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TOP COUNTRY
TOP GOSPEL
TOP LATIN
TOP HEATSEEKERS
TOP INDEPENDENT
TOP NEW AGE
TOP R&B/HIP HOP
TOP WORLD
SINGLES
ADULT CONTEMPORARY
ADULT TOP 40
HOT COUNTRY
COUNTRY SINGLES SALES
HOT DANCE CLUB PLAY
HOT DANCE AIRPLAY
HOT DANCE SINGLES SALES
HOT DIGITAL SONGS
HOT 100
HOT 100 AIRPLAY
HOT 100 SINGLES SALES
HOT LATIN TRACKS
MODERN ROCK
POP 100
POP AIRPLAY
POP R&B/HIP HOP
RAP/HIP HOP AIRPLAY
RAP/HIP HOP SINGLES SALES
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For more in-depth business coverage, check out www.billboard.biz.
Top 40 radio station WHITZ (Z100) New York rounded up some of the format’s biggest stars for its annual Zootopia concert May 22 at the Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J.

It was no surprise to find Kelly Clarkson, Jon Bon Jovi, Jennifer Lopez, Gavin DeGraw and Black Eyed Peas on the bill. Frankie J rapped, Rob Thomas crooned, Simple Plan rocked, Backstreet Boys re-emanaged, and Gwen Stefani ruled, totally.

But the real star of the show was not on-stage. The headline here was the cell phone—and it appeared at the ear or in the palm of virtually everyone present.

The concert attendees were, again, no surprise—overwhelmingly female and overwhelmingly teen age. Many were accompanied by mom or dad. But all were on their phones. Text-messaging across the arena. Calling friends at home. Photographing choice moments with pictures phones held high. E-mailing those images back home or around the globe.

Thanks to Z100’s deal with Sprint, the concertgoers were able to broadcast their text messages to everyone in the arena on giant screens above the stage.

“Hi... my name is January Jones. I’m 22 years old.”

Cell phones define today’s youth much as peace signs did an earlier generation.

And if anyone in this audience wants to see the future of the music business, they need only pay attention to the four American Idols who were performing on the main stage—America, Emblem 3, Kellie Pickler and Ramona.

The Idols are the stars of this summer’s season. Like the Beatles were for their classmates. And the Jackson 5 were for theirs. And the Osmonds were for theirs. And the Rolling Stones were for theirs. And the Beach Boys were for theirs.

Music is not only a vehicle for self-expression, it is a crucial way to communicate ideas and ideals to the younger generation. And music is an essential part of the Beatlemania experience.

The Beatles were not just a band. They were a movement. They were a cultural phenomenon. They were a lifestyle. They were a fashion statement. They were a way of life.

And music is the same way today. It is the same way it was when the Beatles were at the forefront. It is the same way it was when the Rolling Stones were at the forefront. It is the same way it was when the Beach Boys were at the forefront.

Music is the same way it was when Elvis was at the forefront. It is the same way it was when the Beatles were at the forefront. It is the same way it was when the Rolling Stones were at the forefront. It is the same way it was when the Beach Boys were at the forefront.

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Carrie Carries ‘Idol’; Labelmate Bo No. 2

American Idol’ winner in front of 30.5 million viewers during the live May 25 finale at Los Angeles’ Kodak Theater. The TV finale outpaced last year’s climax, which earned 23.9 million viewers. Now the hope is that viewer interest will translate to album sales. “We’re totally blown away by the show this season and the ratings,” says Tom Corson, executive VP/GM of Arista/J Records. “It’s bigger than ever.”

Underwood, who performed the duet “Up Where We Belong” with runner-up Bo Bice during the show, will release her 19 Recordings/Arista debut album this fall. Her first single, “Inside Your Heaven,” written by Andreas Carlsson and produced by Desmond Child, was digitally released to North American radio stations through Musicrpyt’s Digital Music Distribution System hours after her win. The label has also made Bice’s version of the same song available to radio, a first for the “Idol” franchise. “You have a great song that is performed wonderfully by two artists, and the interest in both of them is huge,” 19 Entertainment’s Tom Ennis says. “So why not give people both?” 19 Entertainment, parent of 19 Recordings, created the “Pop Idol” franchise, which spun off into the U.S. version, “American Idol.”

The commercial release of the single is expected mid-June for both singers. Un-
continued on >>p6

EMI Downloads Optimism

London—EMI Group is looking to the virtual world for answers to a real-world problem. Faced with declining record sales, the publicly listed major is looking for digital music sales to swiftly deliver returns. “Digital growth will far outstrip physical decline over the next five years,” EMI Group chairman Eric Nicoli says. “We continue to believe that as much as 25% of the market could be in digital form in five years.”

EMI’s optimism comes not without considerable investment. In recent years, the London-based firm has plowed millions of pounds into building the foundation of its digital strategy and, according to Nicoli, the results are paying off. The group’s financial results for the year ended March 31 show that digital music sales tripled in just 12 months to £49.7 million ($90 million). Revenue from the digital arena now accounts for 2.5% of group income, rising to a 3.5% slice of the sales pie in the final quarter of the fiscal year. “The digital opportunity is a real one,” says Martin Bandier, chairman/CEO of EMI Music Publishing Worldwide. Bandier is buoyant about the potential opportunities from digital distribution. His division captured £14 million ($25.7 million) in revenue from digital sales. “We’ve had a terrific run with ringtones,” he says. “A little bit has come from ring-tones, which has just started to kick in. We’ll be there with our music.”

While the pipes of the digital landscape have been laid, the infrastructure means little without strong A&R, EMI Music chairman/CEO Alain Levy says. “We need to have the artists, we need to have the music, we need to have vibrant local repertoire,” he says. Levy disclosed that after three years of stable funding levels dedicated to artist development, the purse strings will be opened this year. This, he explains, is partly due to the healthy current state for home-grown music, particularly in continental Europe and Japan. “We’re committed to local repertoire [all over] the globe,” EMI Music vice chairman David Munns says. Specific figures about EMI’s A&R investment were not disclosed. Not all the figures in EMI’s May 24 financial report made for “sparkling” reading. Nicoli admits. In a result that it blamed largely on unspecified “underperforming” key second-half releases and the rescheduling of two front-line releases, EMI reported an 8.4% year-on-year decline in revenue to £154 million ($250.5 million). At constant currency rates, the drop was 5.1% compared with the same period last time.

The results were largely in line with the firm’s earlier financial forecasts. In an April note to investors, EMI said it anticipated profit before tax amortization and exceptional items of about £141 million ($265 million). Continued on >>p6
Bob Jamieson, the former "The Tonight Show" music producer, is in talks to leave NBC in pursuit of a career with a major top 40 radio presence.

Clarkson spent seven weeks atop the Billboard Mainstream Top 40 list with "Miss Independent" in 2003 and seven weeks on the chart with this year's "Since U Been Gone." Clarkson's 2003 RCA debut "Thankful" has sold 2.2 million and her 2005 follow-up, "Breakaway," sold 2.1 million. The title track from that album is No. 1 on the Adult Contemporary chart for the 13th straight week. Ennis says regardless of whether this season's high ratings translate to mainstream radio success, "it should continue to be an eye-opening thing for those people that are skeptics."

Heine, Ala.-born Riche, who inked an album deal with Interscope/RCA, will meet with Clarkson for his major-label debut, but for now, he is just enjoying the show's afterglow.

"I'm just going to try to get out there and meet the fans and people who voted for me, and people who didn't vote for me," he says.

Corson credits the fact second season runner-up Clay Aiken—with an album sales tally of 3.7 million—has proved as popular at retail as past winner Clarkson to the label's approach to marketing.

"The show is a great launching pad," he says, "but what matters is that they're working as individuals artists that just happen to be on Idol." Underwood and Bice will both work with BMG North America CEO Clive Davis and Child on their debuts.

Chili also produced this season's cast album, "American Idol Season 4: The Showstoppers," which debuted at No. 6 on The Billboard 200 with 83,000 units after its May 17 release. Tickets for a fourth American Idols tour, American Idols Live, went on sale May 21. It is produced by 19 Entertainment and AEG Live and sponsored by Pop Tarts.

Three previous American Idols tours have grossed more than $55 million combined, and drawn close to 1 million fans, according to Billboard Boxscore. Checotah, Okla., native Underwood says she's looking forward to the tour. "I've got my big brother Bo with me, so she's going to be great."

 Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield in Los Angeles and Ray Waddell in Nashville.

EMI (cont.)

from >>p5 million) for the year ended March 31, versus $163.5 million ($298.6 million) in the previous 12 months. These figures proved to be accurate.

"There weren't any additional surprises in the results," says Richard Jones, an analyst with investment bank Lehman Brothers. Only a handful of write-downs were reflected on the company's share price immediately following publication.

A "challenging year" at its North American business also contributed to an overall slide in sales at EMI's recorded music division. EMI Music reported market share gains at its businesses in the United Kingdom and Ireland, continental Europe, Australasia and Latin America. Overall, the recording division's market share fell to 12.9% from 13.5% as it registered an antidepressant of the currency's sales decline of 7.5%.

During the period, Robbie Williams' "Greatest Hits" was EMI Music's best-performing album, shifting more than 6 million units worldwide. The company also singled out albums by Norah Jones, Joss Stone, Kylie Minogue and Keith Urban as strong sellers.

The division announced February that album releases from Coldplay and Garbage would be pushed into the following financial year. That warning precipitated a sharp slump in its stock price.

The albums—"X&Y" and "Demos: The Best of the Worst"—are follow-ups to a pair of international best-sellers, which EMI says pulled in combined global sales of some 15 million units.

Nicoli says these two releases will help kick start EMI's new fiscal year on the positive side.

"We feel that we are going to start the new fiscal year with some decent momentum," Nicoli says.

Investors had been braced for the results since EMI warned in February that album releases from Coldplay and Garbage would be pushed into the following financial year. That warning precipitated a sharp slump in its stock price.

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"We feel that we are going to start the new fiscal year with some decent momentum," Nicoli says. "The two releases will help kick start EMI's new fiscal year on the positive side."
Includes the classic songs:

**CAN'T BUY ME LOVE**

**I SAW HER STANDING THERE**

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**FOOL ON THE HILL**

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**HEY JUDE**

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London Calls AEG
U.S. Firm Lands Sponsor For Millennium Dome Project

The Los Angeles-based sports and entertainment firm Anschutz Entertainment Group raises its European profile significantly with the just-completed name-in-title agreement with U.K. telecommunications corporation O2 for AEG's Millennium Dome project in London.

Billed as the largest ever of its kind, the deal is worth $13 million per year in cash.

The Millennium Dome, a 22-acre area that will include a new AEG-operated 23,000-seat arena, will be known as the O2. The project will be unveiled in early 2007.

Tim Leiweke, president/CEO of AEG, compares the O2 project with another high-profile venture, AEG's Staples Center in Los Angeles.

"We're spending a half billion pounds on the development of the arena and the entertainment district, so we need that economic model like Staples Center that is about naming rights, founding partners and suites," Leiweke tells Billboard. "This is the largest naming rights deal ever done."

Leiweke likens O2 to other AEG corporate sponsors Staples and Home Depot. "They really see this as about content, distribution, branding and imaging, and doing something no one else is thinking about," he says.

O2 is a cellular company spun off three years ago from British Telecom, so not only is O2 a fresh brand, but corporate sponsorship—particularly at this level—is a fresh concept to the United Kingdom and Europe. But the renamed Millennium Dome, on the other hand, is all too familiar to Brits as a project with a checkered past.

"Not only is this the first significant naming rights deal, maybe ever, in Europe, but the British culture is absolutely skeptical because of the Millennium Dome experience. So we had two strikes going against us from day one," Leiweke explains. "To find a company like [O2] that got 'em we were really lucky."

The O2 project is the latest for the increasingly international AEG, which owns or operates such franchises as the NBA's Lakers and the NHL's Kings and the 20,000-seat Staples Center, along with several medium-size stadium and theater projects in such markets as Chicago, New York, Dallas, Berlin and, more than ever, London.

AEG Live, AEG's concert promotion division headed by CEO Randy Phillips, is second only to Clear Channel Entertainment in terms of grosses, reporting $342 million to Billboard Boxscore last year from tours by such acts as Prince, the Eagles and Usher.

"You can pretty well figure out what we're up to," Leiweke says. "L.A., New York, London, capital markets, the best facilities in the world. No matter what happens to Clear Channel [Entertainment], the reality for us is to be an important part of live entertainment."

At its heart, AEG is an arena company, and the lack of U.S.-quality arenas in Europe would seem a real opportunity. "We own the Manchester Evening News Arena. We're building O2, and soon Berlin," Leiweke says. "We clearly are dedicated, like we are in the States, to being a significant leader in the arena business and the content of arenas in Europe."

Leiweke says AEG is also making more commitments to mid-size soccer and arena facilities. "We're a roof company," he says. "We're about the facility and the content in those facilities, and we're really focused on the key capital markets."
CONGRATULATES OUR ACM AWARDS 2005 WINNERS

BYRON GALLimore
SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR

TIM MCGRRAW
"LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING"
SONG OF THE YEAR

RASCAL FLATTS
TOP VOCAL GROUP

TIM NICHOLS
"LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING"
PUBLISHED BY: WARNER-TAMERLANE PUBLISHING CORP.

DARRIN SMITH
SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR

KEITH URBAN
VIDEO OF THE YEAR

BRENT MASON
TOP GUITAR PLAYER

ALISON KRAUSS
TOP MALE VOCALIST

RANDY SCRUGGS
TOP SPECIALTY INSTRUMENT PLAYER

TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

STUART DUNGAN
TOP FIDDLE PLAYER

JAMES STRICKLAND
PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

TOP STEEL GUITAR PLAYER

DAN DUGMORE
TOP GUITAR PLAYER

WILLIAM EVANS
"I'M GONNA LOVE MYSELF TODAY"
PUBLISHED BY: BMI

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Delta's Song Flies Into Artemis Label Deal

When Delta Air Lines' low-fare, boutique air service Song debuted two years ago, it treated its passengers to personal entertainment in-flight systems.

Now Song is bowing the next phase of its "musical heritage" Song Records.

On May 31, in a multiyear partnership with Artemis Records, Better Than Ezra's new album "Before the Robots" arrives via Song Records/Artemis. It is the New Orleans trio's fifth full-length and first for Artemis.

The next release through the partnership will be from Philadelphia-based R&B singer Jaguar Wright, whose "Divorcing Neo 2 Marry Soul" streets July 12.

The Song Records/Artemis deal was arranged by Song, Artemis, brand consulting firm Creative Branding Group and music attorney Gary Stifflman.

Artemis CEO/president Daniel Glass calls the partnership a "50/50 give-and-take." Artemis signs the artists and handles A&R. Song promotes the artists in-flight, in TV ads and on the Web site song.com/songrecords.

Song Records does not invest in the making of the albums or provide money for any artist advances or outside promotion. It will share in a percentage of profits from CD and digital sales from all retail outlets. In that way, the deal is very similar to the one struck between Concord Records and Starbucks.

While Artemis is, contractually, the primary partner for Song Records, the latter will work with other labels. For example, Song Records is close to closing a comparable deal with Interscope for the Wallflowers' new album "Rebel, Sweetheart." (Billboard, May 21).

Song Records' launch coincides with Song's new non-stop service between New York and Los Angeles, and its forthcoming service between New York and San Francisco and New York and Seattle.

With the music and airline industries needing to adopt new business models to survive, the timing appears right for this alternative pairing to succeed. "It's a unique way to showcase artists," Creative Branding Group president Brooks Branch notes. "Particularly those that fit in with Song's basic philosophy.

"Which, according to Song VP of marketing Tim Mapes, celebrates individuality and self-expression, as exemplified in the airline's individualized in-flight entertainment.

"Song offers customers more than 1,600 MP3 files from its in-flight library. And because Song can track its passengers' listening habits, it has a good idea of which artists will work for Song Records. Better Than Ezra lead singer/ songwriter Kevin Griffin says the tie-in made sense to the band, which also includes bassist Tom Drummmond and drummer Travis McNabb. "Today, if you're not Kelly Clarkson, you need a new way of getting your music heard," he says.

"So, while the lead single from "Before the Robots"—"A Lifetime"—is a hit at adult top 40 radio and is making inroads at triple-A, additional assistance from Song can only help.

"Imagine boarding a plane with the sounds of Better Than Ezra heard throughout the cabin, Branch says. "Then, settled in your seat, you see the band's video for the song you just while boarding.

"Indeed, with an average flight of three hours, Song has a captive audience for its label. "It's a great environment to create and raise awareness of these artists," Branch adds. "Glass notes that there is potential "for millions of impressions.""

"Each seat in all Song aircraft is equipped with a personal video monitor, offering such features as Dish Network TV, movies on demand, videogames and MP3 programming.

"Passengers can immediately purchase CDs and digital downloads of Song Records releases on Song flights, as well as on the airline's Web site.

"Plus, Griffin notes, Song planes will soon "be wrapped with us on one side and Jaguar on the other. I'm not sure if any label—major or independent—would do this for an artist."

Lucky Her: By the end of this year, 15-year-old Lucky Brand Jeans will have 115 domestic stores and five international ones. The company's retro-inspired clothes are carried in high-end department store boutiques, which carry "Made in Southern California," as well as specialty stores as Fred Segal.

"Founded by Gene Montesano and Barry Perlman and owned by Liz Claiborne, the Los Angeles-based Lucky Brand revels in the attitude and spirit of small-town America and classic rock. Its new T-shirts are emblazoned with images of Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin. Others feature the logo of such revered Los Angeles rock venues as the Roxy, the Whilten and the El Rey.

"Indeed, Lucky is committed to doing its part to preserve rock history. It recently hired Emily Morrison, who, as licensing specialist, is now the liaison between Lucky and the artists or venues. When dealing with photographs and the licensing of images, she also works closely with the original photographers.

"For its rock-themed T-shirts, which retail for around $24, Lucky seeks out classic posters, artwork and photos that are true representations of an artist's legacy. Then, Lucky's graphic designers get busy, Morrison notes. "They'll hand paint or draw new designs that go along with the artist's image."

At its core, Lucky is about music, Morrison adds. "It feels like a music company here. The Lucky Brand model is built on a love, and respect, of music and artistry."

Good Deed: Koch-distributed, Houston-based Canvas Records has partnered with the American Diabetes Assoc. Beginning with the July 12 release of Chris Walker's adult contemporary-primed "I Know It's Love," Canvas will donate one-third of the net proceeds from its album sales to the ADA. Walker's CD will soon be available for sale on the ADA (diabetes.org) and Canvas (canvasmusic.com) Web sites, with each site referencing the other. Additionally, the ADA will promote Canvas releases at its fund-raisers and outreach programs.

Scents for Sale: Lisa Price's 5-year-old, Brooklyn, N.Y.-based, all-natural cosmetics line Carol's Daughter received a $10 million infusion from an investment group that includes Will Smith, Def Jam president Jay-Z, Interscope executive chairman Jimmy Iovine and Casablanca chairman Tommy Mottola.

The venture was spearheaded by Steve Stoute, chairman/chief creative officer of Translation, a brand imaging firm in New York. Previously, Stoute has brought together Jay-Z and Reebok, Justin Timberlake and McDonald's, Gwen Stefani and Hewlett-Packard and Beyoncé and Tommy Hilfiger, among others.

This hefty investment will help fund the opening of 10 Carol's Daughter stores in major urban markets, including a flagship store in New York's Harlem neighborhood later this year. Smith's wife, Jada Pinkett-Smith, is the face of Carol's Daughter in a new ad campaign.

Just Say No: For its latest "drink responsibly" campaign, Anheuser-Busch has partnered with Nelly. The St. Louis rapper will appear in a new 30-second TV spot that shines the light on underage drinking and how to prevent it.
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NEW YORK—A proposed class-action settlement with record clubs has some publishers up in arms, claiming a new license procedure places an unreasonable burden on them and sets a bad precedent for securing mechanical licenses.

The settlement stems from a suit filed by three individuals in 2002 against BMI Direct Marketing and Columbia House Music Club for copyright infringement. Plaintiffs Babette Ory (daughter of Edward "Kid" Ory) and songwriters William Griffin Jr. and Leroy Preston claimed that the clubs failed to secure written mechanical licenses before distributing records to club members.

The suit took on broader implications when, in 2003, the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles certified the case as a class action. As a result, the three individuals became representatives of all "legal or beneficial owners of a copyright" to any musical composition contained on any record distributed by Columbia House or BMI Direct since March 20, 1999, and through 60 days after the final court order.

The settlement, reached without admission of liability on the part of the clubs, requires payment to class members of $6.5 million—less attorneys' fees equaling one-third of the amount, $45,000 for the three plaintiffs and certain other costs.

Yet the settlement goes beyond money. It adds a "new license procedure" for the clubs that is prompting the Harry Fox Agency to prepare legal objections.

For many decades, record clubs typically relied on labels to secure written mechanical licenses. The clubs often claimed they held "implied" licenses and paid publishers mechanical royalties at 75% of the statutory rate after distributing records to members. If a publisher objected, the clubs usually stopped distributing records embodying those compositions.

