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ABOVE: Zomby Gospel sports such artists as Donnie McClurkin as it bids to become a major player in religious music.

Photo: Rick Diamond/WireImage.com

COVER: illustration by Christoph Niemann

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“The year’s first great hot-weather record: Optimism, fortitude and joy ring through the power chords.”
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Among the business issues that seem to be outstanding are questions about compensation (for example, if a carrier replaces Best Buy in the distribution chain, does it get the same cut of each sale that Best Buy would have received?) and potentially more vexing questions about pricing. Apple has demonstrated that those kinds of issues can be solved. Indeed, Apple’s ability to crack the music industry code was key to launching its music download business. If business issues are the only impediment to full mobile music downloads, there is no reason Apple could not be just as instrumental in solving those issues for mobile—assuming it believes in the model and there’s the rub. It might not be the business issues, but the use-case model that worries Apple (again, I have no insight into the company’s thinking. I am only speculating). Currently, the mobile music use-case is based primarily on the synchronization model employed by the iPod (and MP3 players of its ilk): Music is downloaded to a computer with which a mobile music player synchronizes and—presumably—music goes.

But some in the wireless industry may be resistant to that use-case model because it does not include over-the-air delivery revenue. However, if there is one thing we have learned about the digital media business, it is that consumers will have it their way—legally, if properly empowered, or illegally if they are thwarted. But they will have it their way.

Getting consumers to understand the value of the wireless download channel may first require accommodating their current usage model. Handset manufacturers are betting that consumers will want dual phone/media player devices. But will customers want devices to which they cannot port music they already own?

Long before there was iTunes, there were portable music players (including the iPod), which allowed consumers to take advantage of music they had already paid for. Subsequently, Apple added a download service that is helping revolutionize an industry. Clearly, there are no sure things in this new world of mobile entertainment. Full music downloads over wireless wide area networks may not prove to be the important distribution channel so many of us think they could be given their ability to provide whatever the consumer wants whenever they want it. That’s an important attribute in an industry such as music that appeals to the emotions of the moment.

But all parties throughout the value chain ought to pay close attention to Apple’s two-step road map—mobility of existing music leading to download of new music—if wireless full music downloads are to prove similarly successful in leading the music and wireless industries to the next level.

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Mark Desaulniers is VP of wireless Internet development for CTIA—the Wireless Assn.

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Let your colleagues know what’s on your mind. Send letters to Ken Schlag, Executive Editor, Billboard, 720 Broadway, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003, or e-mail to letters@billboard.com. Include your name, title, address and phone number for verification.

In his Words & Music column on veterinarian/budding songwriter Sam Lay (Billboard, June 25), Jim Bissman mentioned the “irresistable” lyrics that “she serves me cole slaw/that ain’t nothing but a cabbage raw.” Corky Siegel, Lay’s fellow member of the Siegel-Schwall Band, cites the lyric and asks, “Where did that come from?”

Well, most likely it came from songwriting Jesse Stone, whose “Cole Slaw” was a top 10 R&B hit for Louis Jordan Quartet. Stone’s song includes the above lines virtually verbatim, though they are not contiguous. Memorable indeed!

Scott Isler
Brooklyn, NY.
Radical Copyright Changes Proposed

The U.S. Copyright Office presented a House subcommittee with a draft of legislation on June 21 that, if adopted, would rattle the very foundation of the publishing business.

The proposal abolishes the compulsory mechanical license for cover recordings and could transform performing rights organizations and the Harry Fox Agency into competing one-stop license shops.

The draft, submitted to the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property, stems from ongoing hearings (begun in March 2004) that convinced subcommittee leaders that the mechanical-license provision of the Copyright Act (section 115) needs to be fixed. Digital services, labels and publishers have struggled to streamline the music licensing process for years.

Under current law, anyone who wants to record someone else's composition for the first time and release the recording on phonorecords (generally defined as physical objects, such as CDs, that embody only sounds) must negotiate a mechanical license and a royalty rate with the publisher.

Section 115 lets negotiation out of the process, if the composition was previously recorded and distributed in the United States, by offering a compulsory license to requesting parties who notify the copyright owner or Copyright Office and pay monthly royalties at the statutory rate.

The committee was originally prompted to review the licensing issues because of the new demands of the digital age. The problems, as the subcommittee discovered, are myriad. Compulsory licenses have "steadily declined to an almost nonexistent level," Register of Copyrights Marybeth Peters told the subcommittee. The provision "primarily serves today as merely a penalty for the royalty rate in privately negotiated licenses," she said, referring to HFA licenses and controlled composition clauses in recording contracts.

