative group Plastilina Mosh, Martha Gonzalez and Jose Negroni of Negroni’s Trio.

COMINGS AND GOINGS: Diana Rodriguez has been appointed EMI regional marketing director for Latin America, in charge of Spanish-speaking artists. She replaces Magda Mena. Rodriguez was previously marketing director for EMI Colombia. She is now based in Miami. Jorge Camaraza has left his post as senior product manager at EMI Latin USA to join his family’s business.

No word yet on a replacement. Aida Linares has been appointed Latin director of concert promotion firm NVR Productions. Linares is based in Hallandale Beach, Fla., and replaces Malaica Valiente, who is now director of entertainment for SSEC Concerts in Davie, Fla. The newly created event promotion/company also owns several radio stations ... Eddie Orjuela has been named creative consultant for BMG Music Publishing U.S. Latin. Orjuela also manages singer/songwriter Serrallde.
The Billboard Latin Music Conference has become the “must attend” event to catch up with the movers and shakers of the Latin entertainment world that gather around a most prestigious brand, very interesting and important panelists and great music, of course!“

Gabriel Abaroa
President
Latin Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences

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### Regional Mexican Airplay

**RANK** | **ARTIST** | **LABEL** | **TITLE** | **WEEKS AT NUMBER 1**
---|---|---|---|---
1 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
2 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
3 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
4 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
5 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
6 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
7 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
8 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
9 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
10 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1

### Tropical Airplay

**RANK** | **ARTIST** | **LABEL** | **TITLE** | **WEEKS AT NUMBER 1**
---|---|---|---|---
1 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
2 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
3 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
4 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
5 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
6 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
7 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
8 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
9 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
10 | **Template** | **DISA** | **TemplateName** | 1
Nothing Murky In Murk Label Revival

Pioneering house music duo Murk will relaunch its Murk Recordings label in March. The move coincides with the introduction of new imprint Murk Classics, which will spotlight remixes of vintage tracks from the parent label’s revered vaults.

To celebrate both labels, Murk masterminds Oscar Gaetan and Ralph Falcon—who collectively record under numerous aliases—will host a March 26 party at the Amika club in Miami. Guest DJ for the evening is Sandor Kleinenberg, who is committed to remix a track for Murk Classics.

According to Gaetan, there are many reasons for the relaunch and new label. “There is resurgence in licensing requests for the older songs,” he tells Billboard. “Also, most and more DJs are playing the older stuff.”

Gaetan credits this to the original songs’ raw, stripped-down production, along with the fact that they were classics. “There is a lack of songs on today’s dancefloors,” he says.

True. Play a song like the Fog’s “I Will Remember You,” or Liberty City’s “Some Lovin’” (both Murk productions) in a club today and watch the energy in the room shift dramatically—in a positive way.

And because DJs have been expressing an interest in remixing such classic material, “it only made sense for us to start Murk Classics,” Gaetan explains.

In the coming months, Murk Classics will include Steve Lawler and Desyn Masiello remixes of Funky Green Dogs’ “Reach for Me” and Deep Dish re-rubs of “Release Myself” by Coral Way.

Chiefs, among others. Upcoming releases from Murk Recordings include a single-still-fit track from Murk that will arrive just in time for the Winter Music Conference in March.

This will be one of many new productions from Murk, Gaetan assures. “Ralph and I have been working on a lot of new material—most of which will be released on our own label,” he notes. In this way, he adds, “we remain in complete control of our music.”

In the midst of all this activity, Gaetan remains a weekly resident DJ at Space, while Falcon maintains his weekly residency at Crobar. Both clubs are in Miami and both residencies are, ironically enough, on Saturday nights. Murk, the duo, began its monthly residency at Crobar in New York last month.

CHERISHED BEGINNING: Last year, Plumpmet scored a top five Hot Dance Club Play and a top 10 Hot Dance Radio Airplay hit with an energized, spirited cover of Sade’s “Cherish the Day.”

Signed to Big 3 Records by way of a production deal with Eric “DJ X” Muniz and Xquizit Records & Productions, Plumpmet is putting the finishing touches on its debut album. Scheduled for an April release, the full-length will be preceded by the single “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover,” a cover of Paul Simon’s mid-’70s chart-topper. With “50 Ways,” Plumpmet may very well enjoy its third club radio hit (with “Damaged” being its first in 2001).

MUSICAL SHOES: Rodomal Featur-
ing Nicinha’s “Musica Feliz” will be heard in the 20th Century Fox movie “In Her Shoes.” Due in cinemas April 8, the film stars Toni Colette, Shirley MacLaine and Cameron Diaz.

“Musica Feliz,” pulled from the catalog of Ben Watt’s British label Buzzyz’Fly—was placed in the film by Miguel Govea Jr. and Celine Paliau of synchronization rights firm the Licensing Team.
Womack's Back, And Back To Her Roots

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NAVISHE—After a three-year break between albums, Lee Ann Womack is back with a new set that has Music Row buzzing.

Returning full circle to her country roots, “There’s More Where That Came From” (due Feb. 8 from MCA Nashville) showcases the Texas-born singer serving up a collection of tunes reminiscent of Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette.

In fact, those icons helped shape Womack’s vision for the new record. “In my office I have these framed albums of [Loretta, Tammy, Dolly, Connie Smith and] Jessi Colter all hanging on my wall,” Womack says.

She will be able to add her own framed album to her collection as MCA is issuing the set on vinyl as well as CD, and the cover has a very retro look.

But most important, the music could take its place alongside any of country music’s timeless classics. It finds Womack wrapping her sweet, buttery vocals around a strong collection of songs penned by Don Schlitz, Brett James, Sonny Throckmorton and Kostas, among others.

She debuted the album’s songs in front of an industry crowd Jan. 20 at Nashville’s Ryman Auditorium to an enthusiastic response.

CAUGHT IN THE TURMOIL

Womack admits to being a little frustrated with the music business prior to recording this album. “I just didn’t know really what to do. I didn’t know what direction to go,” she says.

“At the time there was a lot of label turmoil,” says Womack, who started her career on the now-defunct Decca label. “They kept downsizing and regrouping, so I didn’t know what would happen to a record if I did turn one in, because every time I’ve turned in a record, the label has shut down. So, I just decided to lay low.”

Womack’s self-titled debut on Decca peaked at No. 9 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart and was certified platinum. Her sophomore effort, “Some Things I Know,” arrived while Decca was closing and some of its roster—including Womack—was being folded into MCA. It peaked at No. 20 and was certified gold.

Womack’s third album, “I Hope You Dance,” was a huge success, selling 2.6 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. But the follow-up, “Something Worth Leaving Behind,” came out as MCA and Mercury were being merged into Universal Music Group. Nashville and sold only 287,000 units.

Womack says those situations taught her to go with the flow and wait for her next opportunity. She began working on the new album when her husband, producer Frank Liddell, gave her a song that spurred her creative juices.

“Frank brought home ‘I May Hate Myself in the Morning.’ It was almost like the song said, ‘Just go with me, this is the direction we need to go,”’ she says of tune, which became the album’s first single. It is No. 15 on the Hot Country Singles & Tracks chart this issue. “With every record I usually will find one song as the anchor and build the record around it. That was the song for this record that I started with, and I [looked] for material that fit with that.”

Initial response from country radio has been enthusiastic.

“I love the new single. It’s got a throwback sound,” KZLA Los Angeles operations manager R.J. Curtis says. “It reminds me of something we might have heard in the ‘70s—fiddle driven, traditional approach, understated vocal.”

Curtis says the new album will be somewhat of a “reintroduction project” for Womack. “She had one of the most famous songs of the last 10 years with ‘I Hope You Dance’, but the song is bigger than the artist. She has been operating below the radar, so she’ll have to start over in some respects,” he says.

A BLESSING AND A CURSE

Womack says the success of “I Hope You Dance” was a “double-edged sword...if you sell millions of records, the label wants and expects you to come back and do it again. So there is pressure.”

She admits that pressure caused her to really overthink that massive hit’s follow-up album. “I thought so much, harder than I’ve ever worked before on a record on ‘Something Worth Leaving Behind,’ and it just didn’t work,” Womack says. “I promised myself with this record I wouldn’t think at all. I would just totally follow my heart and not my head.”

Byron Gallimore produced “There’s More Where That Came From” (except for one cut by Greg Droman). The album features the kind of traditional country Womack grew up listening to in Texas. She even includes a bonus track, “Just Someone I Used to Know,” that was previously cut by Parton and Porter Wagner and by George Jones.

One of the most talked-about cuts is “Stubborn (Psalm 151),” penned by James and Schilt. When he began listening to the demo, Womack says, “by the middle of it, I was just beside myself, I thought this was the best song I’ve ever heard.” She says other artists also wanted to cut it and “a Music Row tug of war” ensued, with Womack emerging as the victor.

In marketing the album, UMG Nashville senior VP of sales and marketing Ben Kline says he plans to remind consumers “why Lee Ann Womack has sold millions of albums and remind them why she is regarded as one of the best singers of country music in this town.”

The thrust of the campaign has been to get people listening to the music and get word-of-mouth going. There will be syndicated radio specials and win-it-before-you-can-buy-it contests at radio.

“Even though you are talking about a multi-platinum artist, there’s almost a grassroots approach,” Kline says, adding that the vinyl promotional copies successfully caught the industry’s attention.

Kline says retailers have complained about labels waiting to issue major releases in the fourth quarter, which is why MCA chose the Feb. 8 release date. “It’s Valentine’s week. I can’t think of a record or an artist from an exposure standpoint who would benefit more from having a record come out that week,” he says.

“We are going to be everywhere. You are going to trip over the record at your Wal-Marts, Targets [and] Kmart’s,” Kline adds. “We are treating it like the superstar release that it is.”

Womack is booked by Buddy Lee Attractions and managed by Ev Woolsey.

NAB Reminder: You Heard It First On The Radio

Brad Paisley, LeAnn Rimes and Lee Ann Womack are lending their voices to the National Assn. of Broadcasters’ “Radio, You Hear It Here First” campaign.

Each has recorded radio testimonials listing career accomplishments that happened after their music was first heard on the radio. In her spot, Womack says, “It’s one of the best moments in an artist’s life to hear your record on the radio for the first time.”

The ads are airing nationwide as part of the radio industry’s largest organized effort to tout its own strengths. The intent is to stem audience erosion from such rivals as iPods, videogames and DVDs, as well as satellite radio.

The country stars join artists from other genres who have recorded similar announcements. They include Alicia Keys, Ashanti, Avril Lavigne, Hoobastank, Ludacris and Nelly.

The ads, developed by New York advertising firm DeVito-Verdi, will continue to air for several months.

Most of the major radio groups, including Clear Channel, Infinity, Cumulus, Emmis and Citadel, are providing free airtime. The campaign also includes print and Internet ads.

ON THE ROW: Johnny Rose has exited Universal Music Group Nashville, where he was VP of marketing. A replacement has not been named. Rose was head of marketing at DreamWorks Records in Nashville until that label merged with UMG in May 2003.

Gator Michaels is promoted from national director of promotion to the newly created position of VP of field promotion at Warner Bros. Nashville. He joined the company in 2002 after being VP of promotion at Dreamcatcher Records in Nashville.

Tammy Raguza has exited Capitol Records Nashville, where she was manager of marketing and product development. She plans to pursue opportunities in independent music marketing, and will continue to air for several months.

RCA Label Group has hired former Premiere Radio Networks senior director of programing Maurice Miner for a newly created independent consulting role. A company release says his job will be to “create focused imaging of the entire roster of RLG artists.”

FANNING THE FLAMES: Comedian Jeff Foxworthy has been tapped to host the 2005 CMT Music Awards, which have been set for April 11 in Nashville. Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, Big & Rich and Gretchen Wilson are the first announced performers.

The live program, which formerly sported the lengthy and confusing title CMT Flame Worthy Video Music Awards, will be telecast on CMT from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. EST from the Gaylord Entertainment Center. The winners are determined by votes cast by fans and CMT viewers. Tickets go on sale Feb. 19.

SIGNINGS: FamousMusic Nashville has signed hit country and pop songwriter/producer Steve Bogard to a long-term, global publishing deal. Bogard’s hits include George Strait’s “Carried Away” and “Carrying Your Love With Me” and Rascal Flatts’ “Prayin’ for Daylight.” As a producer, his credits include Michelle Wright and Brad Cotter.

ENDORSEMENTS ABOUND: Mercury artist Julie Roberts has been selected as the face and voice of a new advertising campaign for “Good Morning America.”

The “Good to Go” campaign for the ABC show kicked off Jan. 27.

In addition to singing the theme song, Roberts is featured in on-air promos, print advertisements and movie theater promotions.

In other endorsement news, Tim McGraw recently shot a TV commercial in Los Angeles with duet partner Nelly for McGraw’s long-time tour sponsor, Bud Light.