The new procedure requires BMI Direct and Columbia House (recently acquired by BMI Direct's parent company) to create a Web site that identifies each composition embodied on a record at least 30 days before release, including the club's terms, such as a discounted rate. Publishers must visit the site to determine which compositions belong to them. If they elect to accept the terms, they do nothing and the record club will be deemed to hold rights under that negotiated license for at least one year. Any publisher who objects must follow procedures posted on the site to opt out of the license.

"BMI Direct already has a license for the records it releases based upon the course of conduct for over 50 years," BMI Direct senior VP of communications Paula Batson says. "As always, publishers have the right to object to the use of their songs on a club release, and now under the settlement will have additional technology to accomplish this quickly."

Although specific terms are not stated, "there are no plans to change the 75% rate, which has been paid in the past," says BMI Direct attorney Steven Hayes with Manatt Phelps & Phillips in New York.

One of the plaintiffs' attorneys, Maxwell Brecher of Brecher & Collins in Los Angeles, says it would be better to require the record clubs to negotiate licenses in advance of release, but they refuse to do so.

Historically, the clubs have said they have low profit margins, making reduced mechanical rates necessary to stay in business. Labels claim the time and expense involved make re-licensing of compositions prohibitive.

The new procedure effectively shifts the responsibility to publishers to take action to prevent negotiated mechanical rates. "We think it is not a good precedent to have a court enforcing a licensing system where publishers have to constantly monitor a Web site to determine whether their songs are being used at a reduced rate," HFA senior VP/general counsel Jacqueline Charlesworth says.

Famous Music Publishing chairman/CEO Irwin Robinson adds that the license structure makes it "a crazy settlement." Even before the suit was filed, HFA had begun looking into the way record clubs licensed mechanical rights, particularly because the clubs were issuing records closer to initial release, often competing with front-line titles.

The settlement binds all class members to the future procedure unless they request to be excluded. However, it appears to require publishers to continue visiting the Web site, identifying each composition rather than simply providing notice that a publisher elects to be permanently excluded.

 Plaintiffs' lawyer Neville Johnson with Johnson & Rishwain in Los Angeles says, "I am trying to eradicate a weakness that's existed for 50 years." Columbia House declined to comment.

Additional information on the settlement can be found at gilarldi.com/orysettlement.

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Publishers Find Fault In Club Settlement

The court held that using a song in a "singalong" format required more than a mechanical license.

BMG Music Publishing has brought successful lawsuits against karaoke companies, VP of legal and business affairs Peter Brodsky says. "We have also obtained settlements and issued licenses going forward." Karaoke licenses usually provide for a per-unit, per-song rate, with rights limited to the territory where the company does business, Brodsky says. Sometimes they require an advance, with the amount based on the size of the company and anticipated sales. He declined to provide a range of rates or advances.

SWEPT AWAY: Windswept Holdings CEO Evan Medow says the indie publisher is closing its London office June 30. The current terms typical for U.K. writers make it unfeasible to continue investing in U.K. deals, he says.

"What with the high advances, low fees and short retentions, we would prefer to invest in opportunities that will provide us with a higher return, longer involvement and the ability to build assets."

The U.K. management team of Peter McComley and Paul Flynn is forming a new company, P&P Songs, which is negotiating a long-term subpublishing deal with Windswept to represent the catalog in the United Kingdom. Windswept says it will most likely provide them with financing to assure the success of the business.

Windswept represents the Trio and Quartet catalogs ("Fever," "Happy Together"); Hitco Music (Beyoncé, Ciara); and such songwriters as Pete Townshend, Kings of Leon and Mike Elizondo.
SYDNEY—Australia looks set this June to become the 20th territory to introduce Apple Computer’s iTunes music store, but doubts remain about how much material from indie labels Down Under will be available when the service launches.

In the wake of an agreement between Apple and local authors’ rights bodies on royalty rates, sources at the Australian affiliates of three major record companies—Walter Music, Universal and EMI—confirm that repertoire deals have been struck with Apple.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment Australia declines to comment on negotiations, which Billboard understands are ongoing. Apple declines to comment on any prelaunch agreements.

Two of Australia’s three biggest indie labels confirm they are currently negotiating with Apple.

“We’re in the midst of talking to them now,” says Michael Paris, managing director of Melbourne-based Festival Mushroom Records. “Do we want to be on iTunes? Yes, we do,” Paris continues. “They’re clearly going to make an impact on the local industry. But we don’t want to do a deal that could devalue our company and our artists.”

Initial discussions with Apple have also begun at Melbourne-based Shock Records. CEO Charles Cudras says, “We would certainly like to be on iTunes,” he says. “We represent some very interesting music, which would make a good download catalog.

At Australia’s other leading indie, Sydney-based GMM Distribution, managing director Sebastian Chace says the company has been in contact with Apple but negotiations have yet to begin. MGM handles 30,000 titles from 500 labels. However, Stuart Waiters, chief executive of trade group the Assn. of Australian Independent Record Labels (AIR), says he is concerned that indie music may be treated as low priority by Apple, and their terms will not match those offered to major labels.

Waiters claims Apple has not yet approached most indies. “We understand that they initially want to deal with just the three biggest independents,” he says.

According to Waiters, local indies collectively account for a 25% value share of the recorded music market, and for 80% of Australian repertoire releases.

AIR has just struck a deal with British digital rights management specialist RightSource, allowing Aussie indie labels and artists to use the Glasgow, Scotland-based company as their data/licensing infrastructure to manage deals with online music services overseas (billboard.biz, May 24).

The deal paves the way for AIR members’ content to be licensed to iTunes’ stores in the United States and European territories.

The interim deal between Apple and local collecting societies the Australasian Performing Right Assn. and the Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society clears the way for an iTunes launch front the publishers’ standpoint.

APRA/AMCOS CEO Brett Cottle confirms that the license agreement, which was struck April 27, gives a mechanical royalty rate of 0.65% of Apple’s retail price, plus a “communication” royalty rate of 1.75%.

Cottle says a similar combined rate of 8% applies to existing Australian download services. He adds that APRA/AMCOS wanted to ensure equitable royalty terms while creating a commercial licensing environment which would encourage an early launch of the service.

Apple has been closed-lipped about a launch date, although media reports had suggested iTunes would go live April 28. Again, Apple declines to comment.

“Where's the fun?” says Ottawa-born singer/songwriter Anka, who paved the way internationally for Canadian artists in the ’50s. “It shows we've really come a long way.”

“Tribute is the key word,” says Juno Awards, begun inducting artists into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame at BCE Place, a business, shopping and entertainment complex on Yonge Street.

CARAS, which organizes Canada’s Juno Awards, began inducting artists into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame at the 1978 Juno ceremony. There have been more than 24 inductees, including Oscar Peterson, Hank Snow, Paul Anka, Leonard Cohen, Gordon Lightfoot, Anne Murray and the Tragically Hip. “It is an impressive list for us to draw upon for the Hall of Fame,” Reynolds says.

Industry figures and artists say the project is long overdue given the global profile of Canadian music.

“It’s a great idea,” says Ottawa-born singer/songwriter Anka, who paved the way internationally for Canadian artists in the ’50s. “It shows we’ve really come a long way.”

“Guitarist Randy Bachman, of the Guess Who and Bachman-Turner Odredrive, agrees: “We’ve come of age, and it’s time to celebrate. There’s been three decades of huge Canadian successes internationally.”

Eighteen months ago, CARAS retained Toronto-based Lord Cultural Resources, Planning and Management to undertake a concept study for the Hall of Fame. The firm went on to develop master plans for the facility, which will largely feature interactive exhibits.

“This is not going to be a museum,” Reynolds says.

“We’re not going to have just a bunch of dusty guitars. This is going to be a place [that] when you come out of it you will say, ‘That was fun,’ but you learned about Canadian music.”

In the bidding to host the Hall of Fame, Toronto edged out nearby Hamilton, Ontario, and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Toronto, which has a population of 4 million, had the inside track because of its strong tourism business, sources say.

“There are 17 million tourists coming to Toronto annually,” Reynolds says. “We hope to tap into that market.”

Canada’s recording industry has been based in Toronto for decades, and the Yonge Street/Dundas Street corridor in itself has an unusually rich musical history.

In the 1960s, Yonge Street buzzed with entertainment at such clubs as Le Coq D’Or, the Town.
ITALY'S SIAE IN TURMOIL
Collecting Society's President Resigns As Government Intervention Looms

MILAN—Members of the Italian music industry are concerned about the future of authors’ collecting society SIAE following the May 11 resignation of its president, Franco Migliacci.

Industry insiders fear the society risks a return to administration by a government-appointed commissioner, a situation that existed between 1999 and 2003. Publishers and other SIAE members vehemently opposed that scenario, saying it will compromise the body’s independence.

Verona insists that “in terms of public performance at least, SIAE is one of the most efficient collecting societies in the world. Over the years it has produced vast revenues.”

They view such a move as unjustified political interference.

A government commissioner-controlled system, SIAE members say, will put the organization’s financial transparency—knowledge of how much money is collected and distributed—at risk.

“We now know the SIAE system and how it operates,” says Toni Verona, managing director of Moderna-based independent label, publisher, Alba Bianca.

“Under government control,” he continues, “we would no longer be able to keep an eye on the system; they could change it without being obliged to let us, the members, know.”

Insiders also fear that a government-controlled SIAE could begin selling off its considerable real estate assets in order to raise money to support the body's daily operations.

Trade group FEM, representing Italy’s major publishers and leading independents, has issued a statement that its members would consider leaving SIAE if it returns to administration by a government-appointed commissioner.

Other trade groups, including independent publishers’ association ANEM, have backed FEM’s stance.

Verona, a member of ANEM and one of the 64 members of SIAE’s assembly, “is clear that some of Italy’s ruling political parties would like to get their hands on SIAE’s hands,” he says. “They see it as a state company, like (broadcaster) Rai TV. But it isn’t. It’s an economic public entity governed by its members.”

Verona insists that “in terms of public performance at least, SIAE is one of the most efficient collecting societies in the world. Over the years it has produced vast revenues.”

SIAE was founded in 1882. It represents some 75,000 writers and publishers in the fields of music, literature, cinema and theater, and collects mechanical and performing rights.

Its unique constitution sets it up as a government body that operates as a private company with an independent board that operates as a private company with an eight-member ruling council. Five of the council are elected by SIAE members through the assembly; the other three are government appointees.

The society was last placed under a government-appointed commissioner, Mauro Masi, in 1999 after it ran a huge deficit.

The government invoked powers in SIAE’s statutes that allowed the move if the body faced insolvency.

SIAE’s financial problems were related to the abolition, under European Union rules, of a fee the body earned for collecting government taxes related to public-event costs ranging from concert and movie ticket sales to horse-racing bets (Billboard, June 12, 1999).

Masi proceeded to improve finances by selling off some SIAE buildings but only did what our assembly had already voted for,” Verona says.

When Masi completed his term in June 2003, the SIAE- appointed commissioner, I can assure you they are a tiny minority,” he says.

According to Corsi, 90% of the assembly and SIAE members are opposed to the appointment of a commissioner.

“They feel it would be an act of suicide for SIAE,” he says.

Italian labels trade group FIMI supports that stance.

“We’re against [of control of SIAE by a government commissioner], like everybody else in the music industry,” FIMI director general Enzo Maizza says. SIAE needs to be an independent body, he adds, in order to function properly.

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LOUISIANA—At this year’s E3 Expo, the annual videogame convention held here May 17-20, the game industry sought to establish itself as an increasingly important channel for the consumption of traditional entertainment media like movies and music.

The dominant topic at the event was the impact of the next-generation consoles: Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo will introduce in the next six to 20 months. These new platforms will essentially reset the entire technological foundation of the industry and are expected to inspire a wave of innovation.

While this transition to new hardware takes place, the most immediate impact can be seen on the games in development for current-generation consoles. Most publishers are releasing games that skew heavily toward recognizable brands—particularly movie titles—for existing devices because they are holding their most new and innovative projects for the next generation.


Also significant is that game developers are packaging as much extra content into videogames as possible in an attempt to keep the current-generation sales channel active. The best example is the much-anticipated “50 Cent: Bulletproof,” currently in development by Vivendi Universal Games and slated for a fall release.

The videogame features the voices and likenesses of 50 Cent and other G-Unit members as well as original songs recorded exclusively for the game. It includes up to four hours of music and more than an hour of videos, which can be played on the console, independently of the game.

It also will contain at least 10 freestyle tracks, which gamers can mix and customize. According to game producer Aaron Blay, it will retain the typical videogame price of $50.

“There’s no other game out there right now like it,” Blay says. “We’re setting the bar for multimedia.”

Music has become a staple for adding value to videogames. Electronic Arts, which pioneered the art of bringing new artists through videogame soundtracks, is making music an interactive part of the game strategy of such titles as “The Sims 2.”

The goal of the game is to manipulate the lives of in-game characters and manage their interaction with others, helping them find love, prosperity and happiness. For instance, when a character requests a song in a club, his or her choice of music affects how others view the character. EA is licensing a variety of music for “The Sims 2.”

“If I play the right music, I can make someone in the game fall in love” with my character,” Sims 2’ senior producer Scott Anos says.

Additionally, certain characters will wear MP3 players and interacting with them will unlock new songs.

DISCOVERY CHANNEL
As music takes on an increasingly central role in the videogame, the videogame industry hopes to convince record companies that games can be used as a channel not only for music discovery, but also digital sales.

“The gamer is the consumer of the future. If you really understand games, you can extend that into other areas,” says Vince Broudy, senior VP of games for CNET’s gamespot.com.

The next generation of videogame consoles will have the processing power and broadband Internet access to allow videogames to function much like a Web site, and just as Web sites offer songs for fans often sourced from site to site as their interests wander. so will gamers, he says. For instance, an Xbox user could pause mid-play and use a link in the game to get more information about a song or a band used in the soundtrack. The user could also buy a download of the song or album.

“Thai sequence is totally going to happen,” Broudy says.

“With connected consoles, consumers will start with a game and end up with something else. Rights holders need to think about how to make their content accessible so users can make that jump.”

GAMES

BY ANTONY BRUNO

Transition Expected With Next-Gen Consoles

At No. 2, Akon’s “Lonely” is the artist’s third top 10 video on Yahoo Music.

The latest video from actor/singer Jesse McCartney hits No. 16 after making its online debut on Yahoo Music.

A NEW GIZMONDO
Just as the G88 player sang with Sony’s PlayStation Portable and Nintendo’s DSi, Sony’s long-rumored portable game handset is expected to be a hit with Tiger Telematics, with its much-discussed Gizmondo handset.

The device is an MP3 player, gaming handset, portable movie player, digital camera, wireless multimedia messaging port and wireless communicator with a built-in Global Positioning System chip for location-based wireless Internet services. The chip also allows users to trade digital photos with other Gizmondo owners or mobile phone subscribers, download music files and videoclips, and send text messages.

It features a full-color screen, graphics card and memory card slot for removable storage, as well as a Bluetooth connection for multiplayer gaming. It uses Windows Media Player 9 to play movies and music.

The device also issues ringtone-like alerts when it receives a message. Polyphonic versions of various tones are available at the Gizmondo Web site, and the company is developing a wireless full-song music download site as well.

Available for several months in Europe, Gizmondo will make its U.S. bow Aug. 11.

—Antony Bruno

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Sony BMG Tests Technology To Limit CD Burning

As part of its mounting U.S. rollout of content-enhanced and copy-protected CDs, Sony BMG Music Entertainment is testing technology solutions that bar consumers from making additional copies of burned CD-R discs.

Since March the company has released at least 10 commercial titles—a move that Borders Group is expecting to begin commercial trials of sterile burning within the next month. To date, most copy protection and other digital rights management-based solutions that allow for burning have not included secure burning.

Early copy-protected discs as well as all DRM-protected files sold through online retailers like iTunes, Napster and others offer burning of tracks into unprotected WAV files. Those burned CDs can then be ripped back onto a personal computer minus a DRM wrapper and converted into MP3 files.

Under the new solution, tracks ripped and burned from a copy-protected disc are copied to a blank CD in Microsoft’s Windows Media Audio format. The DRM embedded on the discs bars the burned CD from being copied.

"The secure burning solution is the sensible way forward," FirstInternet CEO Mathew Gilliat-Smith says. "Most consumers accept that making a copy for personal use is really what they want it for. The industry is keen to make sure that is not abused by making copies for other people that would otherwise go buy a CD."

As with other copy-protected discs, albums featuring XCP will allow for three copies to be made. However, Sony BMG has said it is not locked into the number of copies. The label is looking to offer consumers a fair-use replication of rights enjoyed on existing CDs.

COMPATIBLE FOR ALL?

A key concern with copy-protection efforts remains compatibility.

It is a sticking point at Sony BMG and other labels as they look to increase the number of copy-protected CDs they push into the market.

Among the biggest headaches: Secure burning means that iPod users do not have any means of transferring tracks to their device, because Apple Computer has yet to license its FairPlay DRM for use on copy-protected discs.

As far as more basic CD player compatibility issues, Gilliat-Smith says the discs are compliant with Sony Philips CD specifications and should therefore play in all conventional CD players.

The moves with FirstInternet are part of a larger copy-protection push by Sony BMG that also includes SunnComm and its MediaMax technology.

To date, SunnComm has been the music giant’s primary partner on commercial releases—including Velvet Revolver’s “Contraband” and Anthony Hamilton’s solo album. In all, more than 5.5 million content-enhanced and protected discs have been shipped featuring SunnComm technology.

FirstInternet’s XCP has been used previously on pre-release CDs only. Sony BMG is the first to commercially deploy XCP.

FirstInternet’s other clients—which include Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group and EMI—are using XCP for prerelease material.

Sony BMG expects that by year’s end a substantial number of its U.S. releases will employ either MediaMax or XCP. All copy-protected solutions will include such extras as photos galleries, enhanced liner notes and links to other features.

Music’s A Drag For Booksellers

Category Hurts Financial Results At Borders, Barnes & Noble

NEW YORK—Borders Group, the book merchant with the strongest exposure to music, had the weakest fiscal first quarter of the three publicly traded book chains that reported results the week of May 16.

In fact, looking at the results from Ann Arbor, Mich.-based Borders Group, New York-based Barnes & Noble and Florence, Ala.-based Books-a-Million, it is clear that each chain’s financial gain was in inverse proportion to its exposure to music.

While Borders & Noble and Books-a-Million were able to eke out a profit, not so for Borders, which lost $5.3 million, or 7 cents per share, on sales of $853 million in the three months ending April 30. Those results were down from the $117.3 million in the first quarter. But the only divisions that carry music are its U.S. and international superstores. Billboard estimates that for those stores, music comprises 16%-17% of revenue. However, the chain is downsizing its commitment to music, according to comments made by Borders Group executives during a conference call.

Meanwhile, Barnes & Noble—which Billboard estimates derives 7%-8% of its revenue from music—reported net income of $9.9 million, or 14 cents per diluted share, on sales of $113 million. While same-store sales were up, net income and total sales were down from the prior first quarter, when net income was $12.3 million, or 7 cents per diluted share, on sales of $107.9 million.

Books-a-Million operates 207 stores, and only about five of them carry music, which is racked by Anderson Merchandisers. The company occasionally carries budget music promotions on an in-out basis.

Borders Group CEO Greg Josefowicz said in a statement that the company’s trade book sales, though strong, were not enough to compensate for declines in other categories—particularly music, “where we have a greater structural challenge.”

In a conference call with Wall Street analysts, Josefowicz added that DVD continued to grow but “did not do its usual job in offsetting weakness in music.” He reported that while music was down 18% for the quarter, in the period’s last few weeks the decline appeared to accelerate to about 16%.

“We anticipated the decline in music, (but) not the high nature of the decline,” he said.

During the call, Borders executives were continually asked about plans to downsize music, and Josefowicz said that as the company builds new outlets and remodels existing superstores, music is getting a smaller imprint in terms of space and inventory. But Borders executives pointed out that new, taller racks carry more music than current fixtures, so they reduce space while maintaining selection.

“In many of our remodels and one-offs,” Josefowicz said, "we have accelerated and gone beyond what we anticipated the music to decline curve to be, and with some experimentation of going way beyond, it escalates the decline (of music). The key for us is not necessarily to manage the space down, but it’s more focused on the effective redeployment of the space and trying to find the right combination of product and placement that drives the other categories in sales.”

In a report to investors, Matt Fassler, an analyst with New York-based Goldman Sachs, said that until Borders Group “successfully addresses music, results will be under pressure.”

Fassler told Billboard: “It’s likely that Borders will have to make some difficult decisions down the road to contend with the reality of music not being a profit center in a declining category. At some point, that is likely to mean a more dramatic reduction in space and inventory allocated to music.”
At Hastings, Q1 Is A Downer

While managing to eke out a profit for its fiscal first quarter, ending April 30, Hastings Entertainment was down from the corresponding period in 2004. The 153-store, Amarillo, Texas-based chain posted net income of $800,000, or six cents per diluted share, on revenue of $129.1 million. That compares with the $2 million, or 17 cents per diluted share, the company rang up in the prior first quarter, when revenue was $126.9 million.

While total revenue was up 1.7%, comparable-store sales were nearly flat, down 0.3% for the quarter.

Breaking out same-store sales by product category, music and books were down 1.4% and 1.3%, respectively, while other categories generated positive results: Video for sale was up 2.4%; videogames rose 30.6%; and accessories and boutique grew 17.1%. Video rental, which comprises 19% of total sales, was down 6.1%, but the company did not break out same-store sales for the category.