Peters noted that the transactional costs and time delays that digital music services face to secure licenses inhibit the music industry's ability to combat piracy. When legal online music services cannot obtain all the necessary rights, their music offerings become less attractive to the listening public than unlicensed services. Peters also testified that virtually all other countries have eliminated similar licenses in favor of private negotiations and

Industry Awaits Grokster Ruling

The Supreme Court is expected to issue a Grokster ruling as early as June 27. But, as many in the music industry wait for word, it seems most expect an anticlimax, rather than salvation—or even clarity.

Executives at three of the four major labels, speaking on background, agree that the court's ruling is unlikely to have an immediate impact.

“IT's a public-relations case at this point,” one executive says. “If we win, that's great. If we lose, we're where we are now. It's still illegal to upload and download pirated material.”

Labels are expecting to stay the course, several execs says, of embracing legal digital distribution platforms such as subscription services and a new round of peer-to-peer sites (current in beta testing) that honor copyright holders' wishes.

“There are some ‘olks out there that, no matter what you do, will steal,” says Adam Klein, executive VP of strategy and business development at EMI Music in London. “But it's our belief that the overwhelming majority of people prefer a legal option than they have one, if the services are cool and good.”

“Will there still be some snotty people out there? Yes. Will we as an industry continue to look for them? Yes. But that's the stick side of the conversation.”

The carrot side is investing in the creation of legal environments where you're protected against spoofing, against viruses, and where you won't get nasty letters from lawyers.”

Regardless of which way the court rules, there will likely be plenty of those nasty letters. Sources close to the Recording Industry Assn. cf America confirm that the industry group would likely take advantage of the media attention following any decision, and step up its strategy of suing file-sharers.

Meanwhile, it is the file-sharing industry continued on >>p8
UpFront

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from >>p7

collective administration.

The proposed 21st Century Music Licensing Reform Act offers a drastically different vision of the publishing world, addressing some current concerns while raising new questions. As laid out in the draft, it appears that publishers would negotiate all mechanical rights and rates. They could offer labels or online services an exclusive license, which cannot be offered under current law, or they could refuse to permit cover recordings.

Also, the proposal essentially merges performance and mechanical licensing, replacing "performance rights società" in the Copyright Act with "music rights organization." The MRO is intended to address the problem of publishers' agents requiring two licenses—performance and mechanical—from separate sources to license one composition for a single digital transmission.

If a publisher elects to authorize an MRO to grant public performance licenses (for radio/TV broadcasting, webcasting and other performances), then that MRO also has the right to grant mechanical licenses. For digital audio transmissions (such as an online stream), the MRO must grant a mechanical license with a performance license.

ASCAP, BMI and SESAC would automatically become MROs because their members have authorized them to license public performance rights. IFA and other entities may also become MROs if they obtain necessary rights from publishers.

Publishers may elect not to use an MRO, retaining their rights to prohibit others from performing, recording and distributing their compositions unless the publishers grant third parties a license directly.

Early response to the proposal is tentative. ASCAP and BMI say they are analyzing the proposal and decline to comment at this time.

"We are aware of the proposal and are analyzing it," BMI President/COO Pat Collins says. "We are investigating the implications of the proposal and will comment in due course." BMI hopes to comment by July 20.

"ASCAP and BMI have not commented on the proposal," SESAC President/COO Tom Morgenstern tells Billboard. "We have asked BMI and SESAC for comment, and they have agreed to provide it by August 15." Morgenstern adds, "We are happy with the proposal as it now stands."

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) is a not-for-profit membership-owned organization that licenses and administers the music rights of more than 200,000 composers, authors and publishers. It provides more than $1.2 billion in licensing revenue annually, and manages over a million licenses.

"The proposal provides ASCAP with a fair and balanced framework," ASCAP CEO Jack Valenti says. "It gives ASCAP the ability to negotiate and license our members' works in both the digital and traditional markets, and it gives our members a voice in the decision-making process."
GLOBAL
BY EMANUEL LEGRAND

IFPI: Take Piracy Seriously
Group Says Governments Worldwide Need To Stiffen Penalties

LONDON—Leaders of the world, act against piracy! This simple message permeated the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry’s annual Commercial Piracy Report, which IFPI chairman/CEO John Kennedy quoted June 23 in Madrid.
The IFPI is urging governments to step up their legislative and enforcement efforts to combat global physical piracy.