Terri Clark has partnered with a group of regional Dodge dealers and will star in a yearlong run of TV, radio and print advertisements for the “Better in a Dodge” campaign. The ads will run in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Tennessee.
### Top Country Albums

#### Last Week's Top 10

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Original Label</th>
<th>Print</th>
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<td>Capitol</td>
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<td>FEBRUARY 12, 2005</td>
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<td>MCA Nashville</td>
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<td>Mercury</td>
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<td>Shaken Not Stirred</td>
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#### Greatest Gainer

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<td>LEE ANN WOMACK</td>
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#### Billboard

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- Billboard uses Nielsen SoundScan data, which is based on retail sales of albums and singles in the United States, and is the leading source of music market information.
- Nielsen SoundScan's Top Country Albums chart is calculated based on sales data provided by retail stores and is a reflection of the most popular albums in the country music genre.
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**HOT SHOT DEBUT / GREATEST GAINER**

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**ALBUMS**

**POP**

- **ALTRA**
  **Different Days**
  **PRODUCER:** Joshua Eustis
  **Heady O74**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  It is apropos that Altra is in close alphabetical proximity to Laila Puna and Lamb in the record bins. With electro-pop and elements of moody, brooding rock, “Different Days” is epic in sound and ethereal in disposition. Soundtracks “So Surprise” and “It Follows Me Around” take great care to meld their most-produces noises with their raw ones to make big, sweeping crescendos and, with Lindsay Anderson and Joseph Costa sharing vocal duties, there’s a thriving balance of sweet and sour throughout. Altra is unfazed to experiment with its beats on many songs, but sometimes such flourishes seem to be an afterthought. Still, “Different Days” manages to be sleepy without being lazy and sad without being depressing. Altra has proved it grows wise with each release. —**KH**

- **ANUBIAN LIGHTS**
  **Phantoscope**
  **PHONETRICS:** Anubian Lights
  **Rhythmbox / Entertainment RBE-00001**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  On this, Anubian Lights’ second album and first for Nora Hendry’s Rhythmbox label, the Los-Angeles-based trio makes music that flits between electronic and musical styles. It’s rock and new wave dance and electronic, punk and funk. Fans of the Ze record label will find much to admire here. A track like “Way Gone Man” is a mix of Wat (Not Wasi), Material and Adele Bertie with whom “Build Me a Bridge” was a dancefloor hit in the early ’90s. In fact, the voice on the track belongs to Bertie, who joined Anubian Lights a few years ago. Formerly a member of the Bloods and James Chance & the Contortions, Bertie has yet to make a bad tune. “Windy Strings” being no exception. —**MP**

- **MATT POND PA**
  **Winter Songs**
  **PRODUCER:** Louie Lino
  **MELODICTS**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  With the history of serious, frosty songwriting, it is only fitting that new-folk act Matt Pond PA comes right out and makes a record about the coldest season of the year. “Winter Songs,” a collection of singles and covers, is, surprisingly, one of the act’s sunniest yet. Lead singer-songwriter and namesake Pond pumps out “Snow Day,” an enchanting pop gem, harking back into an insular rendition of Neil Young’s “Winterlong.” The remainder of this seven-song set trots evenly down the same path, topping off loud, frenzied workouts of Neutral Milk Hotel’s “In the Aeroplane Over the Sea,” sounding like the original had been plunked to the bottom of an aquarium. Even with more than seven years of label-hopping and the generally subdued nature of its output, Matt Pond PA has yet to make a bad tune. “Winter Songs” being no exception. —**MP**

**ESSENTIAL REVIEWS**

- **3 DOORS DOWN**
  **Seventeen Days**
  **PRODUCER:** Johnny K
  **Republic/Universal B0004018**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Feb. 5
  Written in a spirited 17 days, 3 Doors Down’s aptly titled third album suffers from not rush delivery. Indeed, the record seems to thrive on music energetic and surging creativity, particularly on such jackhammer-like cuts as “Right Where I Belong” and killer power ballads like “Behind Those Eyes.” But this is more than a Dixie rock bombast, good that as part of the 3DO game is; check out the self-assured vocals of “Bigger Than Me.” Comparisons to Skynyrd are inevitable (and likely welcomed): Frontman Brad Arnold owns a healthy dose of the late Ronnie Van Zant’s grit, personality and menace. Similarly, the goosebump-inducing “Landing in London” is a new-millennium “Turn The Page,” even boasting a Bob Seger cameo. But even with a healthy respect for heritage, 3DO is a thoroughly modern American band, and a damn good one. —**RW**

- **NANCY GRIFFITH**
  **Honeymoon**
  **PRODUCERS:** Nancy Griffith, Pat McInerney
  **New Door/UME B0003669**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Feb. 8
  With the testing of new tunes since 2001, singer-songwriter Nancy Griffith returns in fine form with the graceful, quasi-ballad “Ten Thousand Days,” a collection of story songs with an underlying anti-war theme. It’s her 15th studio album of literate lyrics and indelible melodies rendered with her nicely reminiscent of late folk songstress Kate Wolf. There are the obvious p ossible sentiments (the sweaty pop opening track “Simple Life” and the sober “Big Blue Ball of War” as well as Vietnam War reminders (“Heart of Indochine” and “Old Hanoi”). While Griffith plays the country card on several tunes, she also shows her range, from her jazz-voiced “Beautiful” (with clarinet support and an uncharacteristic scat vocal) with Steve Grogan’s buoyant shoop-shoop pop pitty “I Love This Town” with Jimmy Buffett on guest vocals.—**DO**

- **LEANN RIMES**
  **This Woman**
  **PRODUCER:** Dann Huff
  **Curb D2-78859**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  LeAnn Rimes’ flip-flop from country to pop and back again may leave fans somewhat confused, but the songs is recent move to Nashville and hook up with producer Dann Huff seem to have resulted in a fairly solid effort to rekindle her roots. Country radio has rewarded the good intentions with Rimes’ first top 10 at the format in years. “Nothin’ Bout Love Makes Sense.” For sure, she remains in peak form vocally, demonstrating an ever-evolving maturity in style and emotion. But unfortunately, except for the affecting ballad “The Weight of Love” and barroom loop of “I Got It Bad,” much of the material here just doesn’t measure up to Rimes’ A-level talent. In an era where consumers have the choice to download only the best tracks from an album, that leaves “This Woman” somewhat lackluster. It is indeed always a pleasure to hear from Rimes, but three great tracks out of 12 doesn’t cut it in 2005. —**CT**

- **CHRISTIAN**
  **GRAND PRIZE IDENTITY**
  **PRODUCERS:** Scott Pendage, Luke Caldwell
  **Apostrophe ARG0091**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  As a result of the first song on Jaci Velasquez’s new label (Apostrophe), Grand Prize may get a little extra attention out of the box because of Caleb’s new label. Caleb doesn’t take long for these Idaho-based rockers to carve out their own identity. Grand Prize members Luke Caldwell, Steven Harder, Nolan Mather and Tony Caruso have crafted a strong album, filled with memorable melodies and lyrics that celebrate their faith without using clichés. Vibrant worship songs (“Like I Never Did,” “I’m Waiting”) fit alongside gentler offerings like “You Are Wonderful.” The anthemic “Break Me,” with its vulnerable, aching lyric, is one of the album’s highlights. The foursome honed its skills at Calgary Chapel churches, which apparently helped each member find his muse.—**DEP**

- **JAZZ**
  **CONJUNTO PRIMAVERA**
  **Hoy Como Ayer**
  **PRODUCER:** Jesús Guillén Fonovisa 0083 51614
  **RELEASE DATE:** Feb. 1
  Conjunto Primavera has long held itself apart from other romantic norteño groups by virtue of the quite extraordinary voice of lead singer Tony Meléndez. On the veteran group’s latest, he lets it rip in the opening, name-sake ballad. But ironically, while its old-fashioned arrangements may make it a radio favorite, it is not the best track on the album—because of said arrangements. Far more distinctive is “Moro Negro,” a ranchera with clever lyrics and rippling accordion riffs, or “Aun Sigue Siendo Mi Año,” a more uptempo cumbia that still showcases Meléndez’s multi-octave voice. These songs, far more than right-ahead, run-of-the-mill romance, are the happy medium that ultimately make this album that rises far above the normal romantic norteño fare. It’s rare to find this caliber of voice in this genre of music. Enjoy.—**LC**

- **KEVIN MAYOHONY**
  **Big Band**
  **PRODUCERS:** various
  **Zebra/Mahogany Jazz/Lightyear Entertainment S4675**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  Kevin Mahogany is unquestionably one of today’s most exciting and music ally adept jazz vocalists. His latest project, “Big Band,” is, as the title suggests, a foray into the big band groove, and it’s a mighty successful one. Mahogany worked with the Frank Mantooth Jazz Orchestra, Michael McGraw & the Kansas City Boulevard Big Band and the Big City Swing Big Band to pull together 10 very cool tracks. The emphasis is on such classy tunes as Thelonious Monk’s “Ruby, My Dear” and Duke Ellington’s “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore.” Mahogany’s swings from first bar to last, and along the way several fine instrumental solos step up, including Ramsey Lewis, Leslie West, Rick Park, Pat LaBarbera, Roy Hargrove and Paul Mc Kee. “Big Band” is a wildly successful meeting of the minds, and it has an implicit message for jazz professionals: Remember that the big band has been greatly exag gerated. Racked in the United States by WEA. —**PVF**

**GOSPEL**

- **ANTHONY EDWARDS**
  **Born To Praise**
  **PRODUCER:** Anthony Edwards
  **Born To Praise 6028**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 11
  Anthony Edwards—a Las Vegas-based producer/songwriter who also is a music arranger—bows with a collection of strong praise and worship originals. They are performed by an ensemble of first-rate Vegas players and singers, showing a wealth of talent devoted to a genre seldom associated with their home turf. With a collection of first-rate producers and conductor, Edwards displays equal comfort and strength in a range of genres that covers gospel, R&B, rock and pop, each framed by a different and sought-after solo vocalist. Standouts include the modern R&B work “Celebrate” and the tender ballad “A Song For You.” The CD also includes printable sheet music of each song. This is a most promising and inspired effort, worthy and ready to play on a national stage. For info, contact 972-331-2538. —**GE**

**BLUES**

- **HUBERT SUMLIN**
  **About Them Shoes**
  **PRODUCERS:** Rob Fraboni, Ben Elliott
  **Tone Cool/Artsin 51609**
  **RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25
  Several years after recording sessions began, longtime Howlin’ Wolf guitarist Sumlin, 68, finally released this album, featuring a slew of high-profile guests, finally (Continued on next page)
appears. “About Them Shoes” is worth the wait. Unlike many contemporary blues releases, this collection of Muddy Waters and Willie Dixon songs (with one Sunnun composition) sounds and feels strikingly retro, as if recorded decades earlier. Guests include Keith Richard, Eric Clapton, Leon Russell, Bob Margolin and James Cotton contribute sincere, powerful accompaniment, particularly on “Still a Fool,” featuring Clapton’s slide guitar, and singing vocals by Richards; the lazy, Clapton-led “Long Distance Call”; and the Nathaniel Alterine-penned “Mammy—all-Sunum, who plays lead guitar throughout, is surrounded by a group that would make Muddy and Wolf proud. The passion these bluesmen inspired is repaid with an authentic and appropriately rauous response. —CW

**SONNY LANDRETH**

Grant Street

**PRODUCERS:** Sonny Landreth, R.S. Field, Tony Maserati

**Sugar Hill 3994**

**RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25

To view slide guitar singer Sonny Landreth as he approaches his first album in 15 years, the Hittman sideman totally misses Landreth’s capabilities. He is every bit as innovative and inspiring a guitarist as Hatt, who is a songwriter. Nothing could demonstrate that better than this sweaty, live tour of force recorded last April at Lafayette, LA., water holes Grand Street. The set features Landreth with his own side-men, David Ranson on bass and Kelby Blondie on drums. With baby pulse and breathes like a living thing, with Landreth’s tenor and uniquely perfected on treats the like of who makes a decision in a flash. This album’s the line-up of “Broken Hearted Road,” boggle hard on “Gone Pecan,” strut their blues stuff on “Wind in Denver,” then go Cajun on “U.S. Zydeco Samba.” Landreth’s flexible network is impressive on “Pedal to the Metal” and the funky “Congo Square.” —RW

**VITAL REISSUES**

**NAT**“KING” COLE

The World of Nat King Cole

**PRODUCERS:** various

**Capitol 72438-7412**

**RELEASE DATE:** Jan. 25

This 28-song compilation is being released to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Nat King Cole’s passing, and there could hardly be a more appropriate way to remember this multi-talented artist. A Cole document-ary of the same title will be released in the spring as a companion to this album. The memorable performances include Cole putting his silky stamp on “Stardust,” “Nature Boy,” “Route 66,” “Mona Lisa,” “Walkin’ My Baby Back Home,” “Let’s Do the Twist,” “Billboard and Dance,” “Unforgettable,” “Almost Like Being in Love” and “Send for Me.” Cole also included the 1931 duet “Unforgettable,” where together Cole and his daughter Natalie. The World of Nat King Cole” features tours his feet with his trio—which remind us of his piano virtuosity—as well as orchestral pieces. Four decades after Cole’s death, lis-
EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE
PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

RECORD COMPANIES: Toshiba-EMI in Tokyo promotes Masaaki Saito to chairman/CEO and Makoto Shioya to vice chairman. It also names Shoji Doyama president. Saito was president, Shioya was managing director/CEO, and Doyama was executive VP at BMG Funhouse.
Virgin Records in New York appoints Adam Lowenberg senior VP of marketing. He was VP of marketing at Arista/J Records.
Koch Records in New York promotes Giovanna Melchiorre to VP of media relations. She was senior director of media relations.
INO Records in Nashville elevates Dan Michaels to VP of promotions and Chris Erlanson to director of marketing operations. It also names John van der Veen director of retail sales. Michaels was director of promotions, Erlanson was director of sales and marketing, and van der Veen was a music buyer at Family Christian Stores.
Sony BMG Philippines in Manila names Rudy Tee managing director. He held the same title at BMG Records Philippines.
Razor & Tie Records in New York appoints Kurt Steffek VP of promotion. He was national senior director of modern rock/rock promotion at Reprise Records.
Equity Music Group in Nashville appoints Brad Helton Southwest regional promotion manager, Kristen Strean promotion coordinator, Los Angeles-based Gary Greenberg West Coast regional promotion manager and Atlanta-based Jeff Davis Southeast regional promotion manager.
Helton was a promotion executive at Lofoten Creek Records, Strean was a promotion assistant at Clear Channel Radio, Greenberg was director of West Coast promotion at Koch Records, and Davis was regional director of promotion at Epic/Sony.

DISTRIBUTION: DNL Distribution in Miami appoints Juan Carlos "JC" Gonzales national director of sales. He was head of national sales at Universal Music Latino.

PRO AUDIO: Starstruck Studios in Nashville appoints Janet Leese studio manager. She was studio manager at Sound Kitchen.

BOOKING AGENCIES: AM Only in Brooklyn, N.Y., appoints Phil Engenthal agent. He was an agent at Fantasma Tours International.

RADIO: Jefferson-Pilot Radio in Greensboro, N.C., promotes Don Benson to president. He was senior VP of operations and programming. Unification Radio in Dallas names Joshua Rahn VP of integrated marketing solutions. He was senior director at Sony Music Integrated Marketing Services.
Clear Channel Radio uppers Sacramento, Calif.-based Jeffrey Holden to regional VP and Phoenix-based Alan Sledge to VP of Clear Channel Country. Holden was director of sales, and Sledge remains director of programming operations for CCR's Phoenix operations.
Rhythmic top 40 KYLD San Francisco taps Dennis Martinez as PD. He was operations manager/PD at rhythmic top 40 KXOL Monterey, Calif.
Country KQFC Boise, Idaho, names Kevin Anderson PD. He was PD at country WSTH Columbus, Ga. Mainstream top 40 WDWF Dayton, Ohio, appoints Wes McCann PD. He was afternoon host at mainstream top 40 WLKX Lexington, Ky. Country KBKO Bakerfield, Calif., taps Lee Logan as PD. He was PD at country WSM-FM Nashville.