Hastings attributes the decline in books and music to a weaker release schedule than in 2004. Hastings VP of purchasing Steve Hicks believes that some publishers are holding off new releases until the next Harry Potter book arrives July 16. “I think a lot of people are waiting for Harry Potter to come out, like that will magically save the industry.”

Hicks adds that its not a good sign when a book from 2003, “The Da Vinci Code,” is still a top three seller while the latest John Grisham novel “came and went and had no legs.”

Meanwhile, album sales are down 8.6% so far this year, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Describing the first quarter, Hastings VP/COO Dan Crow says, “Sales were OK in February [and] fabulous in March, but April just shot us down.”

The chain managed only a 2.4% comparable-store gain in video, while other music chains have been posting double-digit gains in that category. However, Hastings has a long history of movie merchandising, thanks to its video-rental business and its early entry to sell-through, so it has not experienced the recent ramp-up — and gains — that others have. But even with the DVD-driven growth of the last few years, Crow notes, retailers will eventually run into the law of numbers, where bigger base volume produces smaller percentage gains.

Also, he points out that rental revenue sharing used to derived from six-month contracts and now the term is more like 30 days, allowing the chain to convert rentals to previously viewed-for-sale copies quicker. While that is cannibalizing volume on certain titles — since some sales are made at the lower price points of $7.99 or even $1.99 or $2.99 — the benefit of the trade-off is customer loyalty, Crow says.

In the first quarter, video self-through and rental each accounted for 19% of revenue. Books represented 21%, music was 26%, videogames held 8%, boutique was 4%, and software and consumerables like candy and soda were 3%.

Looking at income, gross profit decreased one percentage point compared with fiscal first-quarter 2004, to 34%. Within that, merchandise gross profit dropped even more, from 28.9% to 27.4%. Meanwhile, selling, general and administrative expenses increased from 52.3% to 52.8%.

“Three things impacted our gross profit in the first quarter compared to last year,” Crow says. “First, whenever you incur freight expense, you have to put it on the balance sheet and amortize it based on inventory turns.”

In the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal year, Hastings had a freight build-up when it missed its sales budget. “So in the first quarter we had more coming out of inventory and going into P&L,” Crow explains. “That was about $700,000.”

Second, with the missed sales budget, Hastings incurred higher than expected expenses on returns because it converted inventory to cash and reapedoyed it. Finally, the company accelerated cycle counts, spending $600,000 to count inventory in such high-shrinkage areas as DVD box sets and in-store.

Those three developments together cost the company about $1.8 million. Crow says, accounting for the variance in profit between this year and last year.

Hastings has reaffirmed its earnings guidance, projecting that it will make 55 cents-58 cents per diluted share for the current fiscal year.

The company announced its earnings May 24, before trading opened. It finished the day at $25.56, down from $27.79 at the previous close. Its 52-week range is $9.57-10.25.

MY MISTAKES: In the story on CD-burning kiosks in the May 17 issue, I incorrectly listed the markets where Starbucks allows customers to make their own CDs. The service is available only in the chain’s Seattle and Austin stores. Moreover, I called the kiosk presence a test, but those two markets represent the first phase of a national rollout. Finally, there are 6,400 Starbucks locations in North America, but only 4,500 are company operated; the remainder are licensed.

In the May 28 Retail Track, I misspelled the name of the law firm representing Syber-sound in its karaoke suit. The correct spelling is Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld.

1.3%
The decline of same-store music sales at Hastings, which is pretty good considering U.S. album sales are down 8.6%.

By ED CHRISTMAN echristman@billboard.com
Secretly Canadian Sets Up DVD Label

Bloomington, Ind.-based Secretly Canadian is morphing its DVD distribution division, Blank Stare, into a full-service DVD imprint. The record label/boutique distributor will release one of its first major projects—the acclaimed documentary “Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?”—in conjunction with production company Right Right Films. “Why Should the Devil?” is a 94-minute examination of secretly Canadian and Jagjaguwar as well as SC Distribution—is in the midst of one of its most successful years, with releases by Magnolia Electric Co., Antony & the Johnsons, Okervil River and Oneida generating national attention.

DEF FANS: New York-based hip-hop label Definitive Jux has launched a high-priced fan club. Members will receive packages of exclusive product four times per year. The first offering,

MORE KOCH: After reaching an agreement to be acquired by Canada-based ROW Entertainment Income Fund, Port Washington, N.Y.-based Koch Entertainment Distribution announced a flurry of distribution deals (Billboard, May 28).

Koch has re-upped with Northampton, Mass.-based roots label Signature Sounds, which is prepping an album from Amy Rigby, Wilmington, N.C.-based AnimEigo, which specializes in anime; and DFTV, the record label arm of Detroit Public Television that has had runaway success with Irishman Daniel O’Donnell.

Additionally, Koch has announced exclusive U.S. distribution agreements with a handful of smaller indies, including disco label Salsoul Records, new film/DVD operation Underground Railroad Co., indie rock imprint MoRisen, adult contemporary label Canvas Records, recently formed urban imprint Shorman Work, pop label Collateral Damage Entertainment and rock imprint Gotham Records.

MEYERS’ MOVE: The Folk Alliance has selected Louis-Jay Meyers as its new executive director. He replaces Phyllis Barney, who will step down from the nonprofit advocacy group June 1.

Meyers is one of the four founders of the annual South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin and has played a part in organizing the LMNOP Music Conference in New Orleans.

He will spearhead the Folk Alliance’s relocation from Silver Springs, Md., to Memphis. The group will stage its 18th annual conference Feb. 16-19, 2006, in Austin...
Festivals Keeping Prog Rock Alive
A Tight-Knit Internet Community Helps Sustain Global Audience

In the '70s heyday of progressive rock, bands like Pink Floyd, Yes and Rush were regulars on the airwaves and filled arenas and stadiums. Fans seemingly could not get enough of these bands' lengthy compositions, which were as complex as they were experimental. But when punk arrived and labels began pushing shorter, catchier songs, the development and appeal of new prog talent fell by the wayside.

But the Internet explosion in the mid-'90s created an international communications channel that united the prog community. And a vehicle for socializing and hearing new bands has sprung from the tightly knit society: festivals. The Flower Kings, Spock's Beard, Porcupine Tree, Ozric Tentacles and Opeth are among the top-of-the-mind acts in today's scene; all have either appeared or regularly performed at such concerts. With festivals catering to a variety of sounds within the genre, such bands are welcomed by fans of everything from neo prog and space rock to metal, Canterbury and symphonic prog.

Roughly two dozen of these festivals are held annually around the world. U.S. events include CalProg in Whittier, Calif. (June 4); Prog Day in Chapel Hill, N.C. (Sept. 3-4); and ProgPower in Atlanta (Sept. 16-17).

ProgPower’s sister gathering, ProgPower Europe (to be held Oct. 1-2 in Baarlo, the Netherlands), is among the events located outside the United States. European shows like the Sweden Rock Festival in Solvesborg (June 9-11) are on the prog concert circuit because their lineups often include such bands.

The most popular prog meeting outside the States is the weekend-long Baja Prog in Mexicali, Mexico (March 30-April 2).

Strong word-of-mouth—again spread via Web sites like progressiveworld.net and seaoftranquility.com—is the primary means of promoting these shows.

“The advent of the Internet was the (tipping point) for everything, because people that are into this kind of stuff would normally consider themselves isolated,” observes John Collinge, owner/publisher/editor in chief of Progression magazine, a quarterly publication dedicated to the genre.

In the United States, crowd numbers are modest (maxing out at approximately 1,200 per day), but artists and fans travel from as far as Italy and Japan to attend. Their dedication isn’t lost on the amateur promoters behind the festivals, because the events were primarily established for the love of the music.

In fact, the most popular prog gathering stateside—the North East Art Rock Festival in Bethlehem, Pa.—is a registered nonprofit entity, according to co-founder Chad Hutchinson.

NEARfest, now in its seventh year, is set for July 9-10 at the 1,000-seat Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University.

One reason for this is his partner Rob Laducci held NEARfest there is because they prefer the amenities the venue offers. But with their own out-of-pocket funds backing the show, it is also cost-prohibitive to move to a larger venue.

Because major promoters don’t think there’s an opportunity in such ventures, “no one that size will touch us,” Hutchinson says. “Just like the major record labels won’t sign any [progressive group].” (One exception is Porcupine Tree, whose recent “Deadwing” is the British veteran act’s second album on Lava.

Inside Out Music America is one of the few U.S. labels that regularly works with progressive rock—continuing on >p20

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DeGraw’s Headliner Status Grows

LOS ANGELES—Gavin DeGraw is a triple threat in the touring world.

For more than two years, the soulful singer/songwriter has toured the country as an opening act, a co-headliner and now, a headliner selling out 90% of his own dates, according to his booking agent Jonny Podell of the Podell Talent Agency.

But Podell is in no hurry to pack in whatever he can.

“Whatever we think we can do, we do a little less,” Podell says of his touring strategy for DeGraw. “If you know you have a jewel with 50 years in front of him, it’s better to play it safe.”

DeGraw started out opening for such acts as Sister Hazel and Maroon 5 surrounding the 2003 release of his debut album “Chariot” (I Records).

The album has sold 335,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and peaked at No. 1 on the Top Independent chart. A rereleased version of the album featuring a second disc with acoustic versions of all of the “Chariot” tracks, “Chariot Stripped,” has sold 446,000 units since its July 2004 debut.

DeGraw says, “I Don’t Want to Be” reached No. 1 on the Mainstream Top 40 chart and No. 10 on the Billboard Hot 100.

DeGraw was also awarded a spot on the Virgin Mega college tour with Michelle Branch and opened on his first arena dates for Seal.

It wasn’t until last January that DeGraw headlined his own dates, and even then, Podell’s idea was to do this sparingly.

“We were still doing some supporting for Barenaked Ladies last year while we were also doing some headlining at colleges and clubs,” he says.

In 2004, DeGraw’s headlining shows grossed $412,000, according to Billboard Boxscore, and were attended by more than 26,000.

This year’s headlining runs—which are averaging $20-$25 per ticket—have grossed $310,000 so far, according to Billboard Boxscore.

Podell believed this summer was the time to “start being a little bold” in conjunction with the release of second single “Chariot,” which is No. 13 on the Adult Top 40 chart. A Zach Braff-directed video is airing on MTV and VH1.

Podell booked DeGraw with opening acts including Howie Day, in some 6,000-seat theaters in major markets.

“I feel a bit more secure that I have been building slowly,” DeGraw says. “It is important to test out the waters to see if I can sustain my own tour and continue to get opportunities to open up for other artists.”

Promoters and venues involved in his current headlining tours say the key to bringing in audiences is to target women.

For DeGraw’s June 19 stop at the 2,000-seat Saenger Theater in Mobile, Ala., Blue Deuce Entertainment CEO Russell Doussant, the show’s promoter, says that he’s aiming at females aged 17-45, from high-schoolers to soccer moms.

He’s using e-mail blasts, radio buy and posters at coffee shops and other lifestyle outlets.

“All indications are that the show will sell out,” Doussant says.

Peter Zimmerman, program director for the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Va., says that he hopes DeGraw can stop at his 7,000-seat venue annually. “I’m trying to build audiences for the future,” he says.

Wolf Trap’s in-house promotion staff has partnered with radio and has launched online marketing efforts. Additionally, the DeGraw date is part of a season calendar distributed at local retailers.

After DeGraw’s headlining run ends July 30, he will open 15 theater and amphitheater dates on Avril Lavigne’s tour in August. Interspersed with his own shows, DeGraw is also opening for the Allman Brothers Band on four dates in July.

Podell says the next move for DeGraw will depend on the success of the new single.

“We are open after the middle of September,” Podell says. “If there is an impact like the last single, we will move up. Maybe we’ll play bigger venues or try to be an opening act on a tour like U2’s.”

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TOURING BY CHRISTA TITUS

TOURING BY JILL KIPNS

Once Gavin DeGraw’s headlining run ends in July, he’ll open for Avril Lavigne.

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On The Road
RAY WADDELL rwaddell@billboard.com

Metropolitan Talent Has An In With NY Society

Metropolitan Talent Presents has signed an exclusive booking deal with The New York Society for Ethical Culture to book shows at the latter's home on New York's Upper West Side (billboard.biz, May 17).

The 850-seat, 95-year-old concert hall overlooking Central Park recently underwent a $5 million renovation. Metropolitan CEO John Scher says the deal ends a longstanding need for an intimate concert hall in New York.

The first show under the label will be a June 23 concert by guitarist Robert Fripp, known for his work with King Crimson, Brian Eno, David Bowie and others. Tickets went on sale May 23.

"We think this will be a landmark venue from the time it opens up with Robert Fripp," Scher says. "And it won't be taking business from established rooms, because most of those are controlled by people who haven't thought about these smaller venues."

Led by music biz veterans Al Cafaro and Scher, Metropolitan Talent is a full-service entertainment company that includes artist management, theater and TV production and concert promotion divisions, as well as the Wyrd Recordings label.

Scher is now free to promote concerts again after a judge ruled he non-compete clause with Clear Channel Entertainment had terminated (Billboard, April 2).

"As I sort of re-emerge with our concert division. we're examining all of the opportunities that are out there," Scher tells On The Road. "I think in the live music industry there are probably more opportunities than there have been in maybe 20 years."

Scher says "seismographic" changes in the industry will benefit independent regional promoters.

"There are some very unique niches out there that aren't always served by national concert companies with an agenda to get all of the major regional or national tours," he says.

"From an artist-development standpoint, having the right kind of knowledge of a local market will become invaluable to agents and managers interested in that kind of development."

ROCKIN' THE POCONOS:

The Mountain Laurel Center in Bushkill, Pa., will begin its first summer-long season June 24 with the Spanish Harlem Orchestra. The venue will host 31 performances by 19 artists, all taking place at the 7,500-capacity Tunk Ridge Pavilion.

The exception is the Flying Karamazov Brothers, who will play a 4x performance run at the 4,000-seat Lakehouse Theatre. MLC bookings include the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra with Keith Lockhart conducting; Crosby, Stills & Nash; ZZ Top; Latin jazz artist Poncho Sanchez and his band, Montgomery Gentry.

This Daily, Ricky Skaggs with the Del McCoury Band and Mountain Heart; and Triol featuring Stanley Clarke, Bela Fleck and Jean-Luc Ponty.

Late entertainment, presented by the MLC in association with Mario A. Torres Productions, includes the Spanish Harlem Orchestra, Cuban musician Alfredo de la Fé with Brazilian jazz percussionist Annette A. Aguilar, "El Maestro" Johnny Pacheco with jazz singer Jon Lucien and Orsotura Broadway.

MLC opened in 2003 with the help of a $15 million state grant and $17 million in bonds issued by the Pike County Commercial and Industrial Development Authority. After restructuring its volunteer board of directors and electing Andrew Forte as its chairman, Richard Bryant was named CEO of the operation.

"I have overall responsibility for programming the venue and handle many of the bookings myself," Bryant says. "I rely on our principal programming associate Jim Delia Croce and programmer Herschel Freeman for areas of expertise that complement my own."

FESTIVALS (cont.)

from >>p19

sive acts. President Jim Pitulski would like to see established promoters support these concerts and help elevate their status. But he notes that there are some promoters who wouldn't welcome corporate involvement—or even have the fees attain mainstream popularity.

"I think they like the boutique factor... That's one of the strange things about it," Pitulski says. "They don't want to lose their handle on it, because it's part of who they are." More festivals are on the horizon. According to George Boleau, founder of the recently held Rites of Spring Festival in Phoenixville, Pa., there is interest in launching fests in Florida and Chicago. They are encouraged by prog strongholds along the Northeast Corridor, where smaller concerts are regularly hosted by such organizations as the New Jersey Prog House at the Forum Theatre in Metuchen.

Many who attend prog shows are 30 and older, but teens and those in their 20s are also fans. Boleau thinks that more exposure is all that is needed to turn the next generation on to prog.

"We're starting to see more new faces, but we believe the word is actually starting to get out there," he says. "Basically, if we can touch the kids again with this kind of music, I think we'll win more of it."
When success happens, sometimes there is no time to stop and celebrate—even when it's your birthday. On the day he turned 26, Maroon 5 frontman Adam Levine set aside some time to speak to Billboard at a tour stop in Corpus Christi, Texas.

You've been on the road so much, have you had a chance to work on the next album?

No, not really. We've been a little distracted by all this amazing shit that's been going on. We're not putting ourselves under any pressure to deliver anything so quickly. Also, I think the world can use a little break from us at this point.

Have you had a chance to enjoy your success?

We don't want to back it up too much; we still want to treat everything as though there is something on the line, which there most certainly is. We want to prove something with our second record that we didn't with our first. It's kind of a daunting task, but I think if we just continue to be honest with ourselves and keep working hard the way we have been, everything will be cool.

What specifically do you want to prove with your second album?

I'm not sure what we want to prove, but I know we want to do something different and unexpected. I think that is safe to say because our musical tastes have already changed since we made the first record, so there is going to be a lot of different-sounding material.

When did you realize the band was a success?

There have been so many of those moments and milestones over the last couple of years I can't pick one as the quintessential moment. It took years to realize that we were in there. As far as we were concerned we were a success when the record went platinum. That's a huge success. Eight million records is more like an acid trip.

While your band was experiencing this success and getting bigger, the music industry was contracting—first with J Records merging with RCA and then Sony and BMG. Were you affected by the consolidation?

Luckily there was so much enthusiasm for the record, we started moving full throttle right before that whole big mess happened. I was kind of aware of some of the merging that was going on, but I don't like to affiliate myself with the business side of it, or at least as little as possible. I just know whose hand to shake and who to be nice to. The people that I do know and I am aware of have been amazing.

Historically, winning the Grammy Award for best new artist has been a blessing and a curse. How do you feel about it?

I think it's a blessing to the artists that are dubbed best new artist and then make great records, and it's a curse to the people that don't continue to make good records. Obviously our lives have changed in a lot of ways, but we can't really acknowledge that change too much because otherwise we will be screwed, we will fall into the curse of the best new artist.

I think the people that have fallen under the curse of the best new artist are the people that believe that they are the best new artist. We won, luckily, and we're not going to apologize for it. We appreciate it, and now we're going to move on with it and hopefully put it to good use.

Several years ago, you guys released an album under the name Kara's Flowers but were ultimately dropped from the label. Not many bands get a second chance. What did you learn the first time around that helped you this time?

I guess not to trust people in this business too much, but also to not to be too cynical, because you have to work with people. There is so much that goes into being successful. If your luck isn't matched with your timing and your talent, if all the things don't align, you're not going to do well. I don't believe that failure is always a bad thing. I feel like it helped us really figure out who we were and be all that much more careful when we approached it again.

When we went through the process the second time we were much wiser and better.
CONGRATULATIONS TO MAROON 5

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Commitment from the band, good planning and radio-friendly songs have been key to Maroon5’s international success during the past two years. Its debut album, “Songs About Jane,” has been a chart fixture in many markets for most of that time.

Maarten Steinkamp, president of continental Europe for Sony BMG Music Entertainment, describes the group’s success story as the perfect textbook on artist development.

“There was a happy combination of several factors,” he explains. “We had an album that had at least three, if not more, very strong, radio-friendly tracks. Timewise it was perfect, because the album came out at the beginning of the pop/rock wave. And the band came over as much as we needed.”

Steinkamp says the various affiliates who were then at BMG had sufficient time for the setup, allowing for the local media to accept the album and the songs. “It took about six months before the first single (“This Love”) really made its mark,” he says. “We did not rush it but let it build. We were patient, and it was well-planned and well-executed.”

By the end of May 2004, “This Love” had been on Nielsen Music Control’s Top 50 European Airplay chart for 61 weeks. “Songs About Jane” also showed staying power: during the year, most notably in the United Kingdom, where it finally reached the top of the sales charts in August 2004, in its 28th week on the chart.

At the end of 2004, the album went double-platinum in Europe for shipments of more than two million units in the region. It finished the year at No. 11 on the Billboard year-end European album chart. And thanks to the NRJ Music Awards, presented during the MIDEM trade show in Cannes at the end of January, it even enjoyed a rebound on the European charts at the beginning of 2005.

Steinkamp says much of the success is because of a good collaboration with the band, which was present in Europe throughout the year for promo tours and live action. One of the promotional peaks was Maroon5’s trip to Rome in November 2004 for MTV’s European Music Awards. The group was nominated for three: best group, best new act and best song (“This Love”). It was the culmination of a commitment that had started more than a year before, with the early support of MTV.

Senior VP of music Harriett Brand recalls that MTV first supported Maroon5 in Italy, and then the act received growing support from MTV channels throughout the world, especially in Europe and Latin America. “It was really a global success story,” she says. “Maroon5 was great for MTV. They were on our channels all around the world.”

Steinkamp adds, “MTV’s support did really help, especially in the early stages. We could really monitor that when their video was played, something was happening. And their presence at the awards in Rome really had an impact on sales, which is not always the case.”

“It was a good match,” Brand adds. “But it was rather low risk because of their talent. In the end, it all comes down to great songwriting and good performances.”
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MAROON 5

Congratulations on all of your extraordinary achievements...
the best is yet to come

Creative Artists Agency
while modern rock is not the first genre anyone would associate Maroon 5 with, it is the first format where the band broke onto the charts.