"Over the next few years, governments and society are going to have to learn to take piracy more seriously," Kennedy said in a statement released prior to the report.
He acknowledged that progress was being made, but also warned, "It is no longer acceptable for governments to turn a blind eye or to regard piracy as merely a small irritation to society. The illegal music trade is destroying creativity and innovation, eliminating jobs and bankrupting organized crime."

The IFPI estimates that 1.2 billion pirated music discs were sold in 2004, accounting for 14% of all discs sold worldwide. This translates into $4.6 billion in illegal business, according to Kennedy.

On the encouraging side, IFPI head of enforcement Ian Grant said that the growth in disc piracy appears to have slowed, and is at its lowest level in five years. "We may have turned the corner," he says, attributing the achievement to increased enforcement efforts in such countries as Mexico, Brazil, Hong Kong, Paraguay and Spain, and more seizures of commercial CD-burning equipment. Last year's 28,350 confiscations doubled 2003's total.

Grant says that industry anti-piracy efforts, coupled with a close working relationship with such local and global enforcement agencies as Interpol, have resulted in the shutdown of CD plants with the capacity to supply 380 million discs. "There's still plenty of capacity over the world, but each time we commission a plant, it's a cost to the pirates," Grant says.

It wasn't all good news from the IFPI. Grant says that sales of pirated music exceeded the legitimate market in a record 31 countries in 2004. It had done so for the first time in Chile, the Czech Republic, Greece, India and Turkey.

As it did last year, the IFPI report singled out 10 countries where government action is urgently needed. The top 10 list is Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Paraguay, Russia, Spain and Ukraine. India and Indonesia replaced Taiwan and Thailand from last year's list.

"Indonesia is awash with pirate products," says Grant, who estimates that 3 million pirated records are distributed there every day. "I've never seen so much pirated products in one place," he adds. "And the government's action is weak."

Grant says there is the feeling at the IFPI that too many governments are still fighting piracy with good intentions but too soft an approach. "For action to work, we need proper enforcement and deterrent laws," he says. "What's the point in fighting pirates and bring them to courts if they can walk out with just a fine?"

IFPI regional director RAUL VASQUEZ says which in CAFTA

GLOBAL
BY BILL HOLLAND

Biz Awaits U.S. OK For Central America Pact

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Bush administration, many congressional Republicans and recording industry groups believe opportunities for record companies in the United States and Central America will expand if the pending Central American Free Trade Agreement is approved by Congress.

CAFTA supporters say it promises to level the playing field between the United States and some of its south-of-the-border trade partners, and to move trade restrictions to provide easier market access to goods. Of particular interest to the music industry are provisions that would enhance copyright protection and, hopefully, create stable marketplaces for more U.S. investment. Piracy fines would be increased; criminal penalties would be introduced in some countries and be given sharper teeth in others.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Bush administration, many congressional Republicans and recording industry groups believe opportunities for record companies in the United States and Central America will expand if the pending Central American Free Trade Agreement is approved by Congress.

"It's very important for our country, for intellectual-property rights," Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez tells Billboard. "The treaty will have the highest level of intellectual-property protection in all of Latin America."

IFPI regional director Raul Vasquez says, "We're very much in favor of it. Legislation in most Central American countries regarding intellectual-property protection—specifically copyright—leaves a lot to be desired. Criminal penalties for piracy are very low, making it almost impossible to prosecute pirates."

El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have already voted in favor of the treaty, while Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic are waiting to see if the United States approves it.

The treaty has its critics, especially lawmakers overseeing the agriculture and labor sectors, where there are fears of displaced farmers and low factory worker wages and benefits outside of the States. A ratification vote by Congress will likely take place this fall.

NEW YORK—Eager to find a new financial nucleus, Eagle Rock Entertainment has hired Bear Stearns to seek a replacement for investment partner H.G. Capital.

Billboard has learned that the New York investment bank in early June met with a containing the London-based company’s financial information to prospective investors. Prospects include financial and strategic companies.

The delivery of the book follows a deal memo sent to prospective investors several months ago and is being propelled by H.G. Capital’s desire to cash in on its investment in Eagle Rock.

In the meantime, it is business as usual at Eagle Rock. On June 22, it announced that it would distribute Death Row Records outside of North America starting April 1, 2006.

U.K.-based private equity firm H.G. Capital invested £44 million ($48.9 million), including the assumption of bank debt, in Eagle Rock in late 2001. By taking a stake in Eagle Rock, H.G. replaced Edel Entertainment, which in turn had replaced BMG as the majority shareholder.