RELATED FIELDS: NBC Universal Television in Burbank, Calif., ups Martha Hanrahan to senior VP of music services. She was VP of music services.

Hot Fashion ... DIA NA ROSS AND M.A.C
M.A.C Cosmetics global president John Demsey and Diana Ross are shown at a Jan. 20 appearance at the M.A.C store in West Hollywood, Calif., to promote the new Beauty Icon cosmetics line. M.A.C has named Ross as its 2005 Beauty Icon. M.A.C has also signed Latin singer Alejandro Guzman to a separate endorsement deal for its Sexistista lipstick brand.

In other music-meets-fashion news, Beyonce's fashion company, House of Dereon, has inked a licensing agreement with Tarrant Apparel Group to collaborate on design, manufacturing and distribution. ... Ricky Martin has signed on to be a spokesman for fashion retailer C&A ... Fat Joe and the Game have joined the list of celebrities who have designed Capture the Flag 59Fifty headwear for New Era Cap. Fat Joe's design hit retail Jan. 27, and the Game's will launch Feb. 24 ... Ex-Spice Girls member Victoria Beckham and her husband, David Beckham, have inked a deal with Coty to launch their own fragrance.

Fat Joe Hangs With J. Lo
Fat Joe and Jennifer Lopez are pictured on the streets of New York during the Jan. 15 video shoot for Lopez's next single, "Hold You Down." Fat Joe is a featured artist on the song, which is from Lopez's album "Rebirth," due March 1 on Epic Records. On Feb. 24, MTV will air a documentary special, "Jennifer Lopez: Beyond the Runaway," that will take a behind-the-scenes look at her Sweetface Fashion company. (Photo: Kevin Mazur/WireImage)

Now, Hear This ... ROBBERS ON HIGH STREET
Artists to Watch
New York quartet Robbers on High Street is a rock band with a kick. The group's 13-track album "Tree City," due Feb. 22 on Scratchie/New Line Records, mixes interesting instrumentation with lyrics that grow more introspective with each listen. Unlike a slew of similar but one-dimensional garage bands, each Robbers track offers a different sonic experience. "Japanese Girls," the first single, features heavy guitar-shrumbing and drums with a pop-oriented melody. Other highlights include "Beneath the Trees," a quirky tune about dealing with loneliness; "Robbers" with a catchy beat; and "A Quirky Tune About Dealing With Loneliness," with its fantastic keyboard melody, and "HudsonTubes," which convincingly conveys the feeling of loneliness. Robbers singer/guitarist/keyboarde Ben Trokan, guitarist/vocalist Steve Mercado, bassist Jeremy Phillips and drummer Tomer Dyan released an EP last March, "Time Lines," and spent most of 2004 on the road with the likes of Fountains of Wayne, Ambulance LTD, the Dears and Elephant. The single has received early play on Seattle public radio station KEXP, and Scratchie/New Line is promoting the song at college and noncommercial stations and at hot modem-rock radio before the album's release. The band is featured in Filter magazine's Top 5 Picks banner, which is on various music Web sites, and is part of a new music promotion on myspace.com.

Twenty Years Of Excellence
International Federation of the Phonographic Industry Belgium director Marcel Heymans, left, congratulates Billboard contributor Marc Maes during a Jan. 7 party in Antwerp. The event celebrated Maes' 20th anniversary as Billboard's Belgium correspondent. Several music executives and local artists attended the party.

JILL KIPNIS
The Oscars Add Luster To DVD Biz

BY JILL KIPNIS

LOS ANGELES—The Academy Awards season is a boon to the DVD industry.

Consumers are clamoring to buy nominated films on DVD as the Feb. 27 air date for the 77th annual show approaches. Home entertainment executives say past winners and nominees also garner attention.

“The there's a heated interest in Oscar films, particularly at this time of the year,” says George Feltenstein, senior VP of classic catalog for Warner Home Video.

Chris Anstey, national DVD manager for the Virgin Megastore chain, says that a moved-up Academy Awards telecast is extending the holiday buying period for DVDs. “We have yet to see a dip in sales after the holidays and before the awards that we have noticed in previous years,” he says. “Now the plateau continues from November to March.”

Dvd Oscar Campaigns

A number of studios are taking advantage of the buzz by launching Oscar DVD marketing campaigns.

Though most of this year's nominated films are still in theaters, a number of nominees will be flooding stores this month and next.

Buena Vista Home Entertainment nominees “The Incredibles” (best animated feature film, best original screenplay for Brad Bird) and “Finding Neverland” (best picture, best actor for Johnny Depp, best adapted screenplay for David Magee) will be in stores March 15 and March 22, respectively.

“Part of our strategy was to plan the release dates close to the Academy Awards,” says Lori MacPherson, VP of brand marketing for BVHE. “Since we work with long lead times, we’ve become experts on how to do multiple versions of packages.”

BVHE is creating stickers that call attention to the nominations, MacPherson says. “The studio is also highlighting the nominations in all advertising and publicity efforts for both projects.

New Line Home Entertainment will be incorporating Oscar nominations into the campaign for “Vera Drake,” which will bow March 29.

The company's executive VP of marketing, Matt Lasorsa, says the title's packaging will reflect its nominations (best actress for Imelda Staunton, best director and best original screenplay for Mike Leigh).

New Line’s “The Story of the Weeping Camel,” which was nominated for best documentary, is likely to overperform due to the Oscar accolade, Lasorsa says.

Though the title was released too late for an Oscar marketing campaign—it arrived Jan. 25, the day the nominations were announced—retailers are more likely to keep it on new-release shelves longer.

(Continued on page 45)

Retailers Chase Gaming Dollars

Added Floor Space Drives Sales

BY STEVE TRAIMAN

Retailers in all channels shared in a third straight $11 billion-plus year for video, portable and computer game sales and rentals in 2004.

Driven by software, which sold a record 248 million units for $7.3 billion, games have led to a continuing return on investment for music and video retailers that have given expanded floor space for the product.

NPD Group, which tracks sales at retail, compiled the year-end data.

The addition of a record $715 million from rentals, based on NPD/Rentrek figures, pushed total game software revenue past $8 billion for the first time, a 4% gain from 2003.

“This was one great year for software, which drove a lot of consumer purchases,” NPD senior analyst Richard Oh observes. Driven by the holiday introduction of Nintendo’s DS system, portable software sales topped $1 billion for the first time. “And with Sony's (PlayStation Portable) due in March, the portable segment is ready to explode.”

Oh adds.

Nine of the 10 best-selling video console and portable titles had complementary soundtracks that did well at retail and online. The top three were “Take II Interactive’s ‘Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas’ (5.1 million), Microsoft Games’ ‘Halo 2’ (4.2 million) and Electronic Arts’ ‘Medal of Honor: All Out War’ (4 million).

Many retailers contacted for this article felt the “Halo” effect last year.

“Games are a growth category for us,” Trans World Entertainment merchandising and marketing executive VP Fred Fox says. “The back half of the year was especially strong, and we significantly outperformed the industry in December, chasing short supplies of Nintendo DS and other hardware.”

(Continued on page 44)

Lions Gate Expands Family Division Role

BY JILL KIPNIS

LOS ANGELES—Lions Gate Entertainment has restructured its family entertainment division to expand beyond DVD into theatrical and TV projects.

The division formerly known as Family Home Entertainment will now be called Family Entertainment. Additionally, FHE head Glenn Ross has departed to pursue other interests after seven years with the division.

“We decided that changing the name was important to us because not only do we intend to grow the family business this year, but we intend to grow in the family theatrical business and the family television business,” LGE president Steve Beks says. “We expect to make announcements in both areas in the next several weeks.”

LGE’s family division is known for direct-to-video hits from such franchises as Barbie and Hot Wheels.

Ross’ duties will be split among three people.

Anne Parducci, formerly executive VP of marketing for LGE, has been promoted to the newly created position of executive VP in charge of Family Entertainment and marketing. She reports to Beeks in Los Angeles.

Executive VP Ken Katsumoto’s responsibilities have expanded to include development and acquisitions of family properties. He also handles business development and production for family properties.

Additionally, director of marketing Michael Rathaus has been promoted to VP of Family Entertainment.

Rathaus and Katsumoto will report to Parducci in Los Angeles.
Lumberjack Aims For Front Line With Mordam

Lumberjack Distribution completed its purchase of label group Mordam Records earlier this month, creating the Lumberjack Mordam Music Group. It was a deal nearly six months in the making, and one that Lumberjack owner Dirk Hemsath believes was necessary to turn his Toledo, Ohio-based company into a front-line distributor. Lumberjack has about five months left on its contract with New Hope, Minn.-based Navare to supply Lumberjack titles to major accounts. Hemsath has negotiated a buyout agreement that he can use when he is ready; payment to Navare will be based on the amount of time left on the contract.

Mordam will maintain its Sacramento, Calif., offices for the time being. It has one year left on its warehouse lease, and Hemsath says this will give him time to evaluate his new operation. There will be no layoffs and no changes to Mordam’s current label agreements for the foreseeable future.

“The Mordam staff was afraid we were going to shut down the facility,” Hemsath says. “That’s certainly not something we’re planning, but we’re not going to give any definite answers until the end of the year, when we can determine what will be best going forward.”

Mordam will operate as a boutique umbrella group under the parent company. Sales staffs will be combined, with a section of the department dedicated to penetrating larger chain accounts. The key component of the deal is a pick, pack and ship agreement with WEA. Hemsath will use the distribution arm of the Warner Music Group to supply the larger chain accounts and to help get their attention. Because the agreement is solely for fulfillment, WEA sales staff will not sell Lumberjack titles, and Hemsath says he does not intend to further link Lumberjack with Warner.

“A lot of people thought that, but there’s no ownership situation involved with our deal,” he says. The WEA arrangement was tacked onto a separate deal Hemsath made with Warner for his Doghouse Records label. “There’s no incentive for WEA to do a deal like this, because they don’t make any money off a pick, pack and ship service,” he explains. “I added this into my negotiations with the Doghouse deal, and I did the development deal because Doghouse has different needs, and I treat the companies separately.

“Every year we will choose a couple of bands to develop together,” Hemsath continues. “It works because whenever I had a band that sold 10,000 copies, I had to entertain all these major labels trying to buy them from me.”

Mordam founder Ruth Schwartz, who will remain a consultant with the company for six months, calls the WEA deal “brilliant.” She was tired of being shut out of major retail accounts and having to rely on subdistribution deals with larger companies.

“Now Dirk has to go out and open these accounts, but it’s a bold and brave thing that has to happen to these people,” Schwartz says. “We compete against the major-owned indie distributors, and we can’t be them. In order to compete with them, we have to break the glass ceiling.”

As for her plans after Mordam, Schwartz says she will take some time off before deciding on her next move.

For Lumberjack, it will be far from easy. Hemsath has essentially purchased a warehouse and a brand name. One reason Mordam has been revered in the indie community is that it signs no-term agreements; Mordam labels are basically free to go at any time, and many have recently done just that. In the past year, Polyvinyl Records, Suicide Squeeze, Troublemaker Unlimited and Dirtmap have left.

“They contract thing was a huge issue at first,” Hemsath says, adding that he was careful to handle the deal in a way that wouldn’t prompt other label clients to leave. “We put all our energy into talking to labels before-hand and letting Ruth talk to labels. Ultimately, we knew if we didn’t put up a good presentation, labels would leave.”

Lumberjack typically signs labels to long-term deals. “If a large Mordam label wants to stay with us [but] they don’t want a four-year deal, we’ll understand that,” Hemsath says. “When we bring on new labels, we’ll probably have some sort of different deal, and we’ll probably make it so it’s not so much an at-will situation.”

Still, getting the ear of large retailers is going to take more than adding a group of small indies, no matter how respected.

“Lumberjack and Mordam tend to lose labels once they get to several million dollars in sales,” Hemsath says. “This will bring us to the point where, in a year or so, we can bring some big labels back into the fold.”

“We’re the only independent distributor that can really service labels that have a 7-inch that they want to sell 1,000 units of and a release that they want to sell a couple hundred thousand units of.”

Games

Continued from page 43 throughout the season.”

About 80% of the 850 stores under TWE’s umbrella now carry games, including FYE, Strawberries, Spec’s, Warehouse and Coconuts. Fox is bullish on game soundtracks, noting that some stores with enlarged game formats “afford us more room to market music and games together.”

At Musicland, Patrick Ruhenk, division merchandise manager for videogames and computer software, reports that game departments were added in 300 outlets in 2004, with all 550 Sam Goody and Media Play stores now offering software, hardware and accessories.

“We’ve grown the space to accommodate new product launches like DS,” Ruhenk says, “and also focused on pre-selling top titles and used product trade-ins.” The chain has cross-promoted games and soundtrack CDs in weekly newspaper circulars and cross-marketed them in music.

At Hastings Entertainment, interactive gaming operations director Robert Oram says, “We completed expansion of the videogame footprint in approximately 50% of our 153 stores and have the majority of the remaining stores scheduled for a 2005 expansion.” The chain has seen strong increases in market share as a result.

“Essentially, before 2004, Blockbuster was only in the game rental business,” notes ThiBault de Chatellus, the company’s senior VP/games category GM. “But 2004 put us in the game-trading and the game rental business, and that’s a business we plan on continuing to grow.”

The branded Game Rush store-in-store concept was expanded to 450 of Blockbuster’s 4,500 U.S. outlets by year’s end, with more openings expected in 2005. “We’re determined to be a leading game destination,” de Chatellus emphasizes.

Circuit City spokesman Jim Babb says, “Videogames continue to be a product that our customers demand.” Game hardware and software products are prominently featured in all 625 of the chain’s stand-alone superstores and five mall outlets.

“Interactive entertainment is an exciting category, and hand-held games are generating a lot of excitement, with a great November launch for the Nintendo DS continuing into the new year,” Babb says. He sees more game soundtracks being cross-promoted in Circuit City’s weekly newspaper circulars, highlighting growing ties among movies, music and games.

At EB Games, marketing VP Paul Koulogeorge reports, “Strong 2004 results were achieved by our continued efforts to implement three key business initiatives: domestic strip-center expansion, growing our pre-played business and expanding internationally.”