In July 2002, Octone Records went to a hand-selected group of 20 radio stations with “Harder to Breathe,” well more than a year before the song debuted at No. 40. After developing a success story with those stations, the label targeted the rest of Billboard’s modern rock chart panel, and “Harder” peaked at No. 31 on the Modern Rock chart in February 2003.

Octone initially targeted modern rock out of necessity. The newly launched label only had a few employees, and Ben Berkman, now Octone’s executive VP, had a modern rock promotion background at Columbia. “That was really the only format I had relationships or experience in,” he says.

Another reason the label targeted modern rock was the format’s propensity for taking chances on independent labels. “While modern rock is constantly changing, it’s really the only format that plays new records and can support a project from an independent label,” Berkman says.

“There’s a history and legacy at the format for its stations supporting independent labels and new bands,” he says. “Also, modern was the one format that would support the plan we had, which wasn’t about blowing the band out at radio and hustling every indie, but building things up from a grass-roots level.”

KTBZ (the Buzz) Houston was among the stations initially in Octone’s sights. “From the first time I heard the record, I knew the song was a hit,” PD Vince Richards says. “Because they were a new band, and it fit sonically with the station, we championed it. Research came back really strongly, and it did really well for over six months. When adult top 40 started picking it up, we purposely burned it out with our audience.”

But Octone knew Maroon 5 probably wouldn’t be a career band for the format. “We were very honest when we went to them,” Berkman says. “We said, ‘We think this is something that you guys can appreciate.’ We never went to them saying, ‘This band is the next Nine Inch Nails.’ We didn’t hide from the fact that there were pop songs on this record. I think that modern rock actually appreciated that, because they saw that they would be getting on something that had the potential to be big.”

When targeting the initial group of stations, Octone noted that Maroon 5’s live show was a selling point, and got the band to appear at festivals for stations that were playing the record.

“They played a couple of [KTBZ] Buzzfests, so we saw the fan reaction,” Richards says. “They were just great guys, and it was awesome to see something we had championed very early in the project blossom.”

Upon closing out the record at almost all of the 20 stations it initially targeted, Octone decided to service it to the entire panel. “We had some research stories, we had a sales story, and we had an excitement story, and a lot of burgeoning passion for the band.”

After “Harder to Breathe” became a top 40 and adult top 40 hit, Octone made a modest attempt to get “This Love” played at modern rock, but by then, the band was too mainstream. “We actually looked at other tracks, but it felt like they were more for adult top 40 than anything else,” Richards says.

“Harder to Breathe” eventually reached No. 5 at mainstream top 40, No. 15 at adult top 40 and No. 13 at modern AC. Two No. 1 songs followed, with “This Love” and “She Will Be Loved” topping the mainstream top 40, adult top 40 and modern AC charts. “This Love” was also No. 5 at adult contemporary, and even made it onto the Triple-A chart, where it peaked at No. 14. “She Will Be Loved” was a No. 4 song at AC. “Sunday Morning” was the band’s fourth hit, peaking at No. 21 on the main- stream top 40 chart, No. 15 at AC, No. 4 at adult top 40 and No. 2 at modern AC.

Adam, James, Jesse, Mickey and Ryan

Maroon 5

From school talent shows to worldwide touring
and multi-platinum record sales—
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From your BMG Songs Family
The blueprint for the Maroon 5 touring platform is simple: Play in front of people as often as possible, show the right stuff onstage, then leave the audience hungry for more.

It's a method that has been proved time and again by bands with decades of touring experience, and Maroon 5 has accomplished all of it and then some in its first album cycle. The band plays more than 150 shows annually.

"From the beginning, the approach we took was to try and get the band on tours with acts whose audience would embrace them musically and who would also be open to artists without airplay," band manager Jordan Feldstein says.

The first significant trek for Maroon 5 was as support on the 2002 Jeep World Outside summer festival tour with such acts as O.A.R., Ziggy Marley, Train and headliner Sheryl Crow.

"That tour had a lot of acts with good grass-roots followings," Feldstein says.

Maroon 5 continued that strategy the following fall, going out with such hot college-market acts as O.A.R., John Mayer and the Pat McGee Band.

When "Harder to Breathe," the lead single from Maroon 5's debut album, "Songs About Jane," began to gain radio airplay, life changed for the band.

"When the single broke, it made all sorts of difference," Feldstein says. "We sold more records, we sold more tickets, and we were booked on higher-profile tours."

In spring 2003, the band opened for a red-hot Matchbook Twenty, then spent the summer on the successful Mayer/Counting Crows shred tour.

Both helped set up Maroon 5 for its debut headlining run that fall.

"We blew out 1,000-seaters across the country," Feldstein says. "Every show sold out, including three nights at the L.A. House of Blues and a sellout at the Roseland Ballroom in New York."

In 2004, Maroon 5 went on the road with Mayer again for one of the top tours in a tough year, grossing $23.8 million. Additionally, the band worked in some strategic international plays.

Maroon 5 wrapped its first album cycle by headlining 6,000- to 10,000-seat venues on the Honda Civic tour, a 15-date run that proved to be one of the hottest tickets of the spring.

Feldstein says the touring efforts behind "Songs About Jane" have met all objectives.

"We knew we had a great live band, unlike a lot of our contemporaries where the touring angle is not really developed to its full potential," Feldstein says. "The label that initially signed Maroon 5, Octone, had a marketing plan that was not just about going to radio right away but about finding other ways to get exposure—namely through touring."

Following its latest trek, the band will take a break from the road to write and record a new album. "Come the next record, we'll definitely be setting up a world tour," Feldstein says.

In the meantime, the band will open a few select shows on the Rolling Stones on Stage tour, including dates in Hartford, Conn., and Detroit.

Maroon 5 is booked by Brian Manning and Carole Kinzel at Creative Artists Agency. Jason Miller at CAA handles international booking outside Europe, where Rod McSween at ITB books the band.

Thank you

James Diener, Ben Berkman, David Boxenbaum and Maroon 5
for making us a part of your success!

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Jordan Feldstein

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in the A&R process. When Levine sent him an MP3 of a song called “She Will Be Loved,” Berkman wasn’t entirely satisfied.

“It sounded like a smash to me, at some point in the future,” he says. “It was very obvious that it could not be the first single for this band. The goal was not to break the band with a ballad and be a pop flavor. This was a band that had tremendous potential on the road and could easily appeal to a rock audience if we had the right kind of vehicle.”

That first single came in the white-boy funk-rocker “Harder to Breathe,” a song whose lyrics were inspired not by a relationship gone bad but the pressure Levine was feeling about being expected to deliver the right track to fit Octone’s marketing plans. “Songs About Jane” was produced by Matt Wallace, known for his work with Faith No More and the Replacements. But Michael Barbiero, whose credits include Guns N’ Roses’ “Appetite for Destruction,” was brought in to mix “Harder to Breathe” to toughen it up for modern rock radio.

Berkman and Chris Woltman, then senior VP of rock promotion at RCA, cherry-picked 20 stations around the country to focus on. Berkman vowed that the stations that lent support would be rewarded with band appearances at radio shows.

In the meantime, even before the album’s release, Maroon5 began touring extensively as a support act for the likes of Nikka Costa, Michelle Branch, Sheryl Crow, O.A.R., Vanessa Carlton and John Mayer.

On the video front, the band enlisted director Marc Webb to shoot a performance clip for “Harder to Breathe” at Swing House rehearsal studios.

Early on, that relatively inexpensive video managed to gain the attention of VH1 and MTV. “We were big fans of Maroon5 from day one,” says Rick Krim, VH1 executive VP of music and talent relations. “We pulled out our big guns to support the album as it grew into this amazing worldwide phenomenon.”

Thanks to the efforts of BMG Songs, which signed the band to a publishing deal in May 2002, Maroon5’s music was heard on a number of TV shows, including “E.R.,” “Third Watch,” “Pride and Prejudice” and “Smallville.”

“We made a huge push in the TV world, especially because we knew that the songs lent themselves perfectly to episodic shows and fit the targeted record and concert-ticket-buying audience,” BMG Songs president Scott Francis explains.

By February 2003, the buzz on the band had become loud enough for J Records to get involved at radio on a regional level. “It was the perfect moment,” Diener recalls, “because no one had to beg them or prevail upon them to help. They started to feel it in their own way that something locally was going on with the group.”

By spring of that year, J Records/RCA Records Group joined the campaign full throttle, helping Maroon5 cross over to adult top 40 and later top 40 radio and reach the major chains and big-box retailers. “We were able to get into pockets of programs on a regional level, where the band was buzzing and on the radio.”

Diener notes, “But to really begin a media-blitz, that’s where the resources of the RCA Music Group were extremely essential.”

Although “Harder to Breathe” peaked at No. 37 on the Modern Rock chart in February 2003, the story didn’t end there (see story, page 8). More than six months later, the song managed to crack the chart again, this time on Mainstream Top 40. Subsequent singles like “She Will Be Loved,” “Sunday Morning” and “This Love” have fared even better on the charts.

During Maroon5’s rise, Octone’s label partner, J Records, and distributor, BMG, endured mergers and consolidations that could have slowed the band’s momentum. “We didn’t miss a beat,” J Records/RCA Records Group executive VP/GM Tom Corson says. “I think it just made everyone more resolute to break Maroon5.”

Corson cites the video for “This Love” as a crucial turning point. “When that video hit, it just galvanized everything,” he says. “It was sexy. It made the band [members] stars, it made Adam a star. That was the launching pad to everything else.”

In June 2004, with “Songs About Jane” still selling strong, Octone released “1.22.03 Acoustic.” The EP was for the band’s hardcore fans, featuring stripped-down live versions of five tunes from “Songs About Jane” along with covers of the Beatles’ “If I Feel” and AC/DC’s “Highway to Hell.”

Interestingly, the EP didn’t cannibalize sales of the full-length album; rather, both releases enjoyed sales boosts simultaneously in the final week of July 2004. “Songs About Jane” returned to the top 20, while the EP climbed to No. 43 with little promotion. The EP has sold 570,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

As for the future, Diener expects Maroon5 to follow a Coldplay-like trajectory. “As big as Coldplay was on the first record, the second record really established the band,” he says. “I really think the next Maroon5 record is going to be the one.”
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MAROON5 (cont.)

from >>p30

Its first album, 1997’s “The Fourth World,” failed to gain much notice. “It was a huge disappointment,” Levine recalls. “We expected a lot. They pumped us full of so much crap, like, ‘You guys are going to be huge. Here’s some money’ We were like, ‘OK, cool. Eighteen, sweet. No college, kick ass.’ We did it and failed; it was a rude awakening. It really humbled us very quickly.

After the label dropped the band, Levine and Carmichael went off to college in New York, while Madden and Dusick stayed in L.A. By 2000, rather than packing it in, Kara’s Flowers reinvented themselves with an R&B funk twist, inspired by the sounds Levine and Carmichael heard in school.

Jordan Feldstein, a friend of Levine’s family who was then working as a junior agent at ICM, heard about the band’s new direction and dropped in on a rehearsal. He instantly fell in love with the new sound.

A month later, he quit his job and began managing the band full time. Almost every major label passed over a band demo, but a connection helped the group get on the radar of newly launched Octone Records, spearheaded by J Records/RCA Music Group senior VP of A&R/Marketing James Diener, former Columbia promotion man Ben Berkman and one-time Price WaterhouseCoopers exec David Boxenbaum, who is now Octone’s GM. (As part of an exclusive artist-development co-venture among J, RCA and Octone, the act would eventually be picked up by J.)

The CD was not labeled and didn’t have credits, only some colorful descriptions. “It said something to the effect of, ‘These dudes can be up all night playing cards with Stevie Wonder and partying with Sting,’” recalls Berkman, who is now Octone’s executive VP. “The description was exactly what it sounded like, and it was exactly what I was looking for. I heard ‘Sunday Morning,’ I just flipped.”

Once Berkman discovered the band was Kara’s Flowers he was shocked. He remembered hearing that album while he was working at Warner Bros. “I listened to it, thought it was garbage and threw it out of the sunroof of my car,” he says.

Still, Berkman was so impressed with “Sunday Morning” he rounded up Diener and Boxenbaum and flew to L.A. for a Kara’s Flowers showcase at the Viper Room. “Within two minutes of seeing this kid [Levine] onstage, I was completely sold,” and James soon thereafter,” Berkman says. In April 2001, the band became Octone’s first signing.

Two changes were soon made. First, the band would be renamed so that Kara’s Flowers’ followers would not be confused by the group’s new musical direction. Second, guitarist James Valentine from L.A.-based band Square was recruited, and Levine made the shift from full-time guitarist to frontman. “He’s a more talented performer if he doesn’t have to play guitar on every song,” explains Diener, who is Octone’s president.

Maroon5 was now complete, but of the band’s future singles, only “Sunday Morning” was written at the time. It took more than a year to record the album, with Berkman heavily involved

continued on >>p32
Persistence pays off. That adage could serve as the motto for Maroon5 and its label, Octone Records.

Three years after its release, Maroon5's debut album, "Songs About Jane," has sold more than 8 million copies worldwide—4 million of those in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It has also spawned three top 40 hits thanks to a grass-roots marketing plan by upstart Octone that saw the band establish itself on the road before making inroads at radio, MTV and VH1.

When Maroon5 showed potential as a hit act, Octone upstreamed the act to J Records, which upped the ante. Following a Grammy Award win for best new artist and a successful stint headlining the annual Honda Civic tour, it appears there is no stopping the band.

But Maroon5's story began long before all this success. Four of its members—singer Adam Levine, keyboardist Jesse Carmichael, bassist Mickey Madden and drummer Ryan Dusick, who all hail from Los Angeles—are old friends whose first big break came when they landed a contract with Warner Bros./Reprise Records. At the time they were all mere 17 years old, and the band, then called Kara's Flowers, had a more power-pop sound.
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Blue County’s Benward sees duos as the next trend in a genre that remains dominated by solo male hit acts. “It runs in cycles; it’s the next hot thing,” Benward says. “At times it’s female vocalists, then it’s male vocalists and then it’s bands (and) vocal groups, and now it seems like there’s a trend in duos.”

“I applaud and welcome better duo acts in the format,” says radio programmer Tim Roberts, operations manager for Cumulus Broadcasting’s Midwest stations. “It has been a somewhat soft category at the award shows.”

Roberts says one of the reasons for the new glut of duos may be the category’s historical weakness “spurring artists, record companies and radio to launch and, eventually, embrace the acts.”

But Roberts believes duos “with a unique sound add spice to the format. I’ve always believed that the wider the variety of our music genre within the country format, [the more it] allows us to be a mass-appeal, highly pleasing, long-term listening genre on the radio dial,” he says. “Country has always been strongest when there is a tremendous variety of acts ranging from pop to traditional and everything in between with groups, solo acts, duos and the garage. The emergence of power duos certainly adds spice to our meal.”

NO LEMMINGS HERE

While Music Row is often accused of having a lemming mentality when it comes to signing talent, not everyone thinks this rash of duo signings was a calculated effort on the industry’s part following Big & Rich’s success.

“Most of this stuff has already been in place,” Galante says. “In order to get these records out there that have been coming, you had to do it before Big & Rich broke.”

Ragusa illustrates his point. That act has been in development on Lyric Street for four years but will finally get its first shot at radio success this year.

Galante says the new crop of duos is likely just part of a cycle that, at times, finds the industry with a lot of groups or a lot of female acts. “I don’t think anybody sat down and went, ‘You know what? All we need to do is sign a few duos.’ People come in, somebody gets you excited, you sign them,” he says.

Sony Music Nashville president John Grady agrees that the fattening of the duo category happened organically.

“Brooks & Dunn stayed (on the scene) and remained very successful. Montgomery Gentry got even more successful. Big & Rich exploded onto the scene, and all of a sudden you have an extremely active category,” he says.

“I think it’s just [that] it happens,” Grady adds. “A couple of years ago there was a lack of female artists, and now there’s a glut of them.”

“Every label in town has a group, and every label in town pretty much has a duo,” Galante says. “So it’s not like, ‘Oh, my God, look what happened!’ We’ve been signing them all along. It has just taken some time to get all these records done, and now they are all coming at once. It’s not due to somebody having a hit.”

But Grady admits some sameness of thought does go into the Nashville A&R process. “People are always trying to make records where there isn’t one,” he says. “Like [in] baseball, you’re trying to hit it where they’re not. There’s usually an overreaction and a correction.”

Galante is glad there are so many new duos in the format now, noting that it “gives us another color to paint our picture with.”

MORE FLAVORS

Donnie Van Zant enjoys the musical variety a duo can offer. “What I like about duos is, I sort of get tired, when I listen to a CD, [of] hearing the same voice,” he says. “So for me... it’s more interesting. It brings different texture.”

Brother Johnny agrees. “I think duos are a great thing. You have two people interacting with each other. For a live performance, you have two people out there. That’s one thing I love about Montgomery Gentry and Brooks & Dunn.”

Blue County’s Benward also likes the duo dynamic. “I never thought that I would ever in another duo,” says Benward, who previously recorded four contemporary Christian albums with his father as the duo Aaron Jeffrey and later cut a solo album.

“I love the camaraderie and being able to bounce things off of each other and not be on your own. In a duo [there] isn’t all the pressure on you to perform,” he adds. “It isn’t all on your shoulders.”

For Cumulus’ Roberts, the focus is not on how many people comprise an act, but about the three minutes of music they create.

“The bottom line to all of this is that if the acts had no talent, hits or star power, they wouldn’t make it,” he says. “Clearly Montgomery Gentry, Big & Rich, Hanna-McEuen and the other emerging acts represent talented acts who have fought their way onto the scene through hard work, promotion, determination and—thank God—it hit records.”

Warner Bros. duo Big & Rich was one of country music’s most successful acts in 2004.
Blue County's Aaron Benward and Scott Reeves entered the country format through different doors. Benward had been part of successful Christian duo Aaron Jeffreyy with his father, Jeffreyy Benward, then released one solo album. Reeves was a popular actor known for his work on the soap "The Young and the Restless." The two met at a video shoot, and the friendship that blossomed turned into a musical partnership. Their self-titled debut CD has sold 64,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and peaked at No. 32 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart. First single "Good Little Girls" peaked at No. 11 on the Hot Country Songs chart.

**1. BLUE COUNTY**
Label: Asylum/Curb Records
Current single: "That Summer Song"
Album title: "Blue County"
Release date: April 6, 2004

Blue Country's Aaron Benward and Scott Reeves entered the country format through different doors. Benward had been part of successful Christian duo Aaron Jeffreyy with his father, Jeffreyy Benward, then released one solo album. Reeves was a popular actor known for his work on the soap "The Young and the Restless." The two met at a video shoot, and the friendship that blossomed turned into a musical partnership. Their self-titled debut CD has sold 64,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and peaked at No. 32 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart. First single "Good Little Girls" peaked at No. 11 on the Hot Country Songs chart.

**2. HANNA-McEUEN**
Label: MCA Nashville
Current single: "Something Like a Broken Heart"
Chart position: No. 40
Album title: "Hanna-McEuen"
Release date: July 26

First cousins Jaime Hanna and Jonathan McEuen were born with county music pedigrees. Their fathers are Nitty Gritty Dirt Band founding members Jeff Hanna and John McEuen.

McEuen has been performing onstage with his father since he was 7. At 12 he landed a contract to appear in Disney's "The Mickey Mouse Club," but says the deal fell through because he couldn't take dance. When he was older, McEuen fronted several of his own bands. Hanna grew up playing drums and guitar. After high school, he moved to Nashville and began writing songs. The Mavericks later hired him to play rhythm guitar and percussion and sing harmony vocals.

In 2001, the cousins performed "Lowlands" together on the third installment of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's "Will the Circle Be Unbroken" album series. A video for the song led to appearances on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno," at the Grand Ole Opry, sparking Nashville label interest.

**3. RAGSDALE**
Label: Lyric Street Records
Single: "Ragsdale"/Debut single due in June
Album title: "Ragsdale"
Release date: To be determined

Brother-and-sister duo Josh and Shin-Anne Ragsdale signed with Lyric Street in 2001, and will eventually get its shot at country radio this year.

The Mississippi-raised siblings intended to pursue solo careers, but decided to team up after they wrote their first song together and liked the blended style it reflected. But they had a hard time finding a producer who could capture the sound they envisioned. They tried with dozens of producers and cut tracks with seven or eight before deciding on Jeff Bali.

**4. VAN ZANT**
Label: Columbia Records
Current single: "Help Somebody"
Chart position: No. 28
Album title: "Get Right With The Man"
Release date: May 10

Columbia's hottest new duo is hardly a newcomer to the music industry. Indeed, the name Van Zant is synonymous with Southern rock. Johnny Van Zant earned his stripes with Lynyrd Skynyrd, and brother Donnie gained fame as the frontman for .38 Special. Neither has left their bands behind, but are opening a new chapter in their careers with Van Zant.

Asked about the new direction, Johnny says, "We ain't gone country; we were born country." The brothers co-wrote seven out of 11 tracks on the new album, which debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart in May 28 issue. After years of country artists paying homage to Skynyrd and .38 Special, the format is getting a shot of the real thing.