BMG helped Eagle Rock founder and chairman Terry Shin finance the company at its inception in 1997. H.G. Capital owns 68% of Eagle Rock, sources familiar with the label say. Shin and a few senior managers and private investors continue to own the remainder.

According to sources familiar with the company’s financial structure, the H.G. investment is carried on the books as preferred stock, but either is convertible to debt or includes requirements that those funds must be repaid first before other Eagle Rock investor can realize a return on their investment.

Eagle Rock declined to comment. But sources close to the deal say that Bear Stearns is looking for a replacement partner for either intellectual property or to finance H.G.’s departure from Eagle Rock. Instead of a buyer for the entire company. The sources say Shin wants to stay and run the company, while also retaining an equity stake. Nevertheless, a source familiar with the process acknowledged that there are a variety of ways a deal could get put together, including a sale of the entire company, adding that the Eagle Rock owners are “open-minded” to whichever kind of deal emerges.

Sources familiar with Eagle Rock say it had grossed revenue of about $4 million in 2003, $15 million in 2004 and is expected to reach $70 million this year. Up to 80% of its revenue is generated by its Eagle Vision DVD label and Eagle Media arm, which produces TV programs and DVDs.

In turning to Wall Street, Eagle Rock is said to be pitching a deal that most who have seen it feel it may be too pricey: the implied valuation relies heavily on profit projections going forward. But one source familiar with the deal points out that with the exception of its record label, all of Eagle Rock’s divisions are growing. The company has also just concluded deals for video ringtones and video downloads. The company has quite a number of revenue streams, certainly more than a traditional record company has. H.G. Capital did not return a call seeking comment.

RETAIL
BY ED CHRISTMAN

Eagle Rock Seeks New Investment Partner

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>>FOOTWARE JEWELS

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Marketing Confab: Men Listen For Ring Of Truth

LAS VEGAS—The key to marketing to 18- to 34-year-old males is consistency and credibility. And, not surprisingly, sex.


CLEAR MESSAGE

By the time a male turns 18, he has seen 1 million commercials, according to Dr. Jim Taylor, vice chairman of the Harrison Group. Therefore, brands have to find a way to cut through the clutter, which they do most effectively by staying on message.

In the case of the Palms Hotel, that message was "to create the ultimate party hotel for guys who wanted to come to Vegas and hook up," co-owner George Maloof said. In a session with Billboard/co-executive editor Tamara Conniff, Maloof detailed how the popular hotel and casino promotes itself as the ultimate playground for twentysomethings.

Similarly, body spray Axe's campaign is based on selling the concept that the guy who smells good will get the girl. Or, as Cindy Gallop—chairman of BBH New York, Axe's advertising agency—put it: "Wear Axe, get laid."

Of course, not all selling is sex-based. In some cases, promoting the brand via a celebrity endorser is effective, particularly when the spokesman is someone whom the 18- to 34-year-old man relates to or wants to be. The marketing should be "plausibly aspirational," said Kurt Schneider, executive VP of marketing at World Wrestling Entertainment. "Men need to believe they can attain what is being pitched," he said, noting the popularity of 5-foot-4-inch wrestler Rey Mysterio as a pitchman. Fans see him winning in the ring, Schneider noted, and because of his small stature, "think, 'I could do that.'"

However, marketers warned that they should be clear about the event or an event endorsement as a sign of credibility. "It's cool for a rocker or rapper to sell themselves like any other product," Cohn said.

CINDY GALLOP discusses the concept for the Axe body spray ad campaign.

Winning The Game

How 310 And Skechers Snatched The Rap Star From A Rival

The Game is the latest rapper to have his own fashion brand. The Aftermath/G-U-N/Interscope artist has partnered with Los Angeles-based car customization company 310 Motorings to launch his own shoe line, Hurricane by 310 (Inside Track, Billboard, June 25).

"I was presented with the opportunity and went with it," the Game tells Billboard. While he makes it sound rather easy, there was more to it than that—like another deal on the table.

According to the Game (aka Jayceon Taylor), he was in discussions with Reebok for a similar branding partnership when he was approached by Sketchers and 310, which branched into fashion last year. (Sketchers handles production and distribution for 310's shoe line.)

"I was a day and a signature away from signing with Reebok," he says. Simply put, 310 made the Game—who was once the face of Sean "P. Diddy" Combs' Sean Jean line—a better offer. While the Game will not divulge specifics of the multiyear deal, he says, "Sketchers outbid Reebok with more money upfront and points on each shoe sold." Also part of the agreement was a Bentley Coupe, which the Game now drives.