The chain opened more than 400 stores last year (100 of them outside the United States) for a total of 1,981, with 1,465 in the United States. For the critical holiday period ending Jan. 1, 2005, total sales were up 22% to $660 million, and same-store sales were up 3.4%.

“The migration of games into music and video space reflects the fact that these traditional retailers recognize that they are a central part of the home entertainment market,” observes Doug Lowenstein, president of the Entertainment Software Assn., whose members account for 90% of industry sales. “This is especially true in our interactive entertainment industry’s record sales year.”
InMotion Flies With Altitones For Airport Retail

InMotion Pictures, the Jacksonville, Fla.-based chain that rents and sells portable electronics and movies, has purchased the Altitones music chain. The deal will create a $10 million company with 53 stores located mostly in U.S. airports.

InMotion co-founder Michael Freedman says the purchase will allow the company to “create a one-stop shopping experience for all forms of entertainment for people on the move.”

InMotion rents DVDs and portable DVD players to travelers, who return them to a store or via Federal Express. The Altitones purchase will allow both chains to offer a broader range of products, including movies, music, portable electronics, videogames and headsets. But it will apparently take several months to integrate the two chains. That process begins in April.

InMotion says it expects to create national, regional and local in-store promotions that leverage the 300 million people exposed to the brand annually.

Fifty of the 53 stores are in U.S. airports, two are in international airports, and one is in Grand Central Terminal in New York.

NEW TERM: Usually when a major label issues a policy letter announcing or amending terms of trade, there is no shortage of retailers willing to offer their opinion of its contents. But last week, when Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales finally announced its business policies, the news was met with a resounding silence. One retailer after another begged off, saying they had yet to run the numbers to see how the terms would play out.

They did say that Sony BMG executives supposedly chose the best business practices from Sony Music Distribution and BMG Distribution, with an eye toward simplifying billing.

What are the changes? First, there will be a lower price card for each retail price point. For example, the $18.98 list price carries an $11.86 box lot cost, which is lower than the $12.04 Sony and BMG charged.

On the other hand, the new terms eliminate the popular early-payment discount. (Sony’s discount was 1.97% of wholesale; BMG’s was 1.79%) The company also eliminated the credit incentive for managing returns, but kept the disincetive penalty. Likewise, the new policies eliminate open CD allowances.

The billing month now begins the 26th, but payments are due the 10th. Dating on new releases stays the same, with payment due after the end of the second month. The cutoff for new-release orders to qualify for any applicable buy-in discount is now four Fridays before street date.

The new company will use LOFI minimum order and a loose-pick charge of 50 cents per unit. The company also says it will charge 50 cents per unit for unauthorized returns and send them back to the account.

Bill Frohlich, co-president of Sony BMG Sales Enterprise, the parent of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales, says the company had to “harmonize” the separate BMG and Sony policies. “In general, the [new] policy is revenue-neutral for our company,” he says. “How it affects the different classes of accounts, I can’t answer that question.”

NARM GUARD CHANGE: Richard Willis, chairman/CEO of Charlotte, N.C.-based Baker & Taylor, has been named chairman of the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers, replacing Glen Ward, who resigned Jan. 31.

Ward was NARM chairman when he was president/CEO of Virgin Entertainment Group North America, and he retained his NARM position after he left VEGNA. But he recently became co-CEO of Headplay, a visual and aural technology company, and that precludes him from the NARM chairmanship because his new company is not a wholesaler or retailer.

“I know our members will join me in expressing our appreciation to Glen for his outstanding service to the industry and to the NARM board over the past several years, and congratulating him on his new endeavor,” NARM president Jim Donio said in a statement. “As well, I know our members will welcome Richard to his new post. With his diverse business experience, we believe he will be a valuable leader and guide to the association and board in the coming year.”

Oscars

Continued from page 43

Only a handful of high-profile nominees are available on DVD: DreamWorks Home Entertainment’s “Collateral” (best supporting actor for Jamie Foxx), HBO Home Video’s “Maria Full of Grace” (best actress for Catalina Sandino Moreno) and Universal Studios Home Entertainment’s “Ray” (best picture, best director for Taylor Hackford, best actor for Foxx).

WVH’s Oscar catalog promotion involves the release of a two-disc special edition of “Chariots of Fire,” and the Feb. 1 debut of best picture winners “The Life of Emile Zola” and “The Broadway Melody.”

The studio is also offering five-pack best picture collections highlighting dramas, adventures and musicals.

Consumers who purchase two of the Oscar titles at Barnes & Noble locations will receive a free DVD with seven animated shorts.

“They give out Oscars every year, so unless we win one, we have to promote the same movies every year,” Feltenstein says. “How to keep it fresh is at the forefront for us.”

For retailers, keeping Oscar promotions fresh is also a concern. Virgin’s Anstey says its in-store promotion, running Feb. 17 through mid-March, will be separated into three categories: contemporary winners, classic winners and 2005 nominees.

“We have dipped into many of the secondary categories, like best documentary,” he says, “to give attention to them just like the front-runners.”
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A New (i)Hoopla Over P2P File Sharing

BY ANTONY BRUNO

There’s so much more you can do with DRM than just protect against piracy,” he says. “We see the P2P system as an underutilized tool. So why fight it? Why not give the person [using P2P] some options?”

Content owners licensing the technology have complete control over the dialog box that prompts the purchase. The prompt can be a message that links the user to the content owner’s site to purchase the track, or it can include promotional text, links to similar songs or albums, or an invitation to the user to forward a purchased track to a friend. Because the iHoopla DRM engine runs on Microsoft’s .NET framework, only WMA-supported devices may play the files distributed through the system.

Additionally, iHoopla has unveiled Muse-Wrapped Records, a music distribution service that effectively serves as the beta site for the iHoopla system. iHoopla struck an exclusive digital distribution deal with French nonprofit independent label Musea Records to populate the site as it works to sign other artists.

Jupiter Research analyst Josh Green says the key to successfully using P2P for legitimate distribution is to retain the ease of use consumers have come to expect. Cutting out the music store may entice content owners who want to keep a larger cut of their sales, he says, but consumers also like one point of purchase for a variety of files.

“It can help labels, but I’m not sure it will work for the masses,” Green says. “It depends on the user experience. If it’s cumbersome and hard to search for and find tracks, or too restrictive, then I don’t think consumers will go for it.”

The Internet search wars are heating up. Google and Yahoo have launched beta versions of their video search tools, which allow users to look for specific video content in broadcast and online feeds.

Although the initiatives sound similar, their implementation differs greatly.

Most significantly, Google’s search results do not provide video, primarily because the company lacks reproduction rights at this time. Instead, the results contain still images next to text segments of the narration culled from the closed-captioning associated with each broadcast. The company hopes to eventually allow viewers to watch video directly through its portal.

iHoopla records live broadcast feeds and archives the data for its search service. Currently, the company can record only Bay Area broadcasts of networks with which it has agreements, including PBS, Fox News and C-Span. It can also record various NBA games.

Yahoo, meanwhile, has stepped up its month-old beta video-search tool, adding a link to the service from its home page. Its search results provide links to video content stored on various Internet sites. Much of this content comes from Yahoo properties, including its Launch music service.

Currently, the company’s broadcast feeds are limited to those available through an agreement with TV Eyes, which provides video from Bloomberg, BBC and BSkyB. However, Yahoo says it plans to add major entertainment content providers. It has partnered with RealNetworks to access a greater range of programming and has content deals with Atom Film, IFilm and Stupid Videos.

Independent and grassroots publishers may upload video directly to the search service using the Really Simple Syndication format.

“No: 4: Lindsay LoAne makes a big leap into Launch’s top 10 with the second single from her debut set, ‘Runners.’”
ASCAP Turns Up The Heat

It’s nothing new for ASCAP to file lawsuits against venue owners who have not licensed music they are playing, whether in the form of CDs, radio broadcasts or bands performing live. In fact, the performing rights organization says it filed more than 150 individual suits at various times in 2004.

Yet on Jan. 24, ASCAP for the first time filed a series of federal lawsuits simultaneously against 24 nightclubs, bars and restaurants in 15 states and the District of Columbia. In addition, it issued a national press release announcing the action.

All PROs agree that litigation is a last resort as they attempt to license and collect public performance fees for their songwriters and publishers. Also, litigation often generates local criticism about a big-city corporation coming after the “little guys” who just want to play some music.

So why is ASCAP taking action that draws such attention?

It’s all part of a proactive campaign to fulfill its obligations to its members while educating the public, says Vincent Candilora, ASCAP senior VP of licensing.

By filing one lawsuit at a time, he says, it’s easy for the owner to look like a victim. By showing that many unlicensed venue owners are the targets, however, ASCAP can challenge this argument by pointing to its nationwide activity.

ASCAP has also called on some of its songwriters in the cities where the suits were filed to talk with local press about their feelings toward unauthorized use of their songs. In other words, ASCAP is putting a human face to the litigation.

This strategy of introducing songwriters to the public has met with success as part of the educational campaign launched by the Department of Justice to stem teenagers’ unauthorized sharing of music on peer-to-peer networks, the DOJ’s Intellectual Property Task Force chairman, David Israelite, recently told Billboard.

For example, the DOJ last fall presented a symposium for students in Washington, D.C. It introduced songwriters who explained that they don’t make the kind of money the star artists can make through touring and merchandising deals. Instead, they rely on different royalties for their songs.

The teenagers indicated that they previously did not understand the role of songwriters, Israelite said. Some of them, according to Israelite, said they would no longer use the unauthorized services after hearing the stories.

Through ASCAP’s approach, these songwriters can now explain how public performance income also affects their livelihood. Candilora adds that the clubs sued are not victims; they have ignored repeated licensing and collection efforts.

For example, Wolfy’s in Nashville is in a tourist section near other venues that perform licensed music. People in the recording industry know the owner and perform at a club. Wolfy’s had an ASCAP license in 1996, but the PRO cancelled it in 1999 for non-payment. Since then, the owner has refused to license or pay for ASCAP music performed, Candilora says.

How do the PROs discover venues where music is performed?

The general enforcement process of ASCAP and BMI are similar. Essentially they track new business listings through a variety of sources and monitor announcements—advertisements and event listings—for live music.

They attempt to educate the venue owners by contacting them with information about copyright law and the licensing process. Often the owners are encouraged to discuss any questions with their business lawyers.

Unfortunately, many business lawyers in the country are unfamiliar with copyright law and its interpretation. The PROs say they make every effort to explain the laws and to resolve any disputes out of court.

Yet some owners still refuse to license or pay to perform music.

If legal action is necessary, the courts must be filed in federal court, which has exclusive jurisdiction over copyright matters. Federal court rules are often more stringent than state court rules, requiring the defendants to respond promptly to the claims.

In most cases, the disputes are resolved relatively quickly. ASCAP says it was successful in every suit it filed in 2004, resulting in either a cash settlement or a judgment in favor of its members.

SIGNINGS: Universal Music Publishing Group Nashville has signed songwriter Kyle Matthews to an exclusive co-publishing agreement with Universal joint venture Final Four Music Publishing.

Matthews has had hits with Ginny Owens, Oak Ridge Boys, Grover Levy and Point of Grace, among others. Donnie McClurkin’s recording of “We Fell Down” earned Matthews a Dove Award for traditional gospel song recorded of the year, a Stellar Award for song of the year and ASCAP’s 2002 award for gospel song of the year.

A team of EMI Music Publishing executives dropped by the Billboard office in New York recently to celebrate the company’s No. 1 finish on Billboard’s year-end Hot 100, R&B/hip-hop and country publishing charts. Sharing the moment, from left, are Billboard co-executive editor Ken Schlager, EMI Music Publishing president Robert Flax and chairman/CEO Martin Bandier, and Billboard co-executive editor Tamara Conniff and president/publisher John Kilculen.
U.K. Biz Boots Up For Texas
Brits Increasing Their Presence At SXSW

BY PAUL SEXTON

LONDON—British music industry execs and artists are frequent fliers to Austin for the South by Southwest Music Festival. But this year’s U.K. presence at the annual gathering is getting an upgrade.

Trade body the British Phonographic Industry has announced a number of new radio partners as part of its support of SXSW 2005, which takes place March 16-20. These include, for the first time, MTV U.K., whose MTV2 channel will air a number of programs connected with the festival and will sponsor a new British music showcase.

The BBC will be in Austin in numbers, with its Radio 1, Radio 2 and 6 Music digital outlets all broadcasting from the event; Radio 2 and 6 Music will jointly sponsor a showcase. London alternative radio station Xfm and music publications NME and Uncut are also supporting the 19th annual confab.

“British music is in huge demand on either side of the Atlantic,” says Matt Glover, who was recently appointed international manager at the BPI. “Our showcase was established in 2002 to help promote acts that wouldn’t necessarily get the attention they deserve.” This strategy worked most notably in 2003, when a performance by rock act The Darkness helped fast-track its emergence. Last year’s most-talked-about appearance by a British band was a hot-ticket gig at Buffalo Billiards by Scotland’s Franz Ferdinand.

BRITISH BRANDING

The BPI is expanding its “UKOnthis” branding it launched last year’s SXSW, creating not only a CD sampler of new British music—as in previous years—but a limited-edition 12-inch, 12-track vinyl disc highlighting U.K. talent and BBC archive material. There is also a dedicated Web site.

Fellow British trade organizations Assn. of Independent Music, British Music Rights, British Underground, PPL and U.K. Trade and Investment, as well as several regional music bodies, will participate under the UKOnthis banner, in what Glover describes as a “united front” at SXSW.

U.K. singer/songwriter Lucie Silvas strikes gold with “Breathe In”

The Music will headline a March 19 showcase at South by Southwest. The U.K. arm of MTV2 is sponsoring the event.

Restructured EMI Takes Lead In Italy

BY MARK WORDEN

MILAN—A dominant performance by EMI on Italy’s year-end charts capped a remarkable 2004 for the company.

When labels body FIMI published its 2004 album sales chart Jan. 14, it revealed that Milan-based EMI Italy had scored four of the top five albums. Vasco Rossi’s “Buoni e Cattivi” (Capitol) was No. 1, labelmate Robbie Williams’ “Greatest Hits” was No. 2, “The Best of Blue” (Virgin) was No. 3, and Minas’ “Platinum Collection” (EMI Marketing) was No. 5. The sole outsider was Michael Buble’s self-titled Reprise/AWA debut.

Another EMI artist, Tiziano Ferro, was No. 6 with his 2003 sophomore set, “111” (Capitol).