**5. THE WRIGHTS**
Label: ACR/RCA Records
Current single: "On The Rocks"
Album title: "Down This Road"
Release date: May 3

Georgia-bred married couple Shannon and Adam Wright are the first artists signed to Alan Jackson's 3-year-old ACR label, which RCA Label Group markets and distributes. Jackson is Adam Wright's uncle, and the duo is on a 40-plus-stop tour as the opener for Jackson and Sara Evans.

First single "Down This Road" failed to catch on at country radio, but the label is currently working "On The Rocks" in the same markets the tour is hitting.

The couple met in 1998 and began writing and performing together. They moved to Nashville in 2002 and took day jobs while continuing to perform at night, eventually catching the interest of producers Keith Stegall and John Kelton, who took them into the studio.

The Wrights wrote all of the songs on their debut album either solo or together, and Jackson cut two of their songs on his 2004 "What I Do" album. He makes a guest appearance on the song "Leave a Light On" on the Wrights' debut.

**THE DUO DYNAMIC IS NEW DRIVING FORCE FOR NASHVILLE LABELS**

**NASHVILLE—**Music Row has always been quick to jump on a trend when something successful surfaces.

Last year, Warner Bros. duo Big & Rich was one of country's biggest success stories. Now, with 2005 approaching the mid-year mark, country labels are launching new duos in record numbers.

Columbia is banking on the loyalty of the Southern rock/country audience to provide enthusiastic support for Van Zant, comprising Lynyrd Skynyrd's Johnny Van Zant and .38 Special's Donnie Van Zant. MCA Nashville has introduced Hanna-McEuen, made up of cousins Jamie Hanna and Jonathan McEuen. Their fathers, Jeff Hanna and John McEuen, are founding members of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

Lyric Street Records is working with Ragsdale, comprising siblings Joshua and Shi-Anne Ragsdale. Alan Jackson signed husband-and-wife team the Wrights to his ACR label, which is being marketed and promoted via RCA.

Meanwhile, Curb is continuing to build Blue County, the hot duo of Aaron Benward and Scott Reeves that launched last year.

New duos are also cropping up on some of Nashville's smaller, independent labels. WindSwept Records recently introduced Fanny Grace, the twosome of Paul Reeves and Carmen Mejia. Its debut album, "312 Broadway," is due June 14. Lofton Creek Records just signed BrittonJack, the pairing of Gainesville, Fla., natives Britton Cameron and Jack Sizemore.

All of these acts join major-label stars Brooks & Dunn and Montgomery Gentry, the industry's top two duos, and lesser-known acts the Warren Brothers and Hometown News in what has suddenly become a crowded field.

Until recently, there were barely enough country duos to round out the Academy of Country Music Awards' duo category on the nominating ballot without dipping into acts whose hitmaking days were long behind them. While not actually true, the joke on Music Row has long been that Sweethearts of the Rodeo are slapped onto the ACM ballot every year just to fill out the category. That pair last charted a single in 1991.

"There have been a lot of conversations over the years on duo awards about whether or not the duo category stays in," RCA Label Group chairman Joe Galante admits. "We had this conversation probably three years ago, and we looked at what people were signing and what they had coming ... and the decision was made to keep it. It seems to have paid off."

Indeed, the field is now so robust that Brooks & Dunn's upcoming tour, dubbed Deuces Wild, consists entirely of duos. Big & Rich and the Warren Brothers are supporting. The 52-date shelf tour launches Aug. 6 and runs through Oct. 30.

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Clouding the HD opportunity somewhat is the existence of two competing formats.

Standards are currently being set for the Toshiba-led HD DVD format and for the Sony-led Blu-ray. Both sides have engaged in talks in recent months about coming together to release just one HD DVD format. Neither group would comment about the discussions.

Both formats offer HD picture and audio (though Blu-ray claims to have the higher bit rate at up to 36 megabits per second), advanced copy protection, Internet connectivity and interactive special features.

What distinguishes them is storage capacity, potential manufacturing cost and backward compatibility.

HD DVD has 30GB of storage, while Blu-ray offers 25GB (single layer) and 50GB (double layer). HD DVDs can be produced on existing standard-definition DVD manufacturing lines with minimal switchover costs. Blu-ray will require new lines, but developers say costs will be similar to standard DVD production.

Also, HD DVDs can be played on standard DVD players (though new HD players will provide a better experience). Blu-ray discs will require the purchase of a new machine.

Among content owners, the movie studios are having a major say in determining HD standards. Music labels and independent DVD companies have been fairly format-neutral.

“The first preference would be to have one format or have an ‘omni player’ that plays both formats,” EMI’s Cohen says. EMI has been submitting recommendations to both DVD groups. Kenswil says his company is a member of both forums. “We participate mainly on the audio standards, which was an afterthought for [standard] DVD,” he says. “We’re hoping that does not happen to Blu-ray or HD.”

For the music world, the key HD concerns are program speed, storage and connectivity.

Speed is important because HD technology will allow viewers to control how they watch concert DVDs through multi-angle features. Consumers will be able to focus on a particular band member whenever they want, allowing for unique viewing experiences.

“The speed that you can move between channels of video really matters,” Al's Vella says. “When you press the button and change from the lead singer to the guitar player, that needs to be instant.”

Kenswil says consumers might even start posting their own versions of a live concert DVD online.

Increased storage capacity will be a major benefit over standard DVDs, which are increasingly being released as multiscan sets to accommodate all the extras that are now available.

“We thought 5GB was good enough in the ‘gos with DVD,’” Blu-ray's Parsons says. “We may not know now what kind of applications we will need in eight or 10 years. Music titles will need a lot of bandwidth.”

Additionally, connectivity will be critical with music titles because it may lead to sales of other products. Both formats have the capacity to connect to the Internet, but Blu-ray may be better-suited for broadband.

“With web interactivity,” says Jodi Sally, VP of marketing for Toshiba America Consumer Products' digital audiovisual group, “a user may be able to watch a music video, then be directed to the performer’s Web site to purchase souvenirs or concert tickets or even more HD DVD music videos.”

HD DVD players from Toshiba, NEC, Sanyo and other brands are expected in the United States as early as the fourth quarter, while Blu-ray players are likely to debut in first-quarter 2006. This schedule may change if the single-format discussions prove fruitful.

Toshiba is expected to test the market with a hybrid disc that will have standard DVD on one side and HD DVD on the other.

“A hybrid format is a good approach,” EMI’s Cohen says. “It’s the stealth way of building up titles and doesn’t force the consumer to make a choice now. Then, the next player they buy plays the new format.”

Next-generation videogame consoles from Sony and Microsoft also will play HD programs, and could be a factor in the developing market.

Studio releases on the HD DVD format from the likes of Paramount Home Entertainment, Universal Studios Home Entertainment and Warner Home Video are supposed to come by the end of the year. Key releases are expected to include Warner’s “Batman Begins” and “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” and Paramount’s “Elizabethtown.”

Warner and Universal have announced support of hybrid DVD, though they have not stated when they will release titles on the format.

Buena Vista Home Entertainment and Sony Pictures Home Entertainment are expected to release titles on Blu-ray next year.

The music world has been mum on exact titles targeted for HD DVD. The early leaders in HD all say that they plan to have releases available when players enter the marketplace.

Eagle has a library of 50-60 HD titles at the ready, while CCETV has 50-60. Image declined to provide a number.

Price points for the hardware and software have yet to be determined, though there is no question they will be higher than current DVD players and software.

“I’m not convinced that standard DVD households will jump that quick to HD,” Image’s Gordon says. “Your first level of consumers will be those that already have HD TVs.”

CCETV’s Sterling expects that the history of standard DVD will repeat itself with HD DVD. “HD DVDs will take a few more years to really start, but then it will be everything that DVD has done. I think ’06 will start the watershed of HD DVD in music. Then in ’07, the floodgates will open.”
Watching a music performance in high definition does, quite simply, blow you away.

HD concerts—which can be seen on such specialty stations as HDNet and InDemand—offer astonishing visual detail and superb sound, but that's just the tip of the iceberg.

The debut of HD on DVD, scheduled for this fall, will allow for multiple viewing angles and interactive, Web-connected special features that can personalize visual musical programming.

Getting involved in HD could prove to be a gold mine for the music business, which has enjoyed a significant windfall in recent years from the DVD explosion.

"HD is an unparalleled opportunity for the music business to really play offense," says Zane Vella, co-founder and president of live-concert production company Mx Entertainment.

However, thus far the HD charge has been led by a small number of independents and non-label companies. Eagle Rock Entertainment, Image Entertainment and Clear Channel Entertainment have been investing in HD for several years, buying HD equipment to record live concerts and building substantial catalogs of programming for HD TV and HD DVD.

"With new formats, the early market leaders are small companies," says Larry Kenswil, president of Universal's eLabs division. "It's a little like the chicken and the egg. You have to start spending on extra production costs and then wait for the demand."

Eagle, Image and CCETV are working with HD programmers to understand their content needs, and will put out HD DVDs as soon as the hardware is set to debut.

Barry Gordon, senior VP of acquisitions for Image, says his company started shooting in HD as soon as the technology was available. "We always believed that having the HD asset would be a value. As an independent, it's inherent to be aggressive."

Kenswil says that the percentage of U.S. households that can access HD programming on TV or will be able to hook up new HD DVD players when they are available is still too small to warrant a major investment.

Currently, HD TV broadcasts are available through select digital cable, satellite and pay-per-view outlets. A handful of network programs and sporting events are available in HD, but viewers must have an HD TV to get the full benefit of the experience.

Still, Gordon embraces the fact that HD programming and products will be geared toward premium customers at first.

Ted Cohen, senior VP of digital development for EMI Music, says his company will usher in HD by working with third parties.

For example, the company partnered with HDNet on a series of HD programs featuring such acts as Yellowcard and Ben Harper. Additionally, EMI will work with Eagle to exploit HD DVD opportunities from its catalog of live performances.

"Joint ventures are more economical for both parties, and we are sharing the risk," he says. "We like to work with people that provide expertise and can get us to market quicker. I don't want to do something expedient that's financially foolhardy."

Parsons Research reports that 14.5 million homes had HD TVs by the end of 2004. That installed base is projected to grow to 58.4 million in 2008.

The Federal Communications Commission has ruled that full-power TV stations must broadcast in digital by 2007. It has not taken a position on HD TV.

Though labels can convert existing video repertoire to HD, this will not give consumers the best HD can offer. That can only happen when programming is shot with HD cameras.

Mark Cuban, co-founder and chairman/president of HDNet, says labels that consider converting their assets to HD are not taking the consumer experience into account. "Most of this stuff was mastered on tape," he says. "If you master on tape, you can't just use it to high definition. It looks like crap."

The cost of shooting programming in HD is considered a huge hindrance to the labels, though many in the industry say this perception is wrong.

"The rumors that high definition is more expensive are completely unfounded," says Steve Sterling, senior VP of CCETV.

Sterling says it costs about $150,000 for an eight-camera HD shoot, including editing. He claims this is comparable to a standard-definition concert shoot.

Further, the cost of digital equipment has considerably dropped.

Andy Parsons, senior VP of advanced product development for Pioneer Electronics, a member of the Blu-ray Disc Assn., says the price of equipment will keep declining. He notes that digital camcorders cost $50,000-$75,000 just a few years ago.

"With HD, you have sub-$5,000 capturing devices out there," Parsons explains. "If you shoot in that medium, it greatly reduces the cost. It's all volume-based, and will reach parity with standard definition."

Universal's Kenswil says that mixing an HD program in surround sound—the most important HD feature for music lovers—"adds thousands.

"The current financial squeeze at major labels is making any extra costs prohibitive, HD content developers say.

"Labels are taking a wait-and-see attitude," says Mike Gardner, Eagle Rock North America president of operations and executive VP of Eagle Rock Entertainment. "I don't think they have the desire right now to step into this marketplace after going through terrible business climates, though broadcast is an additional stream to monetize the opportunity."

Though labels could license HD programming for broadcast to make up some of the equipment costs, they say that is not part of their business model.

"The record label would probably not originate programming," Kenswil says.

Broadcast licenses for HD programs can be worth $75,000-$200,000, Sterling says.

It's through DVD that most music companies will get really involved with HD. That's because standard-definition DVDs have proved to be big money generators.

The Digital Entertainment Group says that about 73 million U.S. households now have DVD players, and 46% of those owners have more than one player. The DEG expects that more than 86% of U.S. households will have at least one DVD player by the end of the year.

The music DVD category particularly took off with the labels after 2003, when Atlantic Records' 'Led Zeppelin DVD' set a record for first-week music DVD sales with 120,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan (Billboard, June 14, 2003). The title has sold more than 154,000 units.

Total music DVD sales increased 66% between 2003 and 2004. Last year, the category accounted for sales of $10.9 billion units. (This includes stand-alone music DVDs and hybrid CD/DVD packages.) Music DVDs now account for 11%-12% of the total DVD market, according to the DVD Release Report.

A new generation of TV is about to emerge. Will the music industry be ready? BY JILL KIPNIS

GOING HI-DEF
acts as Interscope's Nine Inch Nails and Audioslave, Geffen's Weezer and Columbia's System of a Down. "Satan" also shares a busy release window with Capitol's Coldplay.

Complicating matters are the struggles of the alternative radio format in key East Coast cities like Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia; New York; and Miami.

The band has been in the market for more than a month with "Blue Orchid," the first single from the album. The track was serviced to iTunes and radio just two weeks after its completion.

So far, radio traction for "Blue Orchid," a prickly rocker reminiscent of Jack White's work two years ago with Electric Six, has been solid, but not on the level of the anthem-like "Seven Nation Army." "Blue Orchid" debuted at a career-best No. 43 on The Billboard Hot 100, thanks to a wave of early iTunes sales. The song has since fallen off that chart and the Pop 100 (where it peaked at No. 36); it is No. 9 on the Modern Rock chart after five weeks.

"This is the first platinum-level band that could have a significant difficulty due to the decrease in alternative rock stations," says Jay Frank, head of label relations for leading online radio programmer Yahoo Music. "The climate right now is about very mainstream, hard-edged rock music."

Frank says that Yahoo's research suggests that online the song is being well-received by the White Stripes' core fans. However, awareness of the single among more mainstream listeners is being affected by the late release of the "Blue Orchid" video, which was to hit mtv.com May 26, other online outlets May 27 and MTV May 31.

Despite all of this, Va., XL, and the band's management are taking a long-term view of the setup.

"Our focus has never been about having a giant first week," Montone says. "For us, it is about the life of the project."

Indeed, hopes are high for second single "My Doorbell," which is expected to hit U.S. radio in mid-summer. That will be just ahead of a U.S. tour in August, September and possibly November, which will include multiple-night runs in major markets.

Richard Russell, managing director of London-based independent label XL Recordings, calls the R&B-flavored track "potentially their strongest airplay song to date."

Russell confirms that there have been "conversations" about working again with director Michel Gondry, who helmed the acclaimed videos for "The Hardest Button to Button," "Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground" and "Fell in Love With A Girl."

Additionally, Va. will look to service another song, the bluegrass-inspired "Little Ghost," to country and Americana radio.

to build on the popularity of the Lynn project, an album that scanned more than 367,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Talks of a tie-in with country cable channel CMT are also in the works, though nothing is confirmed.

"With the last record the single was so enormous—that will be hard to match. What they may have in their favor this time is that they can dip into this record for two or three or four singles," says Carl Mello, a music buyer with Boston-based retail chain Newbury Comics. "It could have really good legs. They're going to get the first week anyway, so maybe this is an even better way for them to do it."

For his part, White isn't concerned. He says he has taken a lot of the pressure off of himself to succeed, and he is happier than he has ever been as a performer as a result.

"Success is doing what you love to do and nobody telling you how to do it. We've luckily always had that with this band," White says. "Meg says this is her favorite White Stripes record. That made it a success to me immediately... I can't wait until it gets to the point where the record comes out and people are familiar with the songs and we can go even further with them."

Additional reporting by Lars Brandle in London.
The White Stripes have a code for the band and they will not tour in major North American or European mar-
ket until the late summer/early fall. And when they do, it's bound to be something special. The band has made a name for
itself by taking an unconventional approach to marketing and promotion. They've been known to release albums with no
commercial hype or fanfare, relying instead on grassroots promotion and word of mouth. This time around, they're
planning to do something similar with their upcoming album.

The first single, "Seven Nation Army," was released in late April and has been a hit on both college radio and
charting music services. The band has also been performing the song live on their recent tour, which has included
shows in Russia, Greece, and the United States.

The album itself, "Elephant," is set to be released in June. The band has been keeping busy with promo-
tours and appearances, including a sold-out show at the Glastonbury Festival in England.

The White Stripes have always been known for their unique sound and approach to the music industry. They've
never been afraid to take risks or challenge convention. With "Elephant," they're likely to do the same thing once again.

In addition to the album, the band has also recorded a series of licensing pacts with various media companies, which
will help generate revenue and promote their music.

The White Stripes have a long history of success, and "Elephant" is likely to continue that trend. The band has
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always been able to find an audience for its music, and "Elephant" is no exception. With its powerful sound and
unique approach, it's sure to be a hit with fans old and new.
In the eyes of Danny Stein, one company’s technology disruption is another’s financial opportunity. As the CEO of Dimensional Associates, the private-equity arm of New York investment firm JDS Capital Management, Stein has spent the last two years collecting music assets that can take advantage of the growing opportunity in digital distribution.

Since 2003, Dimensional—which specializes in transactions of less than $100 million—has acquired the assets of indie music distributor the Orchard (July 2003), indie subscription service eMusic (November 2003), and live-music aggregation specialist Digital Club Network (May 2004). The firm’s biggest deal to date was its $50 million acquisition of the publishing arm of DreamWorks SKG in November 2004.

And that’s just for starters. Dimensional has its eye on fleshing out its portfolio with additional investments in the recorded-music business and mobile entertainment.

Central to the firm’s strategy is what it views as the unexplored potential of indie labels and artists—a segment of the music market that figures to play a larger role as the “long tail” economics of digital distribution take hold. The long-tail model assumes that the Internet is a large enough distribution channel to allow the market share for products with low sales volume—like indie-label releases—to match that of the relatively few best sellers.

Q: What are the factors that prompted Dimensional to invest in the music business?
A: We were very attracted to the concept that people would continue to make music and buy music through the disruption in the marketplace caused by new technologies. We felt that the distribution mechanism for music was very immature when compared to video, for example.

We felt it was just a matter of time [before] music would become more mature and people would begin to buy music through many different channels. And at the end of this cycle—whenever that ends; let’s say we’re five years into it now—the aggregate music market will be substantially bigger than what it was.

Q: How do you decide which companies to invest in?
A: We have looked at the areas of the music business we can realistically participate in. We knew we could participate on the distribution side. We thought we could do it better than the major distributors, because with the Orchard we had the advantage of starting from scratch. We didn’t have legacy issues we needed to deal with.

We wanted to be in the retail business, but we didn’t want to compete with the likes of iTunes.

Q: How has the investment climate for music changed in the last few years?
A: We saw a $40 billion marketplace in decline. We had an opportunity to buy assets around the market trough. Now there’s a tremendous amount of capital flowing into the market that had been on the sidelines waiting to see how this stuff develops.

Q: What are the factors that are driving new investors into the market?
A: We see that with the proliferation of MP3 devices, the digital music services are starting to do pretty well. They look like real companies now. Those businesses are going to do very well in the long run, because we haven’t even scratched the surface of the marketplace. There will be about 20 million MP3 devices in the marketplace by the end of the year, and people are going to need content to put on those devices.

If you look at publishing companies, those businesses are starting to see the benefit of new exploitation opportunities. And now you have companies like EMI saying that by 2008, 25% of their revenue will come from digital sales. If that’s the case, you are talking about moving from an adjunct to a core piece of their business.

Q: How are the assets you have acquired performing?
A: The Orchard’s revenue has doubled quarter-over-quarter since we bought it. That’s a market play. As the digital market grows, so too does the Orchard, because it is a significant part of every service’s catalog. The Orchard represents a half-million tracks.

With eMusic, we went through a lot of building rebuilding all the systems, moving the employees from San Diego to New York and recalibrating the business. We launched the product in September, and the business is humming now. We are selling over 2 million downloads per month. That’s because lots of people are buying iPods, and eMusic is the only other music service besides iTunes whose files can play on an iPod. That has been very helpful.

On the publishing side, we’ve made an operating commitment to the business by hiring industry pros, opening new offices in Los Angeles and Nashville and being aggressive. We’re hiring new writers. We’re signing new acts. We continue to exploit the catalog we have—we manage or control over 10,000 copyrights. That is different than buying a catalog that is throwing off cash and looking at it as a financial investment like an annuity.

Q: Why haven’t you acquired a label operation?
A: We’re thinking about it. We think we potentially have an advantage over some independent labels that just do recorded music, because we can offer more. We can offer focused distribution; we can offer prime-time placement at retail through eMusic; and we can offer a publishing deal.

Q: Is there any interest in having a dedicated mobile play in your music portfolio?
A: Absolutely. We’ve been hunting for assets in the mobile space for several months. We created an entity called Dimensional Mobile Entertainment, and that will be the entity that allows us to go out and do mobile deals. But we haven’t found anything yet. We’re still trying to figure out what’s the best way to approach this business.