Sure, the Game was looking out for himself and his family, but equally important was having creative control of Hurricane.

Hurricane will debut in November with a comfortable athletic shoe, 310 founder and chief marketing officer Marc Laidler notes. This will be followed next year by casual and performance shoes. Like 310's own shoe line, the Hurricane brand will be sold at department stores (including Nordstrom) and athletic specialty shops (Finish Line), but not at Sketchers stores.

Sketchers formed a joint venture with 310 last year. The fashion brand lends Laidler's vision for 310 Shoes, but he declined to give any deal specifics.

As for Laidler's first meeting with the Game, he remembers fondly. "He came into my custom shop about four years ago wanting a sound system installed in his car," he says. Since then, "I've watched him blow up. He's the hottest rapper from the West Coast now—and I'm in West Coast, so it all made sense."

MORE CURVES: Queen Latifah has extended and expanded her partnership with VF Intimates' Curvation line of intimate apparel. The multi-phase, multimillion-dollar partnership can last up to 21 years.

In addition to appearing in consumer ads (as she already does), Latifah will also be seen on Curvation packaging and point-of-sale signage. Additionally, she'll assist in the design department and consult on marketing strategies.

As part of her contract, Latifah will receive royalty payments based on sales. Also, Curvation is sponsoring this summer's Sugar Water Festival, which features Latifah, Erykah Badu and Jill Scott. VF Intimates Coalition president Curt Holz was the driving force behind this lucrative deal.

TWISTED: "Twister Moves," the new dance version of Hasbro's popular "Twister" game, has entered a 20-month partnership with Jesse McCartney, whose Hollywood Records album, "Beautiful Soul," recently peaked at No. 15 on The Billboard 200.

Hasbro is sponsoring McCartney's current United States tour, while McCartney—who stars in the WB series "Summerland"—will appear in the game's ad campaign.

Radio ads begin in late September, followed by TV spots in October and print ads in the October and November issues of [14] and M magazines. Gray Worldwide is the ad agency for Hasbro.

In a cool twist, "Twister Moves"—which retails for $19.99—will include an exclusive remix of the 18-year-old singer's single "She's No You." Later this summer, "Twister Moves" and McCartney will host a free concert to officially celebrate the partnership.

"As longtime fans of "Twister," we cannot wait to try out this new take on a true classic."

SUMMER BREEZE: Yep, that's Donny Osmond in Sprint's new TV spot. Though the ad does not sport any music, the timing is quite good for the performer. Currently on tour, Osmond is enjoying success with his latest album, "Breeze On By," a track from his latest Decca album, "What I Meant to Say." Osmond recently signed with Eric Gardner's Panacea Entertainment for management.
Israelite Outlines Plans For ‘New MPAA’

The National Music Publishers’ Assn. on June 13 emphasized its goal of protecting the rights of music publishers and songwriters, while warning of expected sweeping legislative changes in music licensing.

During the group’s annual membership meeting at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., president/CEO David Israelite said his mission for the “new NMPA” begins with the guiding principle: “The protection of property rights is one of the most important and fundamental values for a free and prosperous society.”

To be true to this principle, Israelite said, the NMPA must evolve. With this in mind, he described five long-term goals for the group.

The most immediate and important aim is to fight to ensure that publishers’ interests are protected from harm in the new digital environment. “We are facing once-in-a-generation types of changes in the music publishing industry,” Israelite said.

He explained that congressional leaders dealing with intellectual property have decided that the compulsory license process is broken and must be fixed. The only question in their minds is what the proper fix should be (see story, page 7).

Also, the NMPA will strive to be a stronger and more cohesive voice for all music publishers and songwriter partners, to be a leader for the entire publishing community.

The group also plans to play a more active role in the fight against piracy, which Israelite prefers to call “theft of music.” He likens anti-piracy efforts to the war against drugs.

The NMPA will also push to improve its relationship with the entire music community, including labels. While there will always be challenges, Israelite said, “It will not help to obtain a larger slice of the pie if that pie continues to get smaller.”

Although the group will always insist on a level playing field and the respect that publishers are due, he said, publishers must continually look for ways to work with others in the music community on issues of mutual concern.

The NMPA also announced the election results for its board of directors. The board members, who will serve for two years, are Martin Bandier, Freddy Bienstock, Helene Blue, Beebe Bourne, Arnold Broido, John Eastman, Nicholas Firth, Donna Hilley, Dean Kay, Maxyne Lang, Levis Levy, Evan Medow, Mary Jo Mennella, Stanley Mills, Jay Morgenstern, Ralph Peer, David Renzer and Irwin Robinson.