“It was an exceptional year by any standard,” EMI Italy managing director Beppe Ciaraldi says. “We reckon our market share increased from 19% to at least 21%.”

EMI’s success came in an otherwise traumatic year for the label. Former president/CEO Riccardo Clary departed when the company was restructured in July, and he was not the only one to lose his job: A dozen other staff members were let go during the summer.

Today, the company is in the hands of Ciaraldi and Fabrizio Giannini, deputy managing director/VP of EMI. Clary hired Giannini in 2003 as senior director of local artists and new talent. He had been managing director of CGD EastWest, where he discovered Laura Pausini.

Giannini signed Ferro within days after he moved to EMI. Ciaraldi calls his deputy “the best A&R man in Italy.”

Ciaraldi points out, “My background is marketing and international repertoire. Our market is clearly defined; he’ll choose an album’s single, and I’ll work out the promotion strategy—and our decisions are final. We save a lot of time on meetings that way.”

Both men acknowledge Clary’s role in paving the way for EMI’s current success.

“For some years, EMI has been No. 1 in Italy at Christmas, with the Beatles’ ‘1,’ Pink Floyd’s ‘Echoes’ and assorted Vasco Rossi albums,” Ciaraldi says. “With Christmas sales now accounting for 60% of the annual market, that’s essential. But when we saw the charts for the week ending Sept. 23, in which we had the top five albums, we knew Christmas 2004 was going to be special.”

RETAIL ENTHUSIASM

EMI’s performance has met with approval by retailers, who say they are grateful for strong product in a difficult market.

Tiziano Foglioli is chief audio and video buyer at French-owned company FNAC, which has stores in Milan, Genoa, Turin, Verona and Naples. He tells Billboard, “EMI was my biggest supplier last year.”

Foglioli praises EMI for providing a mix of effective marketing and quality product. “They let you know their plans well ahead of time, and they stick to them,” he says. “They also produce artists that generate catalog sales.”

Ciaraldi says, “When we sign acts, we look for ones who are going to sell tomorrow as well as today. Our singers/songwriters at Capitol do that, as do the more alternative rock acts at Virgin.”

Giannini says the company makes an effort to maintain the identity of each of its labels: “Capitol is older and more conservative,” while Virgin is younger and trendier,” he says.

“Buoni e Cattivi” has shipped 800,000 units in Italy, according to the company. Giannini is particularly excited, however, about the 450,000 units of “111” that shipped. He calls the feat “remarkable, when you consider that his first album did 300,000 units in Italy.”

The Williams and Blue albums have passed the 400,000 mark, Ciaraldi adds. “If you exclude the U.K.,” he says, “then Blue has sold more here than anywhere else in Europe. And when it comes to Robbie Williams, we’re second only to Germany—but Germany is a far larger market than Italy.”
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*Hits of the World is compiled by Billboard/London.*
### Billboard EUROCHARTS

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### COMMON CURRENCY

A weekly scorecard of albums simultaneously attaining top 10 chart status

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### Silvas Breaths Deep With New Album

Lucie Silvas’ 2000 debut, “Forget Me Not” (Chrysalis/EMI), failed to dent the U.K. albums chart, but the English singer/songwriter has made a higher impression with “Break 2.” The sophomore set was released in October in the United Kingdom. The title track and “What You’re Made Of” reached the top 10, helping push shipments of the album past gold status (100,000 units), according to the label.

Colin Martin, music editor at national Ac station BBC Radio 2, helped to restart Silvas’ career. “In 2000,” he recalls, “she made [our] playlist on the strength of a great voice but with an average song [‘It’s Too Late’]. Without a strong follow-up, she slipped off my radar.”

But Martin was impressed enough by Silvas’ new material in early 2004 to select her for a Radio 2 feature on the process of trying to create a hit record. A Chrysalis Music writer, Silvas has remixed songs for such pop acts as Rachel Stevens and Liberty X. As an artist, “the real test will come with her songwriting, and whether she continues to build on it.” Martin suggests.

**PAUL SEXTON**

**PETITE**

**POTENTIAL CHEMICALS**:

U.K. electronic veterans the Chemical Brothers have scored their highest position to date on the Billboard European Top 100 Albums chart, entering at No. 2 this week and narrowly failing to dislodge Green Day’s “American Idiot.”

The 11-track set, “Push the Button,” hit No. 1 Jan. 30 in the United Kingdom, becoming the act’s fourth U.K. chart-topper. The album also showed strongly in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland. Further afield, it has charted in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

The act has announced European dates for this month and next to promote the album, which is released by

Virgin internationally and by Astralworks in the United States. The shows are part of a world tour that begins Feb. 9 in Japan and includes five U.K. dates March 11-18.

**GOOD VIBRATIONS**:

Italian pop-rock quartet Le Vibrizioni will mark the March 4 release of their second album with an outdoor concert in San Remo, Italy’s main square during the Sun Remo Festival March 1-5.

Le Vibrazioni were signed by BMG Ricordi in 2003 after an independently produced video received heavy domestic exposure. The act’s self-titled debut 2003 debut has shipped 220,000 units, the label says. International plans for “Le Vibrizioni II” are being finalized.

“There was a lot of foreign interest in the first album,” the band’s co-manager Ignazio Morvidducci says. “We even recorded Spanish versions of some songs. The Sony BMG music will put all that on hold, but we hope that, with this album, the time is right.”

**VACUUM PACKED**:

“Negotiate With Love,” the lead single from U.K. pop vocalist Rachel Stevens’ forth-
Tyson Takes A New ‘Road’

Western Music Veteran Returns With First Album In Six Years

BY LARRY LeBLANC

TORONTO—At age 71, Canadian Western music patriarch Ian Tyson didn’t reckon on recording what may be the finest album of his career. Nor did he expect his 20-year second marriage to come to an end.

“I can’t believe the things I’m going through at this age,” says Tyson, who lives on a ranch in southern Alberta’s Rocky Mountains. “I’m supposed to be on the veranda rocking. My life is more complex and more emotional than ever.”

“Songs From the Gravel Road,” his first studio album in six years, comes out Feb. 8 in Canada on Stony Plain Records and April 12 in the United States on Vanguard Records. “This is the album I wanted to make for a long time,” Tyson says.

Holger Petersen, president of Edmonton, Alberta-based Stony Plain, says, “As ever, the quality of his songs is great, and his voice has gotten richer.”

Tyson’s songs are about cowboys and ranchers, including his own life at his T-Bar-Y ranch repairing fences, herding cows and riding horses.

Tyson grew up in Victoria, British Columbia, reading books about cowboys. As a teenager, he rode in local rodeos until a fall shattered his ankle. He first made his mark on the music scene in the ’60s as half of the folk/country duo Ian & Sylvia, who were inducted into Canada’s Juno Hall of Fame in 1991.

Married in 1964, Ian and Sylvia Tyson were at the forefront of the North American folk movement. They recorded 13 albums before they split in 1975 as both an act and a couple.

One of the songs Tyson penned in the ’60s was “Four Strong Winds,” with the lines “Think I’ll go out to Alberta/Weather’s good there in the fall.” Twenty years later, he did go out to Alberta and began living the Western cowboy life.

In 1983, Tyson recorded “Old Corral and Sagebrush,” an album of cowboy songs he intended as a Christmas present for friends. However, after his performance that year at the inaugural National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nev., Columbia Records picked up the album for release in Canada. Tyson has since released seven Western-themed albums, six via Stony Plain and Vanguard. His last set was “Live at Longview” in 2002.

Even after four decades of writing, Tyson says he is not prolific. “Every album I’ve made I’ve said would be my last,” he says with a chuckle. “I scratched my head after ‘This Is My Sky,’ the last song written for the [new] album. It took the length of time to walk from my house to the stone house I work in to write.

However, the album’s gem, “Road to Las Cruces,” was started three years ago and took months to complete. “Then my marriage broke up, and I got into the heavy stuff,” he says. “Songs toward the end just wrote themselves. Hank Williams was right: Heartbreak doesn’t hurt your songwriting any.”

“Songs From the Gravel Road” was recorded at the Phase One Studio in Toronto with top-rankup local jazz and pop players. “Ian was so trusting,” producer Danny Greenpoon recalls. “He had a feeling about the way he wanted to record the cowboy tradition, but he didn’t want a country sound. It was his idea to use horns. Tyson’s songs have been performed by Jeff Puglia, Judy Collins and Suzy Bogguss. “‘Four Strong Winds,’ ‘Somewhere Soon’ and ‘Sum Wages’ were very good songs to me,” he says.

Enthused about his recent songwriting, Tyson says he’s apt to record again. “Writing a song like ‘This Is My Sky’ in 20 minutes, I just don’t believe it,” he says. “I did ‘Four Strong Winds’ like that. But that was 40 years ago.”

SXSW

Continued from page 49

The festival.

The Radio 2/6 Music-backed showcase is slated for March 18 at Buffalo Billiards. The headline is independent melodic rock act Embrace, and the bill also features Dogs Die in Hot Cars, Go! Team, James Blunt, Tom Baxter and Amy Smith.

Radio 1 will host its showcase March 17 at La Zona Rosa, with a lineup to be confirmed shortly.

Virgin rock act The Music will headline the MTV2 showcase March 19 at La Zona Rosa. Also playing are Lildewid, Nine Black Alps, the Magic Numbers and Tom Vek, in a lineup that Mardi Caugh, director of talent and artist relations at MTV Networks U.K. and Ireland, describes as “the next wave of U.K. acts tipped for international notice.”

Caugh adds that it was the buzz surrounding Franz Ferdinand’s 2004 SXSW gig that “marked the birth of a new era and confidence in British music.”

MTV U.K. will produce a one-hour special from the showcase, to air March 25-26. MTV2 will broadcast between three and five SXSW specials in the United Kingdom on its “Gonzo” series, commencing March 21.

“BCC Radio 2 covered SXSW for the first time last year and received great listener response,” the AC network’s head of live music Lewis Carney says. “This year we’re planning a substantially increased amount of coverage from the event, and we’re combining this with a weeklong series of documentary and music programs.” Radio 2 and 6 Music will also launch a dedicated SXSW web site before the conference.

“This is a key event, where we can present the broad range of new music and promote the development of U.K. artists in the world’s biggest music market,” Carney says. “Our showcase with the BPI is crucial in highlighting the best British talent with the potential to break in the States. Last year, Jamie Cullum not only stole the show at our showcase, but he was also a talking point of the entire festival.”

Other British acts booked to play SXSW 2005 include Doves, Robyn Hitchcock, Kaiser Chiefs, 22-20s, Bloc Party, Golde Lookin Chain, Fatboy Slim, the Kils and Graham Coxon. Former Led Zeppelin vocalist Robert Plant is this year’s keynote speaker (March 17).

NEWSLINE

The International Week in Brief

French exports of music dropped dramatically in value in 2003, despite an increase in units sold.

According to the latest statistics from the French Music Export Office, units of French repertoire shipped abroad rose to 42.6 million in 2003, up 28.3% from the previous year. However, pressure on margins and prices meant that revenue dropped 21.7% to 57.7 million euros ($74.78 million).

The FMEO compiles export statistics with a one-year gap to incorporate revenue from licensing.

Revenue from physical exports reached 32.3 million euros ($41.86 million) in 2003, down from 36.9 million euros ($47.82 million) in 2002. Licensing revenue dropped to 25.3 million euros ($32.78 million) from 36.7 million euros ($47.56 million) in 2002.

Europe is the main market for French product, accounting for 80% of exports in 2003. North America accounted for 8.4% of exports.

EMMANUEL LEGRAND

Warner Music Australia has named Ed St. John, former managing director of BMG Australia and New Zealand, president/CEO, effective Feb. 1. He replaces Shaun James, who left in August 2004 to work in the TV industry.

St. John will report to Warner Music Asia Pacific president Lachie Rutherford, who is based in Hong Kong.

St. John left BMG in November as a result of the company’s merger with Sony Music Entertainment Australia. He says a priority in his new role will be “helping the company’s domestic roster to be more noticed globally.”

CHRISIE ELIEZER

The British Phonographic Industry has changed its subscription formula for independent labels.

The fee for BPI members was previously based on a percentage of the label’s sales. Effective immediately, indepies will pay a one-off registration fee of £50 ($94) plus 5% of their public performance revenue collected by rights society PPL.

BPI executive chairman Peter Jamieson says the move enables more independents to take advantage of the organization’s services. “We want to make it easier for indies to join the BPI,” Jamieson says, “and improve the quality of our indie representation.”

EMMANUEL LEGRAND

Universal Music Group has sold its U.K. mail-order music and video unit, Universal Group Direct, to U.S.-based mergers and acquisitions company Platinum Equity, Universal Group Direct, which operates as the Britania club in the United Kingdom and the DIAL club in France, is sold.

Sources suggest that Platinum intends to operate the two clubs as a single, stand-alone business. The clubs, which together have 2 million active members, are Europe’s largest direct-marketers of DVDs, CDs and videogames.

UMG declined to comment on the deal.

SAM ANDREWS

Panas Theofanellis has been appointed GM of the Greek branch of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. He replaces Ion Stamboulis, who exited IFPI Greece chairman Panos Maravelias.

In his new Athens-based post, Theofanellis is responsible for implementing IFPI strategies on a local level. He has also been appointed president of collecting society Grammo.


MARIA PARAVANTES

The Assoc. of Independent Music in the United Kingdom has relaunched its new-media arm, Musicindie, as AIM Digital.

The renamed division negotiates and administers collective licensing deals on behalf of AIM’s 900-plus member labels. It also provides training and support for labels new to the digital domain.

AIM established Musicindie in 1999 to enable the independent sector to take advantage of new-media business development. Through it, AIM has struck deals with Sony Connect, Yahoo, 002, Wippit and Napster.

LARS BRANDLE

For the latest breaking news, go to billboard.biz.
Front Line
Continued from page 1

clear that Front Line and perhaps the Firm are checking out Nashville managers.
Potential targets are not hard to find. “The fishermen have been fishing, that’s about all I can tell
you,” says Clint Higham, a mana-
ger at Dale Morris & Associates,
management company for Alaba-
ma, Kenny Chesney and Gretchen
Wilson. “But people have been
shopping us for years. We’ll take a
meeting with anybody.”