Q: How long do you see yourselves holding these assets?
A: We take a long-term approach to investing, because we’re owner-operators; we’re not financial investors. When these businesses get big—and our goal is to get them big and profitable—at that point, we have a lot of options. Today we are emphatic about being here in the music business, and we want to acquire more assets to the extent that they are available. Any business that can help our existing businesses is something we’d be interested in buying.

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Marek Lieberberg & Mario Mondrzycki

Q&A (cont.)

from >>p40

equipped to handle all the bullshit that comes along with it, because there is a lot of bullshit. You just need to be able to see it and acknowledge it.

What was it that attracted you to Octone? We had the same vision, the same ideas about where we wanted to take everything, and we seemed to all be on par with each other. There was nothing that made us cringe about anything they said. They wanted to put us on the road, and we wanted to work out our asses off for a long time. We were ready to go. They worked it out for us. They also delivered. Everything they said was going to happen happened. We established a pretty good bond with our label, which is almost impossible these days.

How important was it for you to establish yourself as a touring band before you had radio and video hits? That was the goal behind the band in the first place. We had to establish ourselves as a band first and foremost, and all the other stuff would come into play later, like MTV and radio. The record was out a year before they even paid attention to us at all.

We’re not going to ride on the coattails of that kind of mass media stuff to maintain a career, but it’s nice to have all that other stuff, too. It even makes it prettier, but we certainly don’t have to have that forever. We don’t rely on anybody other than ourselves to tour, which is very cool. MTV and VH1 edited your videos. How did you feel about that? They got to do what they’ve got to do. I don’t care. The kids know what I’m saying anyway. It’s just a little sexuality; if that scares people, that’s a shame. The lyrics are all euphemisms basically. There’s a lot left to the imagination. It’s amazing that adults are so much sicker than kids are. “I keep her coming every night” is a perfectly PG-rated sentence. But adults say, “Keep her coming?” Holy shit!” “Sinking my fingertips into every inch of you,” OK, maybe that’s a little more risqué, but still, it’s not that explicit. At least they’re awful. It’s not like, “I wanna do you, baby.” It’s not a tacky approach.

Do you enjoy making videos? The band hates it, but I love it. I love being in front of a camera. It’s fun. It’s kind of like a weird fetish, it’s exhilarating because I force myself to do it. It’s kind of like masochistic behavior.

Sometimes when an artist becomes a sex symbol, as you have, he or she isn’t taken seriously as a musician. How do you feel about that? That’s because they’re jealous. We play music for ourselves, we have a great time doing it, and we are good musicians. If we were fat and ugly continued on >>p44
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Q&A (cont.)

we'd be critically acclaimed. It's absolutely true.
Because that whole [sex symbol] thing comes into it. It changes people's perception of our band. It's kind of an unfortunate byproduct of the way we're marketed. We're starting to take more control of that. All those things will be altered and hopefully repaired by the time we make the next record.

It was in college that you started getting into R&B. What do you listen to now?
I'm a huge fan of every kind of music. My biggest pet peeve is when you ask people what kind of music they're into and they say "indie" or "I like rap." Shut up. That's not true. You like everything.
I love every single kind of music. I like at least one aspect of every genre of music. I think everyone does. People aren't very honest with themselves. I was kind of snobby for a while, but I realized that even the most saccharine, sugary pop song can be the greatest thing ever.

But so can a 25-minute crazy avant-garde fusion gnarly Herbie Hancock jam from the '70s. There's so much great shit out there. I'm getting better at appreciating more of it. I think I can probably even open my mind a little more.

What advice would you give to young bands starting out?
Value each other's opinions. Don't let anyone take over, don't let a tyrannical narcissistic ass-hat frontman become the center of it all.
I think that any band that wants to make it has to apply [each member's] strengths equally, and it'll work. We've worked it out based on a lot of humility and a really nice democratic way of doing things. There's no resentment; there's no hard feelings, there's no bad blood; we're all really happy people and totally stoked to see all of this working out so well. We have really healthy relationships with each other. I learned everything from these guys. We all taught each other something valuable.

―ADAM LEVINE

Thanks to Maroon5 & Career Artist Management for letting us be part of your amazing success in Denmark!


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BACK TO BACKSTREET

s there life beyond the boy band phenomenon? The Backstreet Boys, manager Johnny Wright and Zomba Label Group president/CEO Barry Weiss are on a mission to prove there is.

"The group always succeeded despite the fact that they were always tagged with the 'boy band' line," Weiss says. "They succeeded or the strength of their music, so we kind of went back to basics and succeeded in making a really strong album from an A&R point of view."

"Never Gone," due June 14, is the first studio album from the multiplatinum act in nearly five years. After selling more than 73 million albums worldwide, according to the label, group members Brian Littrell, Howie Dorough, Kevin Richardson, Nick Carter and A.J. McLean decided to take a hiatus. "We had been going on a nonstop pace for over eight years," Dorough says. "It was taking its toll on the relationships in the group. We got to a point where we were taking each other for granted and we were taking our business for granted."

Dorough admits there was also some concern that they were oversaturating the market. "We thought the market probably wasn't ready for us to try to come up with another record," he says. "We just thought instead of pushing it out there in the people's faces, we decided to take a good, healthy break. We looked at groups like the Eagles and Aerosmith, groups that have been around a long, long time. In order to do it properly and to have long careers without getting burnt out, you need to take a break every so often."

Dorough dabbled in real estate and began recording an English/Spanish-language album. Littrell and wife welcomed a son, and he signed a deal with Reunion Records to record a Christian album, due next year. McLean worked on his sobriety and a solo album, "Now or Never," in 2002. Richardson performed in London and on Broadway in "Chicago."

Dorough says the catalyst for the reunion came when McLean and his mother appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

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FACT FILE

Label: Jive Records  
Management: Johnny Wright and Kenneth Crear, Wright-Crear Management  
Booking: David Zedeck, Creative Artists Agency  
Top-selling album: "Millennium" (1999), 12.1 million  
Last album: "The Hits—Chapter One" (2001), 1.7 million
**BACKSTREET (cont.)**

**The Beat**

**Indigo, But Not Blue**

**Indigo Girls Wrap Up**

**Their Epic Run With Collection Of Demos And Rarities**

When Epic Records releases the Indigo Girls’ “Rarities” June 14, it will end a 16-year association between the Sony label and the Georgia folk-rock duo. The 18-track collection of demos, rare versions and duets was Epic’s idea, the Indigo Girls’ Amy Ray says.

They said, “We want to do this one last project together.” Ray tells Billboard, “It’s really for the fans who have supported us over the years.”

Ray’s partner Emily Saliers says the pair will start preparing a new album in 2006 and then decide on a label home. “We have a lot of options. We’re just going to weight them all and see what makes sense.”

What makes sense may or may not be a major label. “There are a lot of artists who aren’t benefitting from contracts with major labels,” Saliers says. “They aren’t getting paid, their music isn’t getting out there, their records are getting shelved. It’s a whole new world with the Internet. It’s the perfect opportunity for artists to take advantage of this new paradigm.”

The Indigo Girls scored one double-platinum, one platinum and three gold albums while on Epic. **DAMN, HE’S GOOD!**

Lil Jon, who was named BMI’s songwriter of the year at the performing rights society’s annual Pop Awards ceremony May 17, says he loved Youngbloodz’s “Dammn,” one of his winning compositions. “It came out of nowhere,” he said. “I went into the studio with no idea where to fit. I record and I think God just gives it to you sometimes and says, ‘Take this.’”

Next for Lil Jon is a slot on this summer’s Anger Management tour with 50 Cent and Eminem.

**DIVING BACK IN:**

O.A.R. is in the studio working with producers Jerry Harrison on its first album of all new material since signing with RCA a few years ago. (2003’s “In Between War and Then” included new and previously recorded songs, while last year’s “3rd & 8th” was a live album.)

After four albums with producer John Alagna, the band is preparing to shake it up. “It wasn’t anything specific that caused the change,” vocalist/guitarist Mark Roberge says, “but the fact that we were growing and changing.”

The album also marks a change in that for the first time, the band is working with outside writers, including Glen Ballard, Peter Zizzo and Jeff Trott.

That’s a notion that Roberge previously shot down. “We were very stubborn,” he says. “We were pretty precious about it and weren’t open to people’s advice, and then one day I realized life’s too short.”

And, with major label relationships behind them, O.A.R. is still looking to prove. “I have a really strong goal to shut up all the naysayers that say we’ve just some college touring band that doesn’t have songs,” he says. “I want to take that and shove it down their throats and get on the radio airwaves.” The album is slated for a Sept. 2 release.

**FLYING HIGH:**

Cardiff, Wales’ People in Planes has inked a worldwide deal with Wind-up Records. Its debut will come out in September.

The quintet was one we earmarked for success after seeing it at the South by Southwest conference (Billboard, April 2). The band has also signed with Monster Peninsula Artists for U.S. booking. X-Ray will handle gigs outside of North America.

The act is managed by John Hunt and Jake Beaumont-Nesbitt. Ted Harris at Grubman Indurks represented the group.

**Latin Notas**

**LEILA COBO** lcbobillboard.com

**Lena Takes Lead On Debut**

On May 16-17, pop newcomer Lena was the sole artist invited to play for Warner executives at their Latin American marketing meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. 

A gifted singer/ songwriter/ pianist who comes from one of Cuba’s most venerable musical families, Lena signed with Warner Music Latin last year, thanks to a personal introduction from Alejandro Sanz. Today, the label is touting her as its next big star.

Lena’s self-titled debut album was released May 17 in multiple territories, including Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Central America and the United States. It will be released in Spain in September.

Already, the single “Tu Corazon,” a duet with Sanz, is on the radio charts in Ecuador, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Chile.

“Usually, you try to break an act in first one territory and then in other countries,” says Gabriel Martinez, marketing VP for Warner Music Latin America. “In this case, we felt the album was so strong we could cover the entire region. Obviously, Alejandro Sanz’s backing gives it more relevance.”

Lena, the daughter of Cuban singer Malena Burke and the granddaughter of Elena Burke—one of Cuba’s premier vocalists—has long worked in Miami as her mother’s musical arranger/pianist and as a back-up singer for many artist’s recordings.

In 2003, she was hired to record vocals for Sanz’s album “No Es Lo Mismo.” Struck by her voice, the Spanish superstar asked if she had original material. Lena played it for him right then and there, and Sanz introduced her to Warner Music Latin America chairman Edgar Zabala, who signed her. Lena then signed with RLM, Sanz’s management company.

Lena, who is classically trained, cites a multitude of influences in her music, from American singer/songwriters like Carole King, Alicia Keys and Tori Amos to Spanish artists like Sanz and Miguel Bosé. She says it was “a dream” to record with Sanz. “When I first met him, right there in the studio, I told him, ‘One day I’ll record a duet with you.’”

Lena had already written “Tu Corazon” but had not titled the track, which Sanz fell in love with. She rearranged the song to fit his vocals, and he gave the track its title, based on the lyrics.

Although Sanz has recorded testimonials about Lena, he is not actively promoting the album with her. Instead, Lena is traveling to various Latin American territories and performing her music live at the piano.

“Our strategy is to have a radio hit, which I think we have,” Martinez says. “But also, we want people to know Lena. This is an artist for the long run.”

**NEW CUERVO:**

Javier Willis, a former A&R director for BMI in Los Angeles, has launched an independent A&R and consulting company. Cuervo Music, based in L.A., includes Cuervo Management Group and represents various musical acts as well as film director Sergio Arau (“A Day Without a Mexican”). It also handles a large catalog of Mexican films available for distribution in the United States.

Willis roster includes regional Mexican act Los Racos, rock band Orina and debut artist Atomic Pink. Willis also represents Mexican rock band Botella de Jerez. Arau originally led the act, which disbanded more than two years ago.

The group reunited in April to play the Vive Latino Festival in Mexico. Conversations are now under way with a major music company to release a live CD and DVD of the performance.
Rivera Offers Two (Genres) For Price Of One

Lupillo Rivera’s evolution as an artist has been swift and constant. Catapulted to fame in 2001 with a series of banda albums that took him to the pinnacle of the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart twice and to No. 1 on Top Regional Mexican Albums four times, Rivera has been steadily tweaking and redefining his material.

Now, Rivera is poised for something completely different with “El Rey de Las Cantinas,” due June 7 on Univision Records.

The release consists of two albums, each featuring identical track listings—one performed with a banda sinaloense, the other with a traditional mariachi band. The suggested retail price for the set is $14.98, standard for a new release.

This is believed to be the first time that a Latin artist has packaged a set of songs in two musical styles to sell together for the price of one. Shania Twain pulled off the same feat with her album “Up!,” which was re-released with a country and pop version packaged together.

“Other acts have been doing CD/DVD combos,” Rivera says. “I wanted to do something different.”

Rivera is known for introducing a new generation of bilingual listeners to banda. With his shaved head and hip look, he embodies bilingual, bicultural Mexican youth who still have a yen for tradition.

Delving into mariachi, he says, will only expand his audience.

“I’m not leaving banda to one side,” Rivera says. “But many people who don’t listen to banda like mariachi and vice versa. This way, I’ll reach (both) audiences.”

The concept presents advantages from a marketing standpoint. For example, both versions of Rivera’s first single, “Ya Me Habian Dicho,” are being sent to every Latin radio format.

“We’re trying to get the message across that it’s both styles in one album,” says Lupe de la Cruz, senior VP of marketing for Univision Music Group.

“Every song was recorded twice. It was a challenge.”

DOUBLE THE WORK
Banda, which is played with a large ensemble that includes brass instruments and clarinet, has an earthier, raw sound that extends to the vocals. Mariachi, which uses trumpets and violins, is typically more refined and vocally demanding. It took Rivera three months to record each album—banda first (accompanied by Banda Aires del Pacifico and then mariachi (with Mariachi Internacional de Mexico).

“It is two voices, and two characters,” Rivera says. “The feeling required by each song, in each style, is different. I had to immerse myself in the life of ranchero and the life of banda.”

But in packaging the two albums as one, Univision has an opportunity to give fans an added value and spark interest from mass merchants that want such deals for their customers. “We are marketing it as a great value and as a great opportunity to see him performing in a style [fans] hadn’t seen him in before,” De la Cruz says.

Univision was able to keep the price down by working closely with Rivera and the publishers of the repertoire. Of the 11 songs on each disc, six are covers and five are original tracks.

“El Rey” premiered earlier this month on AOL Latino as part of an exclusive that gave fans the opportunity to listen to the album before its release.

The day after the album’s street date, Rivera will perform with his mariachi band at a media event in Las Vegas.

On June 25, he will launch a tour at the Gibson Amphitheater in Los Angeles. He will play half of his show with a banda ensemble and wear his traditional suit and tie. For the other half, he will perform with a mariachi band and don the traje charro (the traditional mariachi suit and hat).

“We’ve worked hard and carefully,” Rivera says. “I’ve been learning new things, and this could be very big for me.”
Terror Squad. you like, mopting his duo the single that propelled Joe and his crew to the top of The Bill- board Hot 100 and earned them a Grammy Award nomination for best rap performance by a duo or group.

So how does an artist top such a hit? "It's important to stay consist- ent," Fat Joe says, calling from the road where he is pro-moting his solo album, "All or Nothing." When you have a song like that, then everybody's watching you like, 'What are you gonna do now?' I've got to prove it ain't a fluke," he says. The album arrives June 14 via Terror Squad/Atlantic Records.

Despite the success of "Lean Back," Fat Joe recognized that it was time to broaden his sound and try something new. He paired with hitmakers Timbaland, Just Blaze, Swizz Beatz and Cool & Dre, the Miami-based duo behind the new album's lead single, "So Much More." The track peaked at No. 34 on the Billboard Hot 100 R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

On the new album, Joe puts his consistency theory to use, team- ing again with Scott Storch, who was the force behind the infectious beat of "Lean Back." He also tapped hitmakers Timbaland, Just Blaze, Swizz Beatz and Cool & Dre. The Miami-based duo behind the new album's lead single, "So Much More." The track peaked at No. 34 on the Billboard Hot 100 R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart.

Surpassing the success of "Lean Back" was not Joe's only driving force during the album's recording. He says he was driven by an emotion far deeper. "It was the fact that I love this music. I love hip-hop music," the Bronx, N.Y.-bred MC emphasizes. "If I didn't have my music, I don't know where I would be." It's his deep-rooted passion that has kept him in the in-dustry for almost 13 years. Joe first drew attention in 1995 with his debut album, "Repre- sent" (Relativity Records). But it would not be until the release of his third effort, 1998's "Don Cartagena," that he would experience success. The album debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard 200 and earned the rapper his first gold plaque. That success would be followed by 2001's platinum set: "Jealous Ones Still Envy (J.O.S.E.)." Even with these hefty acco- mplishments, Joe is not content to kick back yet. He has been putting in overtime as the release date for "All or Nothing" nears.

"I've been on the road for over 77 days across the coun- try and I just extended the promo tour for five more weeks. There isn't a rock I left unturned," he says.

Joe has partnered with the New York's MTV Networks' nighttime net-work for teens, to launch the contest I Can't Believe I'm Fat Joe's Intern (Billboard, Making the Band, May 7).

The sweepstakes is part of At- lantic Records' innovative joint Chiefs campaign geared toward promoting its top hip-hop acts (Billboard, Oct. 30, 2004). It kicked off last fall and features retail tie-ins with Ecko, LRG, Champs Sports and clothing line Umbro and media tie-ins with Premiere Radio Networks, Clear Channel's online division, Radio One and BET.

Fat Joe also continues to ap- pear on other artists' records. He guests on Jennifer Lopez's current single, "Hold You Down." Even with all the flurry sur- rounding the album, much re- tailers as Daryl King, manager of the Sound of Market store in Philadelphia, feel that the album's success rests with the product itself. "People are going to want the record just on the strength of the fact that it's Fat Joe. Since he's a big name artist, people will buy it because of the name and not so much for the music," King says. "But the music needs to draw people as well." Joe is confident that the music will indeed draw fans in. "This album is definitely going to make all the Fat Joe fans that have been with me for 13 years really proud of me," he says. "I'm not com- fortable just yet though. I'm not going to be able to be with this game until people are totally convinced that Fat Joe's legend in this game."
REVELL REVEALING AT BMI REVEL

Audience members at BMI’s May 18 Film & Television Music Awards gala were treated to some unexpected admissions from Richard Kirk Award honoree Groove Revell.

“The last thing I vividly remember is walking through the door of a mental asylum in 1978 and meeting some really weird characters,” the composer said of his pre-scoring days as an orderly at an Australian hospital for the mentally ill.

Realizing that the job was “a little depressing,” the New Zealand native rounded up a few of the inmates to form the impromptu industrial punk band SPK. “I remember to this day we were playing on the porch of the ward and [the song] had a one-minute jackhammer solo in it. We had no instruments, you see, but I was pretty handy with a jackhammer,” he told the crowd. “I turned around and all the people in the ward were playing air jackhammer.”

This inventiveness landed Revell in Hollywood after directors Philip Noyce and George Miller invited him to score 1989’s “Dead Calm.” Sixteen years later, Revell’s credits include “Sin City,” “Open Water,” “Blow” and, most recently, “The Adventures of Shark Boy & Lava Girl in 3-D.”

The BMI event, held at the Regent Beverly Wilshire, paid tribute to Revell’s penchant for movies with “killer” themes. A video reel hosted by “Chucky” of the horror film series showed clips with everything from “killer jail bait” (1993’s “The Crush” starring Alicia Silverstone) to “killer Mexican vampires” (1996’s “From Dusk Till Dawn”).

“I got offered [thrillers] all the time, and it’s really hard to break out of,’ he told Billboard. “I’m not really a dark movie kind of person. I like to laugh and see comedies.”

In the works for Revell are the films “Goal!” (directed by Danny Cannon), due later this year, and “Harsh Times” (directed by David Ayer), expected in 2006.

The award, named after the performing rights society’s late VP Richard Kirk, is presented annually to a composer for outstanding career achievements. Past recipients include Danny Elfman, Jerry Goldsmith, John Barry, Thomas Newman and Randy Edelman.

SISTERLY SOUNDS: Chantal Kreviazuk, Rachael Yamagata and Natasha Bedingfield are among the artists lending songs of empowerment to the Columbia Records/Sony Music Soundtrax release “The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants.” Adapted from the Ann Brashares novel, the film follows a pair of secondhand jeans as they get passed between four best friends of different sizes and paths. The album streets May 24 and is produced by Glen Brumman and Dawn Soler. Directed by Ken Kwapis, the Alcon Entertainment/Warner Bros. Pictures film opens nationwide June 1.

WHAT’S THE SCORE? The ballots are out for the American Film Institute’s inaugural 100 Years of Film Scores event. A group of more than 500 composers, musicians, directors and historians will vote on the top 25 film scores from the sound era (1927-present). Among the contenders are Bernard Herrmann’s “Psycho,” John Williams’ “Jaws,” Danny Elfman’s “Batman” and Hans Zimmer’s “Gladiator.”