Officers will be elected at a future meeting.

THEY OBJECT: The Harry Fox Agency and several publishers filed objections June 17 to the proposed class-action settlement in the so-called Ory case (Billboard, June 6).

The settlement stems from a suit filed by three individuals, who were certified as representatives of the class of all “legal and beneficial owners of a copyright” to any musical composition contained on any record distributed by record clubs Columbia House or BMG Direct since March 20, 1999, and through 60 days after the final court order.

The settlement requires payment to class members of $6.5 million, less attorneys’ fees and other costs, and adds a new mechanical license procedure for the clubs through their Web sites.

The objecting parties raise a number of arguments. They claim that the proposed settlement is unconstitutional because it binds all current and future copyright holders, which may include owners who are not members of the settlement class.

They argue that it also unlawfully allows record clubs to obtain reduced-rate licenses in a manner that is not permitted by the Copyright Act and never envisioned by Congress when enacting compulsory license provisions.

Also, they claim that the proposed Web site licensing procedure unlawfully allows mechanical licenses to be issued without notice to—or permission from—copyright holders on terms unilaterally dictated by the record clubs.

The court hearing is scheduled for October in Los Angeles.

MINI-PROMOTION: Dimensional Music Publishing found a new use for Apple Computer’s iPod. The publisher, which acquired the DreamWorks Music Publishing catalog last year, purchased more than 100 iPod minis to give away and filled them with 277 of its compositions.

Who will be the lucky recipients of the freebies? Music clearance houses, advertising agencies and film/TV music supervisors, all of whom are potential licensees of Dimensional’s songs.

August 6 live performance in New York at the 6th annual Latin Alternative Music Conference (LAMC)

USA forthcoming tour in the fall 2005

Music from EMI
UNESCO Plays To A Tune Of Cultural Diversity

BRUSSELS—French rock band Louise Attaque toured South America, Russia and Asia in May, playing to audiences it had never reached before. The tour was subsidized by the French government agency Association Française d’Action Artistique.

Without such assistance, says Marc Thomas, founder and chief executive of the band’s label, Atmospheriques, touring such remote places would not have been economically viable.

This is just the sort of scenario that a draft convention by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization hopes to protect—and that the American government would love to thwart.

UNESCO’s provisional Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions, passed in May, would allow governments to offer subsidies and implement quotas to promote their cultural sector without fear of trade backlash.

The proposal underscores an ongoing debate about global culture: On one side is the United States, which wants its cultural exports to reach free markets, and on the other, the European Union and Canada, which feel subsidies and quotas are necessary to sustain and grow local cultures against a tidal wave of American cultural exports.

UNESCO officials say legal uncertainty and outside pressure—usually from the United States—have left many countries reluctant to support their own cultural sector.

The UNESCO initiative has been widely embraced outside the United States. It was spearheaded by France and Canada and, crucially, the 25-member EU took a key role.

“The EU has become a major player in these UNESCO negotiations,” EU culture commissioner Jan Figel says. He described the convention as “a unique opportunity” to advance the international acceptance of cultural diversity.

Robert Martin, the head of the U.S. delegation in the negotiations, has lashed out at the convention, describing it as “deeply flawed and fundamentally incompatible with UNESCO’s constitutional obligation to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image.”

Aid to the music sector is less than that dedicated to other arts, such as the cinema. However, some countries have benefited from specific programs to support music-related initiatives. France and Canada have a wide range of government-financed programs. In Britain, the Department of Trade and Industry has been involved in market access efforts in China and the United States.

Alison Wemham, chairman of the British indie label group Assn. of Independent Music, says the U.K. government recognizes creative industries as a priority for the nation.

“There’s clearly a feeling among different countries that there is a cultural heritage that needs to be promoted and protected,” she adds.

Critics feel that measures like local cultural quotas create unfair advantages.

Cultural goods and services, as identified by the convention, range from music, movies and publishing to indigenous traditions and minority languages; they would be exempt from World Trade Organization policies. Some express concern that opportunistic industries will shooom their goods and services into such protections.

Neil Turkewitz, executive VP for International for the Recording Industry Assn. of America, says the proposed treaty “misses a tremendous opportunity to offer effective guidance on policies that can promote the production of culturally diverse materials.”

He contends that the draft is “based on an emotional response to perceived cultural hegemony” and uses cultural diversity “merely as a slogan for an anti-American, anti-globalization agenda.”