Higham and DMA are not alone.
I have had a couple of inquiries,”
says Scott Simon, president of RPM,
management company for Tim
McGraw, Holly Williams and others.
“I’m intrigued by it all. I think there
could be a lot saved by consol-
idating costs and overhead, because
there is a lot of duplication in the
management business.”
Front Line, which reps such acts as
Christina Aguilera, The Eagles (Axoff), Lenny Kravitz and Jimmy
Buffett (Kaufman), is said to be uti-
lizing a $20 million investment by
Thomas Lee Partners to roll up select management companies.
Simon thinks anyone looking to
consolidate artist management com-
panies would be looking first for
managers representing solid tour-
ing acts, “so companies like ours are
in play.”
Another top country touring artist is Toby Keith, who grossed $44
million on the road last year, accord-
ing to Billboard Boxscore. Keith’s
manager T.K. Kimberbell says, “No one
has approached me, but you always
should hear what someone has
to say, especially someone of [Axoff’s or Kaufman’s] reputation.”
Kimberbell says different groups have approached him in the past inquir-
ing about purchasing his management. “They never offered me a deal that appealed to
me, I’ve always looked back and been glad I didn’t sell,” he says.
Speculation is that Front Line is
offering several times each company’s average annual earnings.
One would be hard pressed to find
a boutique management company
anywhere that had a better year in 2004 than DMA, with huge tours and
platinum releases in spades.
Chesney alone grossed nearly $50
million from touring.
“It would have to be an awful
good offer for me even consider-
selling, Higham says.
That’s a familiar refrain. “Some-
body’s not going to change the way
I live by offering me any amount of
money,” Kimberbell says. “They can
take it by my house and see what
I’ve done on my own.”
One school of thought holds that the “personal” aspect of the personal
management business could be at
least a commodity.
“You have to keep the personal
character in it; that’s the challenge,”
Simon says. “There’s such a bene-
fit to history, knowledge and relation-
ship between the manager and the
artist, and that’s hard to replace.
All agree that there is more to
consolidation than a financial win-
tfall. “The business is changing, and
you want to be ahead of the curve,
not behind it,” Higham notes.
Nor does Simon sound like some-
one who is ruling out management
consolidation. “Some of the things
that people are trying here are
things that have never been done
before,” he says. “I’m always looking for
things that benefit the artist. If
this can work to the artists’ benefit,
then it could be a good thing.”

Israelite
Continued from page 5

to No. 10 on the Billboard Hot
Country Singles & Tracks chart in
1992. Griffin reunited with
Farrow in 1997 for a successful
world tour. He is survived by
his wife and two children.

Marty Bennett, 33, of cancer,
Jan. 30 in Edinburgh, Scotland.
A traditional bagpiper and
fiddler, Bennett also experimented with electronic music, creating
tchno Celtic dance. His debut self-titled
album was released in 1996 on
independent label Electile.
Records. In 1997, he secured a
deal with U.S. label Rykokids,
which released his sophomore
It was followed by the Scottish
dance music album “H-'ardland” in 2000 on his own
Cullin label and “Clynn Lyon” in
2002 on Foot Stompin’ Records.
Bennett subsequently landed a
contract with Peter Gabriel’s Real
World label and released his last
record, “Grill,” in 2003. He is sur-
vived by his wife.

Jennifer Popkin, 35, of cancer,
Feb. 1 in Los Angeles. At the
time of her death, Popkin was national
director of sales at TQT Records.
She began her career in 1985
working in retail at Los Angeles’
Music Plus and then Blockbuster.
She switched to the label side of
the business in 1995, starting as
an artist-development rep at
Universal, then shifting to
Beyond Music before joining
TQT in 2001. Donations may
be made to the Jennifer Popkin
Memorial Scholarship through
the National Assn. of Recording
Merchandisers.

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**Programming**

**Bad Taste A Serious Matter**

With all the talk about what the Federal Communications Commission does regulate, it has been pointed out a time or two in the past that what the FCC does not weigh in on are questions of bad taste. But the self-regulating impact of community standards is making itself felt in the case of R&B hip-hop WQHT (Hot 97) New York. The morning team aired a parody song and comments mocking the tsunami tragedy that struck Asia and Africa in December.

As we went to press, morning-show member Todd Lynn and producer Rick Delgado have been fired. Host Miss Jones along with DJ Envy and production assistant Tasha Hightower had been off the air since Jan. 26 on a two-week unpaid suspension.

In a statement, the station said the suspension was “for the airing of a song that made light of a catastrophic event, as well as comments made at the time the song was aired.”

Additionally, Rick Cummings, radio president for Hot 97 parent Emmis Broadcasting, issued a statement saying, “What happened is morally and socially indefensible... All involved... have apologized, are ashamed and deeply sorry. I know the members of the morning show are truly contrite. They know their actions here are inexcusable.”

The song, a parody of “We Are The World,” used racial slurs and included the line, “You can hear God laughing, swim, you bitches, swim.”

The morning team issued an on-air apology Jan. 24, and the station announced that while suspended, the morning show salaries were held in abstinence to tsunami relief. In her on-air apology, Miss Jones said: “I apologize to all who have been offended by my poor decision to go along with playing that Inexcusable—to say the least—the tsunami song. I should have known better, and I didn’t.”

But that may not be enough. New York City Council members, along with Asian-American leaders, are calling for federal fines, a stronger apology and for the station to fire its morning crew.

On Jan. 26, the station issued another statement saying that it “felt that stronger action was necessary to demonstrate the severity of the situation.”

Emmis has pledged $1 million to tsunami relief.

Councilman John Liu of Flushing, N.Y., led a protest Jan. 28. He has called for the FCC to intervene with fines against Hot 97. “It’s not just about these individuals,” he told Newsday. “This company fostered the atmosphere that led to a blackface type of outrage against Miss Jones (and) accept corporate responsibility.” He said this should include raising its aid pledge to $10 million.

Additional reporting by Paul Heine and Chuck Taylor in New York.
MTV
Continued from page 1
out a slate of original long-form programming that offers a mix of music-based and lifestyle shows.

While MTV is shifting its programming away from promotional videos, the labels that supply those clips are finding new outlets for them. The needs of these new technology-driven forces are forcing labels to rethink video as less a promotion resource than a revenue source.

Still, MTV’s moves are angering some of the music industry’s top executives (see The Last Word, page 69). They view MTV as the last vestige of the bygone 1980s, when music videos, not long-form reality and lifestyle programs, ruled the roost at MTV.

When MTV2 was introduced in 1996, the channel (then known as M2) was positioned as a replacement for MTV’s former self. However, MTV2 has moved increasingly toward long-form programming, and the number and variety of videos it airs has declined.

Critics see the new direction of MTV2 as evidence that MTV Networks is backing away from music videos. They predict that even the formats still supported by MTV2 will be narrowly defined and marginalized in much the same way pop music is on flagship MTV.

For their part, MTV executives are unapologetic about their strategy.

“The days of MTV2 being the jewel-to-tool station are over,” says Tom Calderone, executive VP of music and talent programming for MTV/MTVU. “The reason is simple: No one liked it. If you don’t stand for anything, and you don’t have people who are deeply in love with you, you don’t sell records, and nobody cares.”

Calderone is quick to point out that while the branding for MTV2 will change, the programming will stay much the same. In fact, MTV2 already focuses its music programming largely on rock and hip-hop, he says.

“Our music video hours have increased by double-digit percentages,” Calderone says, “because we have been providing since the summertime of last year a very focused, hit-driven rock and hip-hop music channel.”

He says the new long-form programs are merely replacing repurposed programming MTV2 has been picking up from MTV: “The video heroes are going to stay where they’ve been for the last year and a half,” Calderone adds, saying that the music video hours get acceptable ratings.

Calderone says MTV2 is looking to identify a few breakout rock acts that can have a persistent presence on the channel. “We’re looking for TV stars,” he says. “It’s been a very long time since we had a Kid Rock or a Fred Durst.”

MARKET FORCES
Even as the music industry’s relationship to MTV is changing, a host of new media developments are giving new life to the music video.

The rise of digital cable offerings, online music services and video-on-demand has made music videos more ubiquitous than ever. Digital and satellite companies, like DirecTV, Internet giants like Yahoo and AOL, digital music retailer iTunes and startup VOD services like New York-based Concert offer consumers 24-hour access to video and performance content.

At the same time, Universal Music Group is fighting to launch its own video network under an agreement with EchoStar Communications (see story, this page).

Even cell phone service providers are getting in on the act. Warner Music Group announced Jan. 31 a deal to provide Verizon Wireless subscribers with access to its music video catalog as part of the V Cast multimedia content service.

“In the 80s we produced videos for a particular purpose — frankly, to be played on MTV,” Sony BMG COO Michael Smellie says. “What we are doing now is producing audio-visual programming, and a play on MTV might or might not be part of a few use. It’s a much more broadly based business model.”

Smellie points out that in the process, Sony BMG is becoming less beholden to the three-minute clip. It’s developing a variety of longer- and shorter-form content as well.

The other major labels are taking a similar path.

In addition, labels are increasingly looking at video as a revenue source. That trend, which has been developing over the last two years, is growing with the rise of VOD services.

In the VGM-Zeen deal, videos are offered as premium content and will cost $3.99 apiece to download.

Meanwhile, UMG has announced plans to begin charging online services like AOL, Yahoo, mtv.com and MSN for access to front-line music videos.

Under the new UMG policy, music services that do not have a standard commercial licensing deal for videos with the major will no longer have access to UMG’s clips for on-demand streaming over the Internet and cable/satellite systems. UMG will also stop purchasing advertising on music sites that do not pay to license its video content, sources say. UMG will not comment on the moves.

Like most music companies, UMG already charges services for the ability to build libraries of catalog videos. But until now, the major has been servicing new videos free for promotion.

UMG has forged a deal with MSN Music under its new policy. As part of the agreement, the companies will team on a series of promotional initiatives to drive users to MSN.

“The digital music and video market is still in its infancy, and the business models are continuing to evolve,” MSN Entertainment senior director Rob Bennett says. “As an industry, we are all figuring this out together, and it’s our job at MSN Entertainment to provide a great platform to bring content owners together with consumers.

Other online services, including Yahoo and AOL, say it’s business as usual as they negotiate with the labels.

The Web “is the destination where people are watching [music] videos,” says Jack Leshy, executive director of music industry relations for AOL Music. “So we can understand what the challenge is that labels have in terms of their economics and why they would be looking at this model.”

Vivendi Claims Dish Debacle
Suit Says Satellite Network Refused To Launch Channel

BY SUSAN BUTLER

NEW YORK—Vivendi Universal S.A. says it is ready to launch a music channel with an “international flavor” for EchoStar Communications Corp., but claims EchoStar refuses to honor its contractual obligation to add it to the “America’s Top 120” package.

The French conglomerate is trying to force EchoStar’s hand in a lawsuit filed the week of Jan. 24 in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. It asks the court to declare both party’s contractual rights under a 2001 investment agreement and to order EchoStar’s launch of the music channel. It also seeks damages of at least $75,000.

The suit claims that Vivendi agreed to purchase in 2001 more than 57 million shares of stock in Englewood, Colo.-based EchoStar for about $1.5 billion. As part of the investment agreement, Vivendi could launch five channels featuring certain types of programming during the three years after close of the deal.

The contract provided that EchoStar would pay Vivendi about 10 cents per month per subscriber for each channel, the complaint states.

EchoStar had 6.83 million subscribers at the end of 2001, and more than 11 million customers as of Jan. 31, 2005, according to the company’s Web site.

Vivendi sold its shares back to EchoStar in December 2002 for a loss of approximately $500 million, the suit says, but EchoStar’s obligation to carry any channels launched before Jan. 22, 2005, continued.

Vivendi notified the company last fall of its intent to launch three music channels. In response, EchoStar claimed it did not have any obligation to include the channels, the suit says. In the midst of communications between the companies and their lawyers, Vivendi says, it continued developing one of the channels. Sixty percent of its content would feature music video, with the remainder consisting of music video shows and other music-based programming. EchoStar, however, refuses to launch the channel, the suit claims.

Both companies declined to comment.
Country To Pop And Back

Kenny Chesney drifts away from his country roots, while LeAnn Rimes makes a proud return to the genre that launched her career. For the moment, neither seems ruffled by the change in direction.

While earning his fourth No. 1 on Top Country Albums, Chesney becomes only the third country artist in chart history to start three albums at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Garth Brooks, the undisputed sales king of the '90s, had eight, while Alan Jackson has led the big chart three times in the last three years.

This time, Chesney rings the bell with an album that sounds more like Margaritaville than Nashville. But even without a made-for-radio country hit, “Be As You Are: Songs From an Old Blue Chair” manages the second-fastest start—and the third-best Nielsen SoundScan week—in his career. Only “When the Sun Goes Down,” the album he released Feb. 2 of last year, yielded bigger numbers, gathering 550,500 in the first week and 350,000 in its second.

The obvious difference is that last year’s album came to market on the shoulders of two No. 1 country singles. The only track to get traction from the format on the new album, “Guitars and Tiki Bars,” bullets at No. 57 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks. The chart action is driven by unsolicited airplay.

In fact, the last single from “When the Sun Goes Down” is still active at country radio. “Anything but Mine,” the youngest title in the top half of the country singles list, has the chart’s second-largest audience gain.

That song’s growth, coupled with promotion for “Blue Chair,” yield a 28% increase for Chesney’s 2004 set, enough to rally the Greatest Gainer award on Top Country Albums (No. 10).

Chesney is the first artist in four months to place two albums inside country’s top 10. Keith Urban was the last to do so, in last year’s Oct. 9 issue, when “Be Here” bowed at No. 1 on the country list and The Billboard 200.

HOME AGAIN: If LeAnn Rimes’ shift back to Music Row was a Hollywood pitch, the writer might describe the script as “Thomas Wolfe meets ‘Goldhocks and the Three Bears.’ You can go home again, if the song that knocks on the door is just right.

After launching her career with “Blue,” a song that struck some country programmers as sounding too country, Rimes (Continued on page 50)
**February 12, 2005**

**THE BILLBOARD 200.**

Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.