The selected compositions will be performed live by principal conductor John Mauceri Sept. 23 at Los Angeles’ Hollywood Bowl with the venue’s orchestra. Scenes from each winning title will play in the background.
**NASHVILLE—When Cowboy Troy made an appearance at the May 17 Academy of Country Music Awards, he joked about the odds of which would happen first: Garth Brooks coming out of retirement for Troy himself having a No. 1 album. Troy clearly came much closer than he ever expected. "Loco Motive" bowed at No. 2 on Top Country Albums this issue, with sales of 51,000, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Nevertheless, Cowboy Troy (born Troy Gonzalez) knows he is up against some tall hurdles in the country music community, being the first artist to creatively combine country and hip-hop music into a mixture he describes as "hick-hop." He says hick-hop utilizes "country instrumentation," including banjo, dobro, fiddle, acoustic guitar and pedal steel, teamed with "shredding rock guitar riffs and a rap delivery." Despite the challenges that kind of genre-straddling presents, Troy has had the benefit of media exposure most new artists can only dream about, thanks to his association with Big & Rich and their Muzik Mafia artistic collective. On May 19, two days after the release of "Loco Motive," the striking, 6-foot-5-inch artist performed on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno." He has also appeared in Big & Rich's video for "Save a Horse (Ride a Cowboy)" and performed on their debut album. He rapped in front of thousands of Tim McGraw fans when he joined Big & Rich to open McGraw's concert dates last year. McGraw became a fan and asked Troy to write a rap to accompany McGraw's hit "She's My Kind of Rain," which the two then performed together nightly. Troy also got significant exposure on last year's Muzik Mafia tour, which was turned into a series for CMT.

**FACT FILE**

*Label:* Raybaw Records/Warner Bros.
*Management and Booking:* Dale Morris & Associates
*Publishing:* Muzik Mafia Publishing (ASCAP)

**DOTTED LINE:** Lofon Creek Records signed singer Keith Bryant to a long-term contract May 10. He has released one album on thelabel, "Ridin' With the Legend," and is working on his next project with producers Bruce Allen and Pat Holt. Songwriter Monty Criswell has signed with Big Tractor Music Publishing. He had deals with Hamstein Music and, more recently, Wenonaga Music, a co-venture with Sony/ ATV Tree.

**ON THE ROW:** Stacey Killian Hagewood joins the Great American Country network as VP of creative services. Hagewood worked at rival CMT from 1991 to 2003, starting as director of creative services and rising to VP of that depart.
had it not been for his Mafia pals, he would still be in Dallas managing a Foot Locker.


Troy says he is not sure why there are not more African-American country performers, speculating that they don't feel as encouraged by their friends and family. He adds that he does not feel as though he is carrying a banner or paving the way for other black artists. "That would get more into a political thing," he says, "and I save the politics for those in Washington. The pressure on me comes from my own desire to succeed..."

Tom Nicholson, music company.

Leading Danish rock act D-A-D returned to its roots for its ninth studio album, "Scare Yourself. (EMI-Medley), released May 23 in the Nordic countries.

EMI Music Denmark says release commitments from other countries are pending for the 11-track album, D-A-D's first since "Soft Dogs" in 2002.

The band formed in 1984, with debut album "Call of the Wild" arriving two years later on Danish indie Mega. Sessions for "Scare Yourself" began in Sweden in late 2003 with producer Michael Elbert (Roxyette, the Hives), but D-A-D ended up self-producing the album.

Elbert was "too correct," so we decided to do it ourselves," band frontman Jesper Blinzer says. "It was a bit scary, but we got the bubblegum punk sound that we liked when we started 20 years ago."

Nordic live dates in May and June precede summer festival appearances and a Danish tour in October. Copenhagen-based Beatbox Booking handles D-A-D in the Nordic countries; other booking is on a territory-by-territory basis. The band is published by EMI Music Publishing and managed by Sweden-based Talent Trust.

—CHARLES FERRO


The band is "very much [in] a Maroon5 situation," St John says. They're not the hippest act, but people identify with them; a young female audience in particular relates to the lyrics."

The album was released in Australia last August. Its eclectic rock-, classical- and jazz-influenced pop appealed to Australian radio programmers across formats, and widespread airplay has helped shipments pass the 50,000 mark, according to Warner.

Thirsty Merc's Sydney-based manager, Francis Coady, says the Atlantic connection followed a recent visit to Warner's New York offices with the band's singer, Rai Thistlethwayte. While Thistlethwayte played songs to Warner execs, Coady says, Atlantic co-founder Ahmet Ertegun listened in, declaring the track "Someday Someday" a potential global hit.

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Chambers, a former member of U.K. acts World Party and the Lemon Trees, was the main songwriter/producer for Robbie Williams until the pair parted company after Williams' fifth album, "Escapology" (EMI Chrysalis), in 2002. He has also written for Kylie Minogue, Texas, Jewel and Diana Ross, and is currently working with Annie Lennox.

"Isis Project" contains Chambers/Zeidel songs exploring aspects of a woman's life, sung by up-and-coming English actress Sophie Hunter. Chambers says it was inspired by the work of late French singer/songwriter Serge Gainsbourg, and is "an 18th-birthday present for my 4-year-old daughter, Iris."

Sleeper is distributed in the United Kingdom by Absolute Distribution. Negotiations for overseas licensing deals are under way. —CHRIS BARRETT

Global Pulse

D-A-D Sires 'Bubblegum Punk'

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similar to the one it set with its 2002 self-titled debut. But it doesn't let its passion fly with the snappy rock stylings of its hit "Show Me How to Live." Instead, the foursome dips deeper, grunge-filled grooves with random bursts of fervor, especially the track "#1 Zero," which smolders with a lover's parting said with hopeful promises. "Doesn't Remind Me" is a deceptively pleasant lyric that invites singer/lyricist Chris Cornell enjoys, like hammering nails and splicing up tongues, because they hold no painful memories. The spectre of Led Zeppelin rears its head on "The Worm," which could irk detractors who single from the "Fantastic Four."—CLT

AUDIO SLAVE
Out of Exile
Producer: Rick Rubin
Label: Interscope
Release Date: May 24
On "Out of Exile," Audioslave travels a musical course similar to the one it set with its 2002 self-titled debut. But it doesn't let its passion fly with the snappy rock stylings of its hit "Show Me How to Live." Instead, the foursome dips deeper, grunge-filled grooves with random bursts of fervor, especially the track "#1 Zero," which smolders with a lover's parting said with hopeful promises. "Doesn't Remind Me" is a deceptively pleasant lyric that invites singer/lyricist Chris Cornell enjoys, like hammering nails and splicing up tongues, because they hold no painful memories. The spectre of Led Zeppelin rears its head on "The Worm," which could irk detractors who single from the "Fantastic Four."—CLT

OASIS
Don't Believe the Truth
Producer: Dave Sardy
Epic
Release Date: May 31
"Don't Believe the Truth" can be considered an olive branch from Oasis to its fans. After its first two acclaimed albums, the band endured a long streak of creative stumbles. Fortunately, "Don't Believe the Truth" is a step in the right direction. Highlights include acoustic singalong "Guess God Thinks I'm Abel," the anthemic "Keep the Dream Alive" and the straightforwardly rocking "Lyla" and "Turn Up the Sun." It's no home run, however (avoid "Part of the Queue" and "The Meaning of Soul"). It's also less than cohesive, leaving the listener wanting more than it can offer. But overall, the Gallagher brothers have finally come up with something that offers legitimate echoes of their early promise.—CMW

BANDA EL RECODO
Hay Amor
Producer: Banda El Recodo
Recodo
Release Date: May 24
Nearly 70 years old, the venerable Banda El Recodo doesn't sound its age. Founded by Cruz Lizarraga and now led by his two younger sons, the group continues to straddle contemporary and traditional sounds. El Recodo uses only traditional banda instrumentation but is decidedly avant-garde in its choice of material and arrangements. To wit, "Hay Amor" begins with an cappella introduction to "Que Mas Quisiera" that dissolves into a danceable banda beat. There is romance in "Parece Mentira," tradition in "Te Doy las Gracias" and a mix of both in "Agua Dulce," a ballad played with banda. Elsewhere, traditional rancheras and tropical tracks ("Camaron Peazo") bring El Recodo back to its roots. It's a delicate musical balancing act, but one gracefully achieved here.—LC

SEETHER
Karma and Effect
Producer: Bob Marlette
Wind-up
Release Date: May 24
Seether's current hit, "Remedy," is climbing the Modern Rock chart (No. 11 this issue), and there is something morose about catchy angst on the new album "Karma and Effect." The act's evolution from a two-man studio project to a four-piece band has helped it dodge the sophomore slump; the songwriting and production gel much better than on its debut album, "Disclaimer." There is less brooding and more punch, although the group offers little to make its songs more distinct from each other. "Truth," "Burnts" and "I'm the Gypsy" are the best contenders for future singles. But with "Disclaimer" cut "Gasoline" still garners attention and "Remedy" up to the task of deciding how to sustain the momentum of both albums.—CLT

TRISHA YEARWOOD
Georgia Rain (5:11)
Producer: Garth Fundis
K. Rochelle Writers: E. Hill, K. Rochelle Publishers: various
MCA Records
Country music has missed Trisha Yearwood, and this gorgeous ballad illustrates why. After a hiatus from the spotlight, the Georgia native is back with one of the best singles of her career. It’s a poignant look at young love and the years she’s washed over us, but certain emotions never fade. The lyric is picturesque and perfectly suited to Yearwood’s warm, supple voice. Garth Fundis’ arrangements are tasteful and an aching steel guitar. This welcome return of one of country’s most talented singer-songwriters as the first taste of her September album, "Jasper County."—DEP

MAXIMO PARK
A Certain Trigger
Producer: Paul Epworth
Release Date: May 31
Pioneering electronic label Warp makes a rare foray into rock with this latest Maximo Park release. A more than believable pop punk peak on 2003’s “Good Hope.” As the album that gleefully mixed bloodshed and breakup into a dozen should-have-been hits. In terms of songwriting, “Good Mourning” was a leap forward, as for the first time nearly every chorus was ready for an arena. "Promise," by contrast, is largely a study in efficiency. Such songs as “Poison” and “Mercy Me” clock in at less than three minutes, driven by guitar riffs that move with the professional recklessness of an ambulance driver. But Matt Skiba is still singing about casket-bound relationships, and the group tries to heighten its sometimes cartoon-like dynamics with guitar keyboards. New ground is broken on “Burn” and “Sadder,” which create some ambivalence and foretell a less aggressive future.—TM

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Motown Remixed
Producer: Harry Weiss
Motown/Universal Music Enterprises
Release Date: May 24
On this compilation, well-known R&B/hip hop producer/DJs spliced new life in new tracks dating from the Jackson 5’s “I Want You Back” to the late Rick James’ “Mary Jane.” The tempest brewed by the Groove Boutique remix of Smokey Robinson’s “Quiet Storm” is lushly underscored by Roy Ayers’ sublime vibes. The Temptations’ “Papa Was a Rolling Stone” became a soulful standalone tribute on soul in the hands of DJ Jazzy Jeff. Others tapped for this special assignment include Easy Mo Bee, DJ Green Lantern and Salaam Remi. Unlike most projects of this kind, this deftly bridges the gap between the originals and their re-grounded versions, enhancing the enjoyment for old-school purists and contemporary fans alike.—GM

R&B
MARQUES HOUSTON
Naked
Producer: Various
T.U.G. Entertainment/ Universal
Release Date: May 24
Marques Houston, the 1990s power trio that was any remnants of his earlier stint as a member of boy group Immature/Imx with this solo effort. The group that he reveals the healthy adult male he has become through songs that reflect the tenets of Marvin Gaye’s sexual healing, Houston doesn’t leave much to the imagination on the suggestive and colorful entries “Sex Wit You,” “Like It” and the title track. Meanwhile, derivative party jam “12 O’Clock” (featuring Joe Budden) loses its punch when it begins invoking the “drop it like it’s hot” hook from Snoop Dogg’s recent hit. Berstein is the best on the album’s uneven and often formulaic course with the engaging midtempo single “All Because of You” featuring Young Rome. Also worth another listen: the relationship-themed “Cheater” and “I Ain’t Ready.”—GM

LATIN
LENA
(4)
Producer: Emanuele Ruffinengo, Bob Benoza
Warner Music Latina
Release Date: May 17
Newcomer Lena is part of a musical family, and has already logged time as a backup singer for Alejandro Sanz and as an arranger and pianist. She is also a songwriter, and a good one. Her début, however, is not just about the songs, but the texture of Lena’s voice. A little bluesy, piercing and emoting. That, coupled with lush arrangements and production, make it better than her Emanuele Ruffinengo, give it a distinctive sound. Lena’s songwriting is similar to that of her mentor, Alejandro Sanz (featured in the Cuban-minded single “Tu Corazón”) in that they both have a grace in the lines and hooks are immediately attention-grabbing. But the musicality makes up for it, and the more you listen, the more you are reeled in. Tracks like “Dueña” are standouts.—LC
JASON MRAZ Wordplay (3:08)
Producers: Josh Deutsch, ASCAP; Warner-Tamerlane/Big Band/ASCAP
Writer: J. Deutsch, K. Kadhish
Publishers: Goo Eyed, Slowy Songs, ASCAP; Warner-Chappell
Atlantic (digital download)

To follow his breakthrough 2002 album, "Waiting for Charlotte," Jason Mraz returns with the new single "Wordplay." This self-conscious jangle- rock song finds him trying to craft a hit single and avoid the sophomore slump. It flutters by slightly more than three measures, sounding like a gut-check acoustic guitar and Mraz rapping/singing about how folks might write him off as a one-hit-wonder. With adult top 40 radio the current home of the young singer/songwriter, Mraz will likely do well there. His album "MR. A-Z" (Get it? MR. A-Z = Mraz) is out July 26—AC

INGRAM HILL Almost Perfect (3:37)
Producer: Rick Beato
Writer: Dennis Henthorn, Rick Beato, E. Hart
Publishers: Thor Hill/Loney Runner, BMI; EMI/Ashley Big Ass Pets, ASCAP; Divorce Records (ASCAP)

As the second half of the decade gets its ears wet, we find the faux-diva movement fading and top 40 radio in search of new classics. About 10 years ago, easy-on-the-ear bands like Toad the Wet Sprocket and Gin Blossoms rose to fame with the perfect formula: memorable melodies, skillful vocals and organic instrumentation. The millennium version of such a group could be Ingram Hill, a Southern-bred quartet whose "Almost Perfect" brings back jangly guitars, lush harmonies and a clever, lighthearted touch that makes its mark after a couple of spins. The band has toured with Gavin DeGraw, Los Lonely Boys, Dave Matthews Band and the Allman Brothers. This is the second time for radio for this single; let's hope these guys are rewarded for tenacity.—CT

DEANA CARTER The Girl You Left Me For (3:31)
Producer: Deana Carter

 Writers: D. Carter, J. Michael
Publishers: Deanaline, ASCAP; Warner-Tamerlane/Big Band/ASCAP
Vanguard/Weik (CD promo)

A decade ago, Deana Carter was the toast of Nashville, with four Top 10 hits, sun-streaked blonde hair, signature bare feet and a handful of Country Music Association nominations. But her career took an auspicious future. But then the genre's focus became clouded, and many country chartbusters were forced to redefine themselves. Now a sassy redhead, Carter has signed with Vanguard and is clearly going for the adult top 40 audience. "The Girl You Left Me For" is not particularly revolutionary; Carter is clearly reaching out to the Avril Lavigne/guitar-driven movement; however, this is an artist with a track record that shines. If Carter wants to tickle top 40, then the format should seriously consider her charms. Here's one multi-talented lady, and how many of these adult top 40 boil that it owns at this point?—CT

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CHAMP COMES OUT SWINGING

Chances are if you haven’t yet heard of DeNetria Champ, you will soon. The JDI Records artist seems to be everywhere lately.

Champ, whose vocal prowess has drawn comparisons to Aretha Franklin, participated in the Fox Television special “Easter Glory” and appeared at Marvin Winans’ Perfecting Church Conference and at Dorinda Clark-Cole’s Singers & Musicians Conference. Her talents have been on display in the Wesley Snipes film “Sugar Hill” and the HBO movie “The Goat,” starring James Earl Jones.

She has also appeared on Dr. Bobby Jones’ TV show and was part of a live recording with Norman Hutchins, and was featured in an Ebony magazine article on today’s top gospel acts.

Champ recently performed at a private concert hosted by Oprah Winfrey, who cites Champ’s “When God Gets Through” as one of her favorite songs.

Champ first found an audience in Europe, where she scored dance hits with the tunes “Rescue Me” and “Rise Up,” and she has sung backup for Patti LaBelle. But gospel was always her first love.

“It was birthed in me,” she says. “My mother was a minister of music, and my grandfather was a preacher.”

JDI Records head Professor James Roberson’s longtime wish to work with Champ was fulfilled when her JDI debut, “I Really Love You,” was released last summer. The project includes a duet with Vanessa Bell-Armstrong, “Go On Through It” as well as “DeNetria’s Church Medley,” a fan favorite.

Before recording Champ’s gospel debut, Roberson says he endeavored to give songwriters a feel for her style. “I tried to impress upon people that even though DeNetria is a traditional gospel singer, she can do other stuff,” he says.

With the finished project, Champ says, “we tried to put a little something on there for everybody—traditional, rock, contemporary gospel and dance.”

Summer plans call for Champ to participate in radio events and conferences as well as tour.

Champ is thrilled with all the new developments. “God has done so much,” she says. “I’m just mesmerized by his anointing.”

Fleming’s Change Of ‘Heart’


However, surprisingly, all these musical worlds co-exist very comfortably on acclaimed American soprano Reneé Fleming’s new album, “Haunted Heart” (Decca, May 10). Paired with two impeccable collaborators (pianist Fred Hersch and guitarist Bill Frisell), Fleming performs with a tonal color and range that may stun longtime fans used to hearing her on the world’s greatest opera stages rather than as an intimate cabaret.

While Fleming eventually opted for an operatic career, this album reflects some of her longest-held musical loves, starting even before her student days, when tenor sax jazz legend Illinois Jacquet invited her to tour with his band.

“In my case, singing jazz and standards was when I was younger was a really liberating experience,” she reflects. “It helped me immensely in freeing up my sound.”

That musical breadth has also shaped her ideas about performing. “Singing jazz has definitely affected the way I sing both Handel and bel canto music, for example. I’ll bend a phrase, or delay it slightly. In fact, I do it with everything now,” Fleming muses.

BRODSKYS LEAP IN: After years of appearing on labels ranging from WEAs Teldec to the independent Silva Screen, the U.K.-based Brodsky String Quartet is making a splash with its own Sanctuary-distributed Brodsky Records.

The first offerings, both out April 26, are a vivacious recording of the Tchaikovsky String Quartets Nos. 2 and 3 under the directorship of the group’s violinist, Pavel Rashkov, who sold out his first offering only two weeks after recording.

Paul Cassidy, the group’s violist, says “Moodsings” was the result of one of the Brodskys’ long-standing educational initiatives. “We spent three years on a project for British teenagers,” he notes, “in which we invited the students to write songs for string quartet and voice, and design everything from CD booklets and concert programs to stage sets.”

The quartet hopes to expand the project to the United States.

www.americanradiohistory.com
How many times in the last 15 years have you read the “rock is dead” obituary? Three times? Four? System of a Down, and the other acts that have recently led The Billboard 200, would beg to differ.

For at least four weeks in a row—five if you count Rob Thomas—rockers have been kings of the big chart, with this issue’s topper representing the fattest sales week in SOAD’s much-lauded career. As for Thomas’ rock credentials, although his solo album follows pop-leaning trail, his band, Matchbox Twenty, was absolutely considered a rock act during its formative years.

There is no doubt how one would classify the thrice that bowed at No. 1 after Thomas and before SOAD, a relay that saw the baton pass from Bruce Springsteen to Nine Inch Nails to Dave Matthews Band.

Guess what? That track met might not end next issue, because Audioslave is warming up on the sidelines.

First-day sales reported by chains have executives close to the supergroup’s sophomore album predicting a start of 270,000 copies or more. Such sales—assuming System’s latest undergoes a typical second-week decline—would place Audioslave at the top of the chart for the first time. The 2002 self-titled debut by the band that emerged from Rage Against the Machine and Soundgarden peaked at No. 7, with opening-week sales of 162,000. Rage had two No. 1 albums during its run, while Soundgarden had one.

In the meantime, all hail SOAD, whose “Mezzmerize” begins with 433,000—more than the band’s first album sold during the 33 weeks it appeared on the chart.

The band’s best prior Nielsen SoundScan week belonged to its only other No. 1 album, 2001’s “Toxicity,” which began with 222,000 on The Billboard 200 that was calculated during the week of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Its subsequent leftovers collection, “Steal This Album,” peaked at No. 15, selling 166,000 in its best week.

In a year when such major markets as Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia lost significant rock stations, and New York’s WXRK has essentially forsaken current music for classic rock, the streak of rock titles atop The Billboard 200 is a helpful reminder. Like any other popular genre, rock will experience ups and downs, but it never fails its tent.

In fact, there is one fascinating statistic that might surprise you. Although SoundScan does not calculate an overall market share for rock that would extend all the way from death metal to Bob Seger, modern rock and hard music are among the categories that it tracks regularly. Of those 11 categories—an eclectic menu that includes R&B, Latin, gospel and jazz—the only one that has seen its share of overall album sales grow in each of the last seven years is modern rock.