For Turkewitz, the best way to develop culturally diverse materials is to provide “strong and effective copyright protection so that private capital is employed in cultural pursuits.”

“We don’t endorse quotas, because we don’t think cultural products are like widgets,” he says. “Guaranteeing market share for certain goods only serves to advance cultural mediocrity.”

No international trade organization has previously attempted to legitimize this sort of cultural subsidy. The convention still faces a vote at the UNESCO general assembly in October. To pass, it will need a simple majority of the 191 member nations, then 30 nations must ratify it before it would take effect.

Additional reporting by Bill Holland in Washington, D.C.

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Oz Hall Of Fame Mutes The Fanfare

MELBOURNE, Australia—The Australian Record Industry Assn. plans a low-key launch for its inaugural "ARIA Icons: Hall of Fame" event July 14.

Only 400 invitation-only guests will attend the event at the Melbourne Regent Theatre to see six acts inducted. The show will be screened two days later on pay-TV channels VH1 and Fox8.

The approach deliberately contrasts with the glitzy annual ARIA Awards show, which will be presented Oct. 23 in front of a 4,000 strong audience at the Sydney SuperDome and telecast to an expected 1.3 million viewers, says Mark Pope, executive producer of both events.

"The Hall of Fame is about celebrating an artist’s body of work, as opposed to whatever’s in the charts," Pope says.

Hall of Fame inductions have been part of the ARIA Awards since 1988 but this is the first separately televised event. Some 37 artists have received the hall of honor to date, usually two each year. "We didn’t want to have to start presenting them poshly," Pope wryly notes.

Many label executives Down Under believe that a stand-alone Hall of Fame induction ceremony has the potential to become a major marketing event.

"There’s no reason why it can’t become similar in size to the ARIAs," says George Ash, managing director of Universal Music Australia in Sydney. "Many of these inductees are still working. This could be their springboard for more touring, and help them prolong their careers."

Inductees, whose careers started at least 25 years ago, are chosen by the 10-person ARIA board. This year the inductees are the Easybeats, whose "Friday on My Mind" was a global hit in 1967; 92-year-old country singer Smoky Dawson; 1960s pop star Normie Rowe; rock bands Split Enz and Hunters & Collection, which stormed the domestic charts in the 1980s; and blues/soul diva Renee Geyer, whose current album "Tonight" on ABC Music went gold in Australia with sales of 35,000 units.

"It’s a significant honor," says Mark Seymour, singer with Hunters & Collectors and now a solo artist with Melbourne-based Liberation Music. "When we broke up (in 1998)," he says, "we felt we’d been ignored, and not recognized for what we contributed."

Ash believes the Hall of Fame honor can give acts a boost at contemporary radio formats, and says his company will market heavily around the event if one of its acts is initiated in the future.

This year, Liberation Music is releasing a two-CD live album from Split Enz called "ExtraVAGEnza" and reworking the Hunters & Collectors catalog at retail to coincide with the induction telecast.

Liberation managing director Warren Costello believes it is wrong to equate the Hall of Fame just with heritage acts. "It’s more about respect for musicians, regardless of their age and experience, and the music industry needs to encourage any and every opportunity to do that," he says.

Liberation has itself been active with new "unplugged" recordings by Australian acts from the 1970s and 1980s on its "Acoustic Blue" series. Tracks from the albums have regularly picked up airplay at modern rock stations since the series August 2004 launch.

ARIA insiders confirm that tentative negotiations have already taken place with various music managers and promoters with ARIA to set up a permanent Hall of Fame museum in an as-yet-unspecified Australian city.
GLOBAL NEWSLINE

JAPAN'S MARKET GOING MOBILE

BY STEVE MCCLURE

Tokyo—Figures from the Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers confirm the ongoing decline of physical sales in the world's second-largest music market—but they also offer hopeful signs from the mobile music sector.

According to JSARC, mechanical royalties from CD sales accounted for less than 25% of its annual collections in 2004/2005, although fees from ringtone kept revenue on the rise. Total copyright fee collections by JSARC for the 12 months ending March 31, 2005, rose 1.2% to 110.8 billion yen ($1.1 billion). Mechanical royalties from CD sales in the year were 26.8 billion yen ($248 million), representing 24.2% of JSARC's total collections. Just four years ago (year ending March 31, 2001), that percentage was 35.5%, or 37.7 billion yen—equal to $367.7 million at that time.

However, JSARC reported a 10.2% increase in income from "interactive/comound-use sources" to 15.2 billion yen ($140.5 million) for the year. That revenue comes mainly from downloadable ringtones and online karaoke services. It represented 8.4% of the society's collections in 2004/2005; in 2001, such royalties accounted for slightly more than 1%.