**ARTIST** | **IMPRINT & NUMBER DISTRIBUTING LABEL** | **Title** | **RANK**
--- | --- | --- | ---
**NEW** | **THE GAME** | **ATTENTION: I DON'T KNOW HOW TO LOVE HIM** | 1
**NEW** | **LEANNE RIMES** | **This Woman** | 3
**NEW** | **GREEN DAY** | **American Idiot** | 1
**NEW** | **ENEMEN** | **Encore** | 1
**NEW** | **JOHN LEGEND** | **Get Lifted** | 4
**NEW** | **LIL' JON & THE EAST SIDE BOYZ** | **Cocky Juice** | 3
**NEW** | **KELLY CLARKSON** | **Breakaway** | 3
**NEW** | **CIARA** | **Confessions** | 1
**NEW** | **VARIOUS ARTISTS** | **New Now** | 1
**NEW** | **BRIGHT EYES** | **I'm Wide Awake, It's Morning** | 10
**NEW** | **FANTASIA** | **Free Yourself** | 8
**NEW** | **DESTINY'S CHILD** | **Destiny Fulfilled** | 2
**NEW** | **LUDACRIS** | **The Red Light District** | 1
**NEW** | **SHANIA TWAIN** | **Greatest Hits** | 2
**NEW** | **SOUNDTRACK** | **The Phantom Of The Opera** | 16
**NEW** | **GETO BOYS** | **The Foundation** | 19
**NEW** | **NELLY** | **Soil** | 1
**NEW** | **MARCO** | **Turning Point** | 13
**NEW** | **THE KILLERS** | **Hot Fuss** | 14
**NEW** | **JAY-Z/LINKIN PARK** | **MTV Ultimate Mask-Ups Presents: Collision Course** | 1
**NEW** | **RASCAL FLATTS** | **Feels Like Today** | 15
**NEW** | **SNOOP DOGG** | **R&G (Rhythm & Gangsta): The Masterpiece** | 6
**NEW** | **GWEN STEFANI** | **Loves, Angel. Music, Baby.** | 7
**NEW** | **GREENWICH** | **Here For The Party** | 27
**NEW** | **U2** | **How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb** | 1
**NEW** | **VARIOUS ARTISTS** | **WOW Gospel 2005** | 29
**NEW** | **T.I.** | **Urban Legend** | 7
**NEW** | **MAROONS** | **Sounds About June** | 6
**NEW** | **JESSE McCARTNEY** | **Beautiful Soul** | 32
**NEW** | **TOBY KEITH** | **Greatest Hits 2** | 3
**NEW** | **RASCAL FLATTS** | **Country Nation** | 20
**NEW** | **RAY CHARLES** | **Genius Loves Company** | 20
**NEW** | **ZAC** | **Loyal To The Game** | 1
**NEW** | **GEORGE STRAIT** | **50 Number Ones** | 1
**NEW** | **BIG & RICH** | **Horse Of A Different Color** | 6
**NEW** | **TIM MCGRAW** | **Live Like You Were Dying** | 1
**NEW** | **ASHANTI** | **Concrete Rose** | 7
**NEW** | **HAT KING COLE** | **The World Of Nat King Cole** | 41
**NEW** | **NELLY** | **5th Street** | 1
**NEW** | **GUNS N' ROSES** | **Greatest Hits** | 3
**NEW** | **RAY CHARLES** | **Ray (Soundtrack)** | 9
**NEW** | **KENNY CHESNEY** | **When The Sun Goes Down** | 9
**NEW** | **SOUNDTRACK** | **The Phantom Of The Opera** | 15
**NEW** | **CREED** | **Rage Against The Machine** | 15
**NEW** | **ASHLEE SIMPSON** | **Autobiography** | 1
**NEW** | **JOHN MAYER** | **Heaven** | 1

**GREATEST GAINER**

**ARTIST** | **IMPRINT & NUMBER DISTRIBUTING LABEL** | **Title** | **RANK**
--- | --- | --- | ---
**NEW** | **ANIDIFRANCO** | **Knuckle Down** | 49
**NEW** | **LOS LONELY BOYS** | **Los Lonely Boys** | 9
**NEW** | **SMART ONE** | **One Tree Hill** | 51
**NEW** | **BRAD PAISLEY** | **Mud On The Tires** | 8
**NEW** | **AVRLAVIGNE** | **Under My Skin** | 1
**NEW** | **SIMPLE PLAN** | **Still Not Getting Any...** | 3
**NEW** | **LINDSAY LOHAN** | **Speak** | 4
**NEW** | **NEW** | **CHICAGO** | 52
**NEW** | **THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS** | **Push The Button** | 59
**NEW** | **WILLIAMS** | **The Beautiful Leftovers** | 16
**NEW** | **ANN MARY** | **All Of Me** | 66
**NEW** | **JOSH GROBAN** | **Closer** | 1
**NEW** | **MODEST MOUSE** | **Good News For People Who Love Bad News** | 18
**NEW** | **ROD STEWART** | **Stardust... The Great American Songbook Vol. 1** | 1
**NEW** | **VELVET REVOLVER** | **Contraband** | 1
**NEW** | **RITCHIE HAVNELL** | **Take It All Away** | 8
**NEW** | **JOHNNYSWIM** | **Three Cheers For Sweet Revenge** | 48
**NEW** | **CÉLINE DION** | **Thug Mariage: Married To The Streets** | 2
**NEW** | **KEANE** | **Hopes And Fears** | 51
**NEW** | **JOJO** | **JoJo** | 4
**NEW** | **VARIOUS ARTISTS** | **WOW Hits 2005** | 39
**NEW** | **PAPA ROACH** | **Getting Away With Murder** | 17
**NEW** | **BLAINE LARSEN** | **Off To Join The World** | 79
**NEW** | **BILL & GLORIA GAither** | **We Are Not Alone** | 20
**NEW** | **BRITNEY SPEARS** | **Greatest Hits: My Prerogative** | 4
**NEW** | **CAM'RON** | **Purple Haze** | 20
**NEW** | **BLACK EYED PEAS** | **Elephants** | 14
**NEW** | **HILARY DUFF** | **Hilary Duff** | 2
**NEW** | **MARTINA McBride** | **Martina** | 7
**NEW** | **VARIOUS ARTISTS** | **The Source Presents: Hip-Hop Hits Volume 9** | 75
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**NEW** | **BILL & GLORIA GAither** | **Street's Disciple** | 5
**NEW** | **BROOKS & DUNN** | **The Greatest Hits Collection II** | 7
**NEW** | **METEORA** | **The Way Up** | 99
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Top Internet Album Sales reflects physical albums ordered through Internet e-tailers, based on data collected by Nielsen SoundScan. Unlike real Billboard charts, albums not eligible for certification at 50,000 units sold (Platinum). RIAA certification for 10 million units (Diamond). RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million units. Digital sales, and double albums with a running time of 180 minutes or more, the RIAA multiplies shipments by the number of tracks and/or types. RIAA sales awards: 50,000 units (Platinum), 1 million units (Gold), 2 million units (2X Platinum), 5 million units (5X Platinum). Asterisk indicates vinyl release. (t) indicates past performance of SoundScan title © 2008, VNU Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved.

The Billboard 200 A-Z (LISTED BY ARTISTS)

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The Billboard 200 A-Z (LISTED BY ARTISTS)

Over The Counter

Continued from page 57

latter success at other formats. "How Can I Live" led the Adult Contemporary chart for 11 weeks and was one of six top 10 for her in that format, while two of those—including the dance-incited "Can't Fight the Moonlight"—reached the top 10 at Mainstream Top 40.

That broadening of her scope left some country stations with the impression that Rimes had strayed too far from the format, but the teen who grew into her adult years before the public's eyes has moved back to her launch pad in more ways than one.

First, she drew a fair amount of media attention when she traded her home in Los Angeles for one in Nashville. More significantly, lead single "Nothin' Bout Love Makes Sense" is shaping up to be her biggest country hit in almost seven years.

With a gain of more than 1 million audience impressions, the song's reach of 26.8 million pushes it 7-5 on Hot Country Singles & Tracks, Rimes' best rank on that chart since "Commitment" peaked at No. 4 in the Oct. 27, 1998, issue.

The payoff is an opening week of 101,000 copies for "This Woman," her best Nielsen SoundScan frame since "LeAnn Rimes" sold 121,000 copies during Christmas week of 1999. The rally places her at No. 2 on Top Country Albums and No. 3 on The Billboard 200, her best standing on the latter chart since 1998.

BUFSHY TALKED: Bright Eyes enjoys a bright moment, landing two simultaneous debuts inside The Billboard 200's top 15—not bad for an indie rock act whose prior peak had been No. 161.

So far as we can tell, the Conor Oberst-led band becomes the first independently distributed act to have two albums at the same time within the big chart's top 20.

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**GREATEST SELLER**

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<td>Jimi Hendrix</td>
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<td>I CAN'T STOP</td>
<td>James Brown</td>
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<td>Decca Records, EMI Records</td>
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<td>Steve Martin, Martin Short</td>
<td>Warner Bros. Records, EMI Records</td>
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**Additional Notes:**
- **ASAP**: Artists, Songs, Albums, and Performances
- **BMI**: Broadcast Music, Inc.
- **ASCAP**: American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers
- **SESAC**: Society of Singers, Songwriters, and Composers
- **BMI/Sony/ATV**: BMI and Sony/ATV
- **BMI/Universal, BMI/Warner**: BMI and Warner Music
- **BMI/EMI**: BMI and EMI Music
- **BMI/Republic**: BMI and Republic Records
- **BMI/Interscope**: BMI and Interscope Records
- **BMI/Atlantic**: BMI and Atlantic Records
- **BMI/Island**: BMI and Island Records
- **BMI/Universal Music Group, BMI/Universal**
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Airplay for the music consumer. that provide play since audience the Hot had been divided this magazine's franchise charts, the chart's mainstream hits. "The addition of the Pop 100 chart is a big win for mass-appeal pop radio," says Richard Palmese, executive VP of promotion for RCA Music Group. "Now we have a chart that complements the Hot 100 and spotlights those songs that enjoy significant airplay on mainstream top 40 stations with retail and digital sales."

The first track to take the Pop 100 crown is "2 Step," It ranks No. 2 Airplay and Hot Digital Sales, but comes out on top since the No. 1 songs on the component charts fail to accumulate more overall points. The infusion of digital sales into the Top 100 serves that chart's formula. Reports from nonmonitored radio stations will no longer be a factor. Audience from Hot Airplay is still divided by 10,000, but digital sales and retail singles sales are now divided by five (retail sales had been divided by 10). In addition, songs without a retail component will now be able to chart on the Hot 100 regardless of their rank on the Hot 100 Airplay chart. In the past, a song had to appear among the top 75 of the airplay chart in order to debut on the Hot 100. Radio audience on the Pop 100 is divided by 1,000, but sales are factored at 100%. The ratio of radio audience to sales in the new Hot 100 formula is 67-33.

The ratio was adjusted to 75% radio and 25% sales in 1998, when the chart's radio panel was expanded to include all formats, but as fewer hits have been released to retail, the influence of sales has been minimized in recent years. The radio-to-sales ratio on the Pop 100 is averaging 60-40. Titles are removed from the Pop 100 when they fall below No. 30 and spend more than 30 weeks on the chart.

The Greatest Gainer/Sales award has been changed to Greatest Gainer/Digital to honor the biggest gainer on Hot Digital Songs. As it was with retail singles, the Greatest Gainer/Digital song must have appeared on the Hot 100 and Hot Digital Songs charts the previous week. With so few singles selling meaningful quantities, the Recording Industry Assn. of America certifications will now reflect digital sales, rather than gold and platinum retail singles. A "D" adjoins to the label logo to denote digital availability. DVD singles, which used to be denoted with a "D," will now be represented by an "M." We will no longer include stars denoting retail availability, as the absence of any configuration designations will indicate that the track is not available either digitally or at retail.

Catalog numbers for retail singles will no longer be printed but can be found on the chart at billboard.biz or billboard.com, a change that also affects the NRB/ Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and Hot Country Singles & Tracks.

THE FINE PRINT: On The Billboard Hot 100, the "last week" and "two weeks ago" rankings reflect the list's new formula, rather than the songs published under the old methodology. "Weeks on chart" and "peak position" refer to the song's history on the print version of the Hot 100, which explains why some songs show a prior week's ranking but may have only one week noted in the "weeks on chart" column.

The print version of the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart is reduced from 25 titles to 20, but will be 50 deep on the Billboard Web sites.
Valentine

Continued from page 5

Down’s “Seventeen Days” (“Universal”), Brian McKnight’s “Gemini” (“Universal Motown”) and Michael Buble’s “It’s Time” (“Warner Bros.”) — all due Feb. 9 — to provide some punch for the holiday.

For the last three years, Valentine’s Day has been the second-biggest sales period of the year behind Christmas. In 2003, sales hit 13.9 million units for the week; in 2002, the tally was 14.5 million; in 2001, 15.5 million.

For smaller chains in cold weather locales like Homer’s and the 11-unit Gallery of Sound in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., weather is a big concern.

“The main thing for us is if there’s not several feet of snow and it’s not 40-below,” Gallery of Sound VP Joe Nardone says. “It could be the best setup in the world, but it really depends on whether people are in the mood to leave their house.”

Fratt says of the winter’s recent affect on sales, “We just got the crap kicked out of us in the first two weeks of January — much worse than last year.”

He credits the chain’s recent pickup to the Jan. 25 release of two albums by hometown breakout Bright Eyes on Omaha-based indie Saddle Creek Records. The acoustic-driven “I’m Wide Awake, It’s Morning” and the electric “Digital Ash in a Digital Urn” are expected to remain the chain’s No. 1 titles through the holiday.

THE GRAMMY FACTOR

Last year, Valentine’s Day sales also benefited from the Grammy Awards, which were last week before this year. This year, the Grammys fall the night before Valentine’s Day, a change not lost on Recording Academy president Neil Portnow.

“If we look at last year and the Grammys, Norah Jones and Valentine’s Day — 17 million albums were sold,” he says. “We’ll stand up and take credit for a good deal of that.”

This year, the pre-Valentine’s week TV slot was not available because of the Super Bowl on Feb. 6.

This time, as soon as the Grammy date was set, Portnow sent a letter to the labels and others in the industry, noting that the Grammys would be Feb. 13, but that the broadcast could still create a sales and marketing opportunity.

“We could have kept people in suspense and dropped the date later in the year,” Portnow says, “but instead we sent out the notice that we’re right on top of Valentine’s Day, so people could market into the situations they should choose.”

Despite the effort, Virgin Entertainment Group senior music product manager Jerry Suarez says sales will take a hit. “There’s definitely a huge bounce for winners during Grammy week. I would prefer a little more time this year, and I think sales will be lighter than we’ve seen,” he says.

Nardone contends that the February sales boost has more to do with the Grammys than Valentine’s Day.

Instead of a Valentine’s-themed display, Gallery of Sound is featuring a month-long promotion highlighting the Grammy nominees.