That classification accounted for 16.1% of sales in 1998, and although its volume has sometimes declined from one year to the next, its market share has grown each year, reaching 19.9% in 2004. Take that as another offer of proof that, as more than one old song suggests, rock’n’roll will never die.

UPBEAT: Cause for celebration is not confined to rock. With nine new titles entering the top 20, including five in the top 10, album sales this week beat those of the same week in 2004.

In a comparison of the same-numbered sales weeks—the measure that Billboard uses on this page’s Market Watch—album sales are up 1.5% over last year’s 20th sales week. If you use the adjusted report on Nielsen SoundScan’s home page, album volume for the tracking period that ended May 22 is up 0.6% over sales for the week that ended May 23, 2004.

Now, will we see two wins in a row?

Aside from the aforementioned Audioslave splash on next issue’s Billboard 200, look for the Common album to open in the range of 230,000-240,000, with George on track for 90,000-100,000.
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<td>JOHNNY WINTER</td>
<td>Get Right With The Man</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOHN CENA &amp; THA TRADEMARK THUGS</td>
<td>Can’t See Me</td>
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With 95 million copies sold, the list has charted nine songs during the week of June 4, 2005, including tracks from "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge Of The Sith" Soundtrack, "The Right With Delicious Surprise," and "The Beach Boys Baby."
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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td><strong>WE BELONG TOGETHER</strong></td>
<td><em>Nick Carter &amp; Kitt Angel</em></td>
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<td><strong>OH</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HOLLABACK GIRL</strong></td>
<td><em>Kerry Clarkon</em></td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IN THE KITCHEN</strong></td>
<td><em>Daft Punk</em></td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>REMEMBER THE NAME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DA DA DA</strong></td>
<td><em>Gwen Stefani</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ROB</strong></td>
<td><em>Lil Jon &amp; B5</em></td>
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### POP 100 AIRPLAY

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<td><strong>DON'T TRICK ME</strong></td>
<td><em>Out Da Pawn</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COOL TO BE YOU</strong></td>
<td><em>Nelly</em></td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOO MUCH</strong></td>
<td><em>Lil Jon &amp; B5</em></td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HE'S YOUR MAN</strong></td>
<td><em>Jill Scott</em></td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BABY I'M BACK</strong></td>
<td><em>Beyonce</em></td>
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<td><em>Lil Jon &amp; B5</em></td>
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<td><strong>ME AND MY GIRL</strong></td>
<td><em>Faith Evans</em></td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
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<td><strong>GOT THAT LOOK</strong></td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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<td><em>Beyonce</em></td>
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*Note: This chart is compiled from Nielsen SoundScan data and includes songs from Billboard's Hot 100 and Pop 100 charts.*

Data for week of June 4, 2005 | Charts Legend on Page 72
Top Country Albums

1. Toby Keith - Honkytonk University
2. Rodney Atkins -forall the Pieces
3. Tim McGraw - Live Like You Were Dying
4. Sugarland - Twice The Speed Of Life
5. Gretchen Wilson - Here For The Party

Top Bluegrass Albums

1. Alison Krauss & Union Station - Lonely Runs Both Ways
2. Old Crow Medicine Show - Shenandoah
3. Rhonda Vincent & The RSR - Devil On My Shoulders

ACM Awards Lift Keith, Others

The 40th annual Academy of Country Music Awards show, which aired May 17 on CBS, adds steam to Toby Keith's 28,900-unit opening for 'Honkytonk University.' His fourth No. 1 start on Top Country Albums opens at No. 2 on The Billboard 200.

A multiple nominee and performer on the ACM show, Keith has had three larger first weeks, but this debut is his latest one-week sum since "Greatest Hits" did 88,000 copies during Christmas week last year.

Other ACM-related gains include Greatest Rascal Flatts' "Feels Like Today" (45%), Keith Urban's "Be Here" (34%), and McGraw's "Live Like You Were Dying" (45%) and Gretchen Wilson's "Here for the Party" (33%).

Note: The ACMs are sponsored by Cabela's in 2005.
Hot Country Songs

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<td>Keith Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lot of Leavin' Left to Do</td>
<td>Trace Atkins</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody's Hero</td>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homewrecker</td>
<td>Gretchen Wilson</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Card of Freedom</td>
<td>Rascal Flatts</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>What's a Guy Gotta Do?</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
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<tr>
<td>My Give a Dam's Busted</td>
<td>Jo Dee Messina</td>
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<tr>
<td>You'll Be There</td>
<td>George Strait</td>
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<tr>
<td>That's What I Love About Sunday</td>
<td>Craig Morgan</td>
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<td>Something More</td>
<td>Sugarland</td>
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<td>Keg in the Closet</td>
<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
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<td>Anything But Mine</td>
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<td>Country Girl</td>
<td>Montgomery Gentry</td>
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<td>If Something Should Happen</td>
<td>Danny Wayle</td>
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<td>Sugarland</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>If That's What I Need</td>
<td>Toby Keith</td>
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<td>Long, Slow Kisses</td>
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<td>Goodbye Time</td>
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<td>Don't Ask Me How I Know</td>
<td>Bobby Pinson</td>
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<td>Pickin' Wildflowers</td>
<td>Keith Anderson</td>
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<td>The Talkin' Song Repair Blues</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
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<td>Don't Worry 'Bout a Thing</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
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<td>Alcoholic</td>
<td>Rebekah Mclain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big &amp; Rich</td>
<td>Pat Green</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Doll</td>
<td>Van Zant</td>
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<td>Help Somebody</td>
<td>Trent Yarwood</td>
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<td>Georgia Rain</td>
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Country Singles Sales

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<td>John Denver</td>
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<td>Photograph</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restless</td>
<td>Don Williams</td>
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<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Jerry Jeffery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ride</td>
<td>Randy Travis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby Girl</td>
<td>John Anderson</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Bumper of My S.U.V.</td>
<td>Don Williams</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>You Don't Lie Here Anymore</td>
<td>Delbert McClinton</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>Lila Downs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montgomery County</td>
<td>Montgomery County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Big &amp; Rich</td>
<td>Pat Green</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

Country radio chart data, 177 country stations, airplay monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Billboard and Hot Chart now monitored in top 10 on both RDS Digital Audio Research and Audience charts for the first time with increases in both audiences and detections. In 2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. as rights reserved. Country Singles Sales © 2005 VNU Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved. Hot Prediction © 2005. From Radio and Music Motivations of Think Past. All charts: See Chart Legend for notes and explanations.

Don't miss another important COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE


BillboardRadioMonitor.com

Hot Country Songs: 177 country stations are electronically monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Billboard and Hot Chart now monitored in top 10 on both RDS Digital Audio Research and Audience charts for the first time with increases in both audiences and detections. In 2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. as rights reserved. Country Singles Sales © 2005 VNU Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved. Hot Prediction © 2005. From Radio and Music Motivations of Think Past. All charts: See Chart Legend for notes and explanations.

Data for week of June 4, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
## LATIN AIRPLAY
### POP

<table>
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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>DJ TIGER</td>
<td>WARNER LATINA (MUSART / BALBOA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>LUIS MIGUEL</td>
<td>WARNER LATINA (MUSART / BALBOA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>KELLY CLARKSON</td>
<td>CAPITOL / WARNER (Universal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>LIONEL RICHIE</td>
<td>EMI ( Warner Bros. /EMI)</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
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## LATIN ALBUMS

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<td>KOM HAVEYO</td>
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<td>THE DISTRICT SLEEPS ALONE</td>
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<td>#1 O. H.T.</td>
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Data for week of JUNE 4, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633
### JAPAN

**SINGLES**

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### UNITED KINGDOM

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### FRANCE

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### AUSTRALIA

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**SINGLES**

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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
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### SWITZERLAND

**SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
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</table>

### DENMARK

**SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### FLANDERS

**SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### BRAZIL

**ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>MAY 23, 2005</td>
<td>MAY 30, 2005</td>
<td>JUN 6, 2005</td>
<td>JUN 13, 2005</td>
<td>JUN 20, 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### FINLAND

**SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### IRELAND

**SINGLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### POLAND

**ALBUMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>Week 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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**Data for week of JUNE 4, 2005**

**Charts Legend** on Page 72

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www.americanradiohistory.com
ALBUM CHARTS

Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan. For Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, sales data is compiled from a national subset panel of over 100 R&B/Hip-Hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

- Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.
- Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart's biggest gain.

PRICE & SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE

Indicate album entered top 100 or The Billboard 200 and has been removed from Heatseekers chart.

CD/CD/DVD prices are suggested or equivalent prices, which are projected from wholesale price. After price indicates only available on DuoDisc, CD/CD/DVD after price indicates only available. Duadisc available. * CD/DVD combo available. * Indicates vinyl LP is available. Pricing and vinyl LP availability are not included on all charts.

Singles charts

Compiled from a national sample of CDs supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of greatest sales, compiled by cross-referencing each title with Nielsen's database. The top charts are the Rhythmic Top 40, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are ranked by total detections.

- Songs showing an increase in audience or detections over the previous week, regardless of chart movement.

RECURRENT RULES

Songs are removed from the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and ranked below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks for more than 20 weeks and ranked below 50. Songs are removed from the Pop 100 and Hot Rock airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Pop 100 for more than 30 weeks and ranked below 30. Songs are removed from the Hot Country Singles & Tracks they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and ranked below 15, provided that they are not still gaining enough points to be ranked. Songs are removed from the Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Adult R&B, and Hot Dance Club/Top 40 Airplay charts if they have been on the chart for more than 26 weeks and ranked below 50 (for Modern Rock)."
### Music Video Monitor

**MTV**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUST A LIL BIT</td>
<td>The Game feat. 2 Chainz</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 45 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE BELONG TOGETHER</td>
<td>Nelly feat. Gloria Gaynor</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 29 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAIT</td>
<td>Ciara</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 33 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DREAMS</td>
<td>Ke$ha</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 27 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRIND WITH ME</td>
<td>Usher</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HATE IT OR LOVE IT</td>
<td>Tyga feat. Mya</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 31 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL BACKL@@K</td>
<td>Don Omar feat. Lil Wayne &amp; Ace Hood</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 32 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOLLBACK GIRL</td>
<td>Nicki Minaj feat. Jeezy</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 29 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL BECAUSE OF YOU</td>
<td>Usher feat. Yung Joc</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 31 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR. BRIGHTSIDE</td>
<td>The Killers</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIKE THAT</td>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE LADY</td>
<td>The Game feat. 2 Chainz &amp; Fabolous</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWITCH</td>
<td>Wiz Khalifa feat. Snoop Dogg &amp; Wale</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 31 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY DRESS</td>
<td>Lecrae &amp; Kari Jobe</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 35 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'M A HUSTLA</td>
<td>Reek da Vill feat. Surface &amp; 19th Ave</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 30 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLD BLUE CHAIR</td>
<td>George Strait feat. Shania Twain</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 35 sec)</td>
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**CMT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KENNY CHESENY, OLD BLUE GRAIN</td>
<td>Joe Nichols</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOE, WHAT'S ANY GUY GONNA DO</td>
<td>Keith Urban</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 32 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEITH URBAN, I'M A BASTARD</td>
<td>Dierks Bentley</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOBY KEITH, NIGHTS LIKE THIS</td>
<td>Jo Dee Messina</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 35 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE GIVE A SHOW &amp; IT'S BETTER</td>
<td>Runaway June feat. Luke Bryan</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 32 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONTGOMERY GENTRY, IT'S RASCAL FLATTS, NOT HERE</td>
<td>Montgomery Gentry feat. Rascal Flatts</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 34 sec)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARN RIMES</td>
<td>Boyz N Da Hood, Big Boyz</td>
<td>Music Video Preview (1 min 30 sec)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Music Videos

**Title**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAR WARS EPISODE II: REVENGE OF THE SITH</td>
<td>Lucasfilm</td>
<td>12:10</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY JEWELS</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>8:57</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOSEN FEW: ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTARY</td>
<td>Rhino</td>
<td>7:25</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DOCUMENTARY</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>7:58</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BEST OF PANTERA</td>
<td>Warner</td>
<td>3:44</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE FLAMING LIPS</td>
<td>Alternative</td>
<td>4:03</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>4:47</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORY OF THE YEAR</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:38</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Zombie</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:19</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna McGee</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Williams</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasma</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frantic</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Jobe</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Jace</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah McLachlan</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Pistols</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh Groban</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Led Zeppelin</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>Sony Music</td>
<td>4:32</td>
<td>$2.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HELP WANTED

LABEL PRODUCTION MANAGER WANTED

Leading L.A.-based independent label seeks experienced Production Manager for top to bottom oversight of all label production/manufacturing, from POP to finished goods. Also requires inventory management, POP/promo trafficking, vendor relations, etc. Qualified applicants can forward resumes to: resume@thrivemusic.com

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Pioneering Distributor Dan Heilicher Dies At 82

Dan Heilicher, half of the pioneering independent record distributor Heilicher Brothers, died May 23 in Minneapolis after a long illness. He was 82.

Heilicher joined brother Amos’ jukebox operation in 1945. By 1947, the Heilicher Brothers expanded to independent distribution after landing the Mercury Records account for North and South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska and home state Minnesota.

In 1955, the Heilichers started the Musicland chain. Both brothers stayed with the business following its merger with Pickwick International in 1960, until American Can acquired it in 1977. The Heilichers then concentrated on real estate and the coin-operated machine business.

“The way the Heilicher Brothers worked, Amos was the idea guy and Danny was the nuts and bolts guy who put it all together,” says Owen Husney, a relative of the family and a principal in Los Angeles-based First American Entertainment. “At some point, Amos probably said, ‘We have to get on computers,’ and Danny probably said, ‘I’ll get on it right away.’ And then he probably went away and learned everything to know about how to use computers with distribution and probably was the first in the industry to buy punch cards for computers.

“It was the most wonderful business-brother relationship,” Husney says.

Dan is survived by his wife, Phyllis, five children, 12 grandchildren and his brother Amos, who is 88.

—Ed Christman
Paul Simon, center, received the BMI Icon award for his lifetime of creativity and esteemed body of work. Brian Wilson, Yolanda Adams, Jo Stone and Marc Anthony paid tribute to Simon. Pictured, from left, are BMI president/CEO Del Bryant and BMI's Phil Graham.

Bee Gees Brian Wilson, Yolanda Adams, Jo Stone and Maroon 5 paid tribute to Simon. Pictured, from left, are BMI’s Charlie Feldman and Barbara Cane, BMI president/CEO Del Bryant and BMI’s Phil Graham.

Matt Roberts, left, and Brad Arnold of 3 Doors Down celebrate their song of the year victory for "Here Without You." Last year, the pair won the award for most performed song on college radio.

Lil Jon puts down the crunk juice long enough to embrace his BMI songwriter of the year award, as well as the certificates for co-writing four of the 50 most performed songs in 2004.

Paul Simon, left, and Jim Foglesong were the two new inductees warmly welcomed at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's annual ceremony May 16. Pictured, from left, are Hall of Fame inductee Ray Price, Kris Kristofferson after presenting him with a medallion, and Mike Flecker (Photo: Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum).

Kris Kristofferson and Jim Foglesong were the two new inductees warmly welcomed at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's annual ceremony May 16. Pictured, from left, are Hall of Fame inductee Ray Price, Kris Kristofferson after presenting him with a medallion, and Mike Flecker (Photo: Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum).

Grammy Award-winning singer Diana Ross presented her father, singer/composer Pat Boone, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra Lifetime Achievement Award April 20 at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles. The event honored Boone's 50 years in show business.

Anita Baker, Public Enemy's Chuck D and music director Eubanks received honorary Doctor of Music degrees at the Berklee College of Music's 2005 commencement May 7 in Boston. Pictured, from left, are Eubanks (who is a Berklee alumnus), Baker, Baker and Berklee College of Music president Roger Brown (Photo: Phil Ferranti).
SPECTATOR SPORTS
Keen eyes at EMI were trained on Warner Music Group’s recent initial public offering. None more so than former WMG chief Roger Ames, who EMI recently brought onboard as a senior adviser. “We watched it with interest as a spectator, and I’m sure he watched it with greater interest as former head of that business,” EMI Group chairman Eric Nicoli tells Track. Nicoli was swift to rule out any connection between Ames’ arrival and Warner’s new, public status. “Ames has been helping us in lots of ways completely unrelated to Warners. His appointment is completely unrelated to the timing of the IPO, and the fact of the IPO,” he says. —Lars Brandle

CISAC NO VACATION
When the members of CISAC meet June 9 in Dublin, it will be their first general assembly since changing statutes in October 2004. The Paris-based organization’s 20-member board of directors will meet two days earlier, in an effort to streamline operations, the authors’ and composers’ societies participating in the assembly can send only one representative and one replacement. “Gone are the days when one could go on holiday to a CISAC assembly with family and nannies,” one member tells Track. —Emmanuel Legrand

BILLIONAIRE’S REALITY
Artemis Records artist Sir Ivan—who recently scored an international dance hit with “Peace on Earth”—is poised to become a star on the small screen. Sources say the 49-year-old billionaire-banker-turned-artist is expected to ink a deal for his own reality TV show. From what Track hears, Sir Ivan has been in negotiations with a number of reality shows executives, including producers of “Growing Up Gotti.” Surely, Sir Ivan’s castle in the Hamptons will play a major role in the show—just as it does June 12 on the Travel Channel’s “Grand Castles of America” program. —Michael Paolella

A FRENCHMAN IN NEW YORK
Expect the Reed MIDEM Organization to announce shortly the appointment of Jean-Pierre Bommel to the position of VP of sales and business development for MIDEM Market North America. Bommel has held various marketing positions in such record companies as Sony and BMG in the United States. The New York-based Frenchman will have the task of boosting U.S. presence at the annual trade show held in Cannes. —Emmanuel Legrand

DOORS CLOSE WITH A FORCE
After 10 years, Nashville-based management/public relations firm Force is closing its doors on Music Row May 27. The reason? Owner Nancy Russell wants to devote more time to travel and enjoying life. Russell has been co-managing Alan Jackson with Howard Kaufman’s Los Angeles-based HK Management. Jackson will remain with that firm with Laurie Gorman as his rep. Force has also been managing Loretta Lynn’s Grammy Award-winning comeback, and Russell will continue to work with Lynn on select projects. Russell’s upcoming plans include work on a film she has written. Force’s William Smithston will continue to handle Lynn’s publicity in addition to adding new clients. —Deborah Evans Price

COUNTRY HUNK CITY
As New York gears up to host its first ever Country Music Association Awards this fall, many of Nashville’s hottest performers have spent spending time in the Big Apple to help promote the event. Track hears that Aaron Benward and former “The Young and the Restless” star Scott Reeves—the members of the easy-on-the-eyes male duo Blue County—are currently in New York being photographed for a calendar by CMA sponsor Chevrolet. With one of the Curb act’s fellow country artists (think Billy Currington) already having graced the cover of Playgirl, Track can’t help but wonder what will happen the next time Wynonna or Dolly stops by “The Howard Stern Show.” —Katy Kroll

THE WHO’S NEXT MOVIE
Academy Award-winning director Murray Lerner is collecting material from fans for his documentary about the Who, at thewhohome.com. Tentatively titled “My Generation: Who’s Still Who,” the feature-length film, now in production, is expected in theaters in early 2006. The project, which explores the continuing influence of the band, is being created by the Who’s Roger Daltry, Spitfire Pictures’ Nigel Sinclair and Guy East and Trimford Management’s Bill Curbishley and Robert Rosenberg. —Jill Kipnis

RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Classics Group in New York names David Novik senior VP of A&R. He was senior VP of international A&R at RCA Records.

SRC Records in New York taps Kirk Harding to be executive VP. He was marketing director at Loud Records.

Island Def Jam Music Group in New York promotes Jana Fleishman to VP of publicity. She was senior director, DJJMG also appoints Karen Wiessen VP of media and artists relations. She was national director of media and artist relations at Island Records.

Virgin Records in New York appoints Jennifer McDaniels VP of urban marketing. She was director of marketing at EMI Music Marketing.

Praise Hymn Soundtracks in Nashville promotes James Hume to associate director of marketing and recording programs. He was production coordinator.

PUBLISHING: Music Sales in Miami names Rene L. Flores account manager/Latin product specialist. He was account executive at Warner Bros. Publications.

ASCAP in New York names Adrian Ross associate director, public affairs. He was director of alumni affairs at Berklee College of Music.

The Canadian Music Publishers Assn. in Toronto appoints Catharine Saxberg executive director. She held the same position at the Radio Starmaker Fund.

HOME VIDEO: Universal Studios Home Entertainment in Universal City, Calif., names Mike DuBoise senior VP of category management and retail planning. He was senior director of North American customer marketing at Avery Dennison.

RELATED FIELDS: Digiview Entertainment in New York appoints Michael Omansky CEO. He was president at Worldwide Entertainment Marketing.

Sprockets Music in Miami names Marya Meyer partner. She was VP of corporate and external affairs at the Latin Recording Academy.

5.1 Production Services in New York appoints Tom Hutten director of services. He was founder and audio engineer at Bionic Mastering.

BILLBOARD INFORMATION GROUP: Billboard in New York welcomes Christine Bower as associate art director. She was assistant art director at Rolling Stone. Send submissions to shan@billboard.com.
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