“It’s a good holiday, but people are going to buy what they want, not some love CD,” he says.

Fratl agrees, saying that his store plans to be well-stocked with hit albums and new releases. “Generally speaking, those packages geared toward lovers don’t really perform,” he says.

Suarez, however, says that Valentine’s Day compilations are expected to fill the gaps left by a spotty February release schedule.

“We always try to take advantage of Valentine’s Day Daytime highs. I love song compilations and artists. It’s always difficult to tell if people are going to buy Kenny G or what, but our love compilations do pretty well.”

Several sets by romantic mainstays were released Jan. 25, including “The World of Nat King Cole” (Capitol/EMI), “Lou Rawls: Love Songs” (Right Stuff/EMI Music Catalog) and “Love, Elvis” (Sony BMG Strategic Marketing).

On Feb. 1, Miles Davis’ “My Funny Valentine” (Sony Classics) and Johnny Mathis’ “Isn’t It Romantic: The Standards Album” (Columbia) hit stores.

One new option that consumers are already showing interest in is “Markus McBride: My Heart,” which is exclusively available at Hallmark’s Gold Crown stores. Following the tremendous success of its Christmas compilations, the retailer bowed its first Valentine’s Day set Jan. 24. Bolstered by strong marketing efforts and TV spots, Hallmark says the CD sold 500,000 copies in its first nine days, surpassing expectations.

“We were certain Martina was a perfect fit for this Valentine project, and we knew our customers would be receptive of the special offering,” Hallmark manager of integrated marketing Ann Herrick says. “Still, we were overwhelmed at the sales success. It really speaks of Martina’s level of appeal.”

Virgin stores will feature an endcap called “All You Need Is Love” with albums by acts such as Buble, Josh Groban, Seal, Phil Collins, Elton John, Rod Stewart and Chic.

“We have a lot of hope for the holiday,” Suarez says. “[Virgin’s] sales have been strong so far after Christmas, and we expect them to continue.”

Additional reporting by Melissa Neuman in Los Angeles.

StreamMan

Continued from page 6

vice senior European VP Robert Ashcroft, says, “But we’re in discussions with a very large number of operators around the world, including the U.S. and Asia.”

SNS is the unit responsible for the conglomerate’s digital-music ventures. Ashcroft declines to disclose which wireless operators are signing up for StreamMan until they are ready to go public.

“We’re trying to rethink the whole digital-music concept from scratch,” he says. “How do you promote the discovery of new music and give people access exactly to the music they want?”

Ashcroft suggests that StreamMan — available in Finland through wireless operator TeliaSonera since October — will be on offer in the U.S. by the end of the year. While Sony Connect, Sony Corp.’s download service available in the United States and five European markets, directly targets consumers, StreamMan is a business-to-business service that SNS operates for wireless carriers, who then sell it to their subscribers.

Once registered on the operator’s Web site, customers download the StreamMan software to their handsets.

NO LIMITS

Ashcroft suggests the service will be popular because users can listen to thousands of streamed tracks on their mobile phones, whereas downloads are limited by the device’s storage memory.

SNS has licensed more than 500,000 tracks from major and independent labels and is in talks for more repertoire.

Currently, 10 devices from manufacturers Nokia and Sony Ericsson feature the Symbian operating system, which allows users to access StreamMan’s catalog.

Subscribers are offered a set of preprogrammed radio stations or can create their own based on their tastes. The SNS server’s software also recommends songs that are deemed similar to the users’ choices.

StreamMan allows customers to exchange playlists of songs with friends, but since the entire catalog cannot be kept, there is no risk of copyright infringement. Subscribers can also transfer their personalized radio stations to their PCs through broadband Internet services.

The wireless operator determines the pricing, TeliaSonera customers, for example, can pay on a sliding scale beginning at 3.95 euros ($5.15) per month for a maximum of two hours’ listening per day, while downloaded songs cost 1.39 euros ($1.81) each.

Olli-Pekka Takanen is Helsinki-based TeliaSonera’s department director at the enlargement unit for consumer customers. He declines to say how many customers have taken up StreamMan since its launch in Finland.

“StreamMan is a new service that launching and growing such a service will take time, and the usage numbers are directly connected to the penetration figures of higher-end phones,” Takanen says.

PACKAGE DEAL

Ashcroft is confident StreamMan will eventually be offered as a home-entertainment package via Sony’s PlayStation 2 game console and digital TV sets.

Simon Dyson, music analyst at London-based Informa Media, says he still needs to be convinced that there is a viable market for mobile streamed music.

Dyson says that recorded-music consumption is “very different from people’s use of streaming to make music to a customized radio service is a lot easier than full-track downloads, it will be interesting to find out if people who like to listen to music also go actually listen to radio.”

Jupiter Media senior analyst/research director Mark Mulligan says, “When it comes to digital music, Sony has always had its own little world,” he says.

“Connect is just a tiny piece of Sony’s overall media portfolio. "Like Apple’s use of iTunes to push sales of iPods, Connect is actually doing a decent job of enhancing value for Sony-device owners.”

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MusiCares

Continued from page 5
spends more than $2.3 million per year on its programs. They include emergen-
cy financial assistance, addiction recovery and a number of community
outreach workshops and seminars.
The years of growth for the group, as evidenced by the recent
acquisition of Los Angeles-based non-
profit MusiCares’ Assistance Program.
MusiCares has a bold vision for 2005 and beyond, and intends to
establish offices in at least two of its Recording Academy chapters.
Contingent on an agreement with MAP
now under the MusiCares fold, a
rise in drug and alcohol rehabilitation
program expenses.

Since August, Recording Academy
president Neil Portnow says Musi-
Cares has seen an astonishing 69% rise in clients served over the
same period in the previous year. According to Kristen Madsen, senior VP of
foundations, MusiCares spent $1.3 million in direct financial assistance from August
2003 to August 2004. In the past four months alone, MusiCares spent
$1.1 million on direct financial assistance, which does not include work-
shops and referral services.

MusiCares
talk excitedly about Portnow’s steward-
ship, as well as the promise of increased offerings in months to
come. Additionally, Portnow has sought to erase any questions regarding
MusiCares’ finances. For the first time in the charity’s 16-year history,
MusiCares has made its financial details available via its Web site.

Perception is everything,” Port-
now says. “Having an opportunity
to restart our image, and have a
different style and tone, I wanted ever-

to know exactly where the money
was going.”

Journey to Recovery
took on the task of
recording his treatment and out-of-pocket expenses to

In 2003, MusiCares spent more than
72% of its revenue on program expenses.

They’re trending up,” says Sandra
Minuti, a spokeswoman for non-
profit Charity Navigator, which provides evaluations of more than
3,500 organizations. “Program
spending has been closer to 135
since the year 2000, and their
revenue has grown nearly 28% during
that time.”

MusiCares
derives most of its
funds from the annual person
of the year dinner (see story, page 1),
and will continue to stage MAP’s annual
campaign. For March in Los
Angeles, the latter will honor some-
one who has been beneficial to
the recovery community. Additionally,
MusiCares has been forced to get
more creative in its fund raising, such
as staging annual eBay auctions.

And we’re incorporating dishing
out millions to trauma-related relief
efforts, revenue for a group like Musi-
Cares is far from guaranteed. “With
all this money going to the tsunami vic-
tims,” Minuti says, “other charities—
especially those related to the arts—are
going to be left out.”

When asked why volume has
increased in the Nashville office, Car-
roll gives a simple answer: lack of
health insurance.

“People are struggling, and musi-
cians have an extremely tough time
obtaining health insurance and hav-
access to plans that may be able
to provide for some type of medical
issue they have,” Carroll says.

“Even with the reduction in the size of the
labels, we still sell out our events, and that’s
a wonderful thing.”

MusiCares, however, hasn’t stopped
thinking of a way to solve the problem.

“We’re doing a lot more research
on low-cost health facilities,” Carroll says. “We’re looking at what other
firms would provide services to our con-
stituents. We’re trying to stay pro-
active, but there are so many people with different needs.”

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The Task, The Mission Is Always The Same: To Build Artists’ Careers

BY TAMARA CONNIFF

Clive Davis can’t help but dance. Put on a record of one of his artists and his feet automatically start to tap, then he’ll get up from behind his desk and groove. He’s a music man, a hitmaker and an industry legend.

With the Grammy Awards around the corner, Davis is very excited. His star artists—Alicia Keys and Usher—each have eight nominations. He is also in the throes of putting together the musical lineup for his famed pre-Grammy party. “It’s going to be hot,” he says.

Throughout Davis’ storied career, he has weathered every kind of music biz storm—from payola scandals in the 1970s to the massive merger of Sony and BMG. Many of his competitors have described him as a force of nature, because he keeps his keen eye on the business while never losing sight of the creative. Under his tutelage, such acts as Janis Joplin, Santana, Billy Joel, Bruce Springsteen, Aerosmith, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Whitney Houston, Barry Manilow and Barbra Streisand became household names.

“Clive has been a mentor to me,” singer/songwriter Gavin DeGraw says. “There are a lot of executives who can make records happen, but they don’t develop an artist’s career the way Clive does. He shows loyalty to the artist, and that creates a relationship of trust.”

After more than 40 years in the business, Davis has every reason to dance.

Q: Your annual pre-Grammy bash at the Beverly Hills Hotel is already creating a big buzz. What can we expect this year?

A: Expectation is so high that you can only hope that it meets and fulfills it. We really have a lot of special plans, and it should be very exciting. Probably the most gratifying thing is that since we started J Records four years ago, the four new artists that I chose to introduce at the party have each broken. The first one in 2001 was Alicia Keys, the second in 2002 was Mario, the third in 2003 was Gavin DeGraw and last year it was Maroon5. This very year each one has topped the chart with a No. 1 record. That feels great. But it’s the stars everyone comes out to see, and this year will showcase them more than ever.

Q: With Keys and Usher each receiving eight nominations, could BMG sweep the Grammys this year?

A: Thousands of records are made each year by so many artists. To see Usher, Alicia, Maroon5, Velvet Revolver with multiple nominations, it’s a joy. To be narrowed down from several thousand to five is the major triumph. So what I do is concentrate on our celebration-of-music party, which is the night before. That’s where everybody’s a winner. Then the next night, a Grammy win becomes icing on the cake. I’m going to let those chips fall as they may.

Q: The iPod, mobile devices and ringtones have really captured the consumer. What are your thoughts on the digital revolution?

A: I just think it’s a great affirmation of the role that music plays in one’s life. The major threat we as an industry have had to live through was the early days of Napster, when music was taken for free. Since then, we’ve had the battle of our lives in order to establish the validity of copyright and ownership. I totally support what the [Recording Industry Ass’n of America] has done with its lawsuits against illegal downloaders. To establish these principles everywhere requires battle mode and constant vigilance. Now, to see legal downloading, to see the exploding sales of digital tracks, to see the growth of the ringtones and other areas is just affirming the role of music in people’s lives.

Q: Will digital replace CDs?

A: I don’t think CDs are going away. I think they’re going to coexist in this world.

In my [National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers] keynote last year, I underscored the importance of the retail environment making the consumer experience special, of making it an event. People who work in the stores need to be knowledgeable and know what the best records are. Know who the best new artists are, know what the best new music is. Guiding the listeners is more vital than ever. Call me old-fashioned, but I also still believe in the packaging and the information provided in the CD—it’s not all just what you listen to on your iPod. Digital will soar but will coexist with CDs.

Q: Isn’t the onus also on labels to create quality albums with more than one or two songs?

A: Quite frankly, I think it has been happening. Just study how many albums today are deep with singles. Usher is on his fifth single. Alicia’s going toward her fifth and Maroon5 is going to its fifth. I think the trend is toward more depth in the album’s material. It’s less a one-single-oriented business where one cut carries the day.

Q: How has the Sony-BMG merger affected the way you do business?

A: My personal outlook is the same. The record business has always been a tough business, and you really have to have laser-beam focus on what the essence is, which is finding and developing the right artists. The merger was a business decision made between two large corporations to create a healthier environment for each company. So, from that point of view, it’s working, and I think there is a healthier environment. In each of the two component parts of Sony BMG, a really strong bottom line has been accomplished and very strong momentum. Really it’s satisfying to know we have a positive environment. But the task, the mission, is always the same: to build artists’ careers.

Q: What are your thoughts on MTV and MTV2’s move to air even more long-form programming and less music?

A: My biggest disappointment is that there’s no longer an “M” for music in MTV. They have a PR campaign that promises they will always be about the music. But sadly, it just isn’t true. It’s not fair to the artists, it’s not fair to music, and it’s wrong to sell music just as a vehicle to mainly showcase other programming. It’s time for a change, and all of us have got to have our voices heard.

Q: What about radio?

A: Well, obviously, we live and die with radio. So there’s one side of me that is tremendously indebted to radio, because all these artists we have broken, especially the last two years, could not have happened without radio. On the other hand, today you really have to be vigilant about radio, because it is somewhat formulaic. When you see artists like Conor Oberst, when you listen to his lyrics, you have to work around radio. We all really have to go back to a grass-roots mentality. There’s no doubt that Maroon5 would not be this big without radio, but it took over a year for radio to get interested.

Q: Is satellite radio the answer for artists who lyrically don’t fit into traditional radio?

A: Satellite radio will be very valuable in this connection and can give exposure to artists who don’t fit the traditional formats. Artists who are unique and creative and don’t fit into tiny little slots will benefit. I’m grateful for the new avenues, and I root for them.

I concentrate, for one, on the music. It’s all in the creativity of trying to come up with new, talented artists, and breaking them is what has been so gratifying for us. In the RCA Music Group, we have now 10 artists whose very first albums have gone platinum. To see Fantasia, Mario, Velvet Revolver, Gavin DeGraw, Maroon5 joining Avril Lavigne, Kelly Clarkson, Clay Aiken, Ruben Studdard and, of course, Alicia Keys—that’s what it’s all about. As far as technology goes, as long as we are vigilant in the enforcement of our rights, the digital revolution is only going to take music to a great audience in the future, and I’m all in favor of that.

Clive Davis: Career Highlights

1967: Named president of Columbia Records
1974: Founded Arista Records
2000: Founded J Records
2003: Named chairman/CEO of RCA Music Group
2004: Named chairman/CEO of BMG North America

Q&A With Clive Davis
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two bonus tracks and a michael buble poster.

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it's time for valentine's day
fan club info at michaelbuble.com
bungalow-b.com reprise records.com

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