"Within the next five to 10 years, income from performance, mechanical and interactive royalties will each account for one-third of JSARC's collections," predicts Ichim Asatsuma, president of leading Japanese publisher Fujipacific Music. "The interactive category included ringtone royalties of 7.9 billion yen ($73 million), up 3.9%, plus master ringtone royalties of 806.7 million yen ($7.1 million)—a staggering 384.4% increase.

One publishing source says he expects interactive fees to continue their rapid growth at least for the next few years.

"In the near future, we will have more 'interactive' revenue, particularly from mobile-related music use," affirms Kazuo Munakata, managing director of BMG Furnace Music Publishing.

With increasing broadcast opportunities likely to raise the income from performance rights, Asatsuma says, an alternative prediction could be "performance fees with a 50% share, and the other 50% split between mechanicals and interactive.'"

Performance-right collections rose 4% to 45.1 billion yen ($417 million) during the year, boosted by a 13.6% rise in broadcast royalties.

Mechanical fee collections from all formats, ranging from vinyl to DVD, were down 3.8% to 44.2 billion yen ($409 million), mainly because of the decline in CD sales.

GLOBAL

BY LARRY LIEBLANC

Canadian Radio Mulls Satellite Regulations

Toronto—The future of satellite radio in Canada remains unclear as licensees weigh government programming requirements.

Federal broadcast regulator the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission granted subscription radio licenses June 16 to three entities. Two are satellite radio operations: Canadian Satellite Radio and Sirius Canada. The third, a yet-to-be-named joint venture between Toronto-based CHUM and Montreal-based Astral Media, will be territorially transmitted.

However, the CRTC ruled that the two satellite operations must offer at least eight Canadian-produced channels with 85% Canadian content. At least 25% of the Canadian channels' output must be in French-language.

The CRTC also decreed that the packages offered by both could include a maximum of nine U.S. channels for each Canadian station. The satellite broadcasters have 150 days to decide whether to accept the conditions.


"We're meeting with XM Satellite Radio to discuss these issues," CSR chairman/CEO Bitove says. "We want this deal with quickly so we can launch in the fourth quarter." XMS is expected to hold a one-third stake in CSR when the partnership agreement is finalized; Canadian law bars U.S. companies from having a majority stake in businesses from Canada's cultural sector.

Sirius Canada is a venture from the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., Toronto-based Standard Broadcasting Corp. and New York-based Sirius Satellite Radio.

Sirius Canada and CSR would offer channels provided by their U.S.-based partners. However, because of satellite capacity issues, those partners would have to drop a U.S. channel from their U.S. services with each Canadian channel they add. An additional complication is the CRTC's insistence that at least 25% of the music on the Canadian channels be new recordings by domestic acts and a further 25% be by emerging Canadian artists.

The licensees also must contribute 5% of their gross annual revenue to existing development programs for Canadian talent.

"We're considering whether or not we will be going forward [with Sirius Canada]," Standard Radio president/CEO Gary Slaight admits. "We have to find out if Sirius Satellite Radio will carry the eight Canadian channels.

"If we launch with eight Canadian channels," he continues, "we can only put up 80 channels. So if a person in Canada can get 130 channels on the 'gray market' [through using U.S. services direct] our business is going to suffer.

"The CRTC also approved the CHUM-Astral application for a service comprising 50 Canadian-produced channels, of which at least 20% will be in the French language.

"The music broadcast by those channels must fulfill the CRTC's existing regulatory minimums for music on private-sector radio—35 Canadian content and, for the French-language channels, 65% French-language music.

Additionally, CHUM and Astral must contribute 2% of the venture's gross annual revenue to developing Canadian talent.

Given the CRTC's approval of the two satellite radio providers, however, CHUM executive VP of radio Paul Ski says CHUM and Astral are considering their options.

"It is unrealistic [that] we could compete with undertakings that are 90% U.S.-originated," Ski says.

Cultural and music industry associations have sharply criticized the CRTC for allowing the satellite operators to carry less Canadian content than private radio broadcasters or pay audio services.

"We like the fact that the commission has acknowledged that emerging Canadian artists require protection," says Cori Ferguson, executive director of the Canadian Independent Record Production Assoc., "but 90% of the channels available will not be required to play any Canadian music whatsoever. Also, having 85% Canadian content on eight channels is a ghettization of Canadian music."
MySpace Is The (Online) Place

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Walk through the MySpace office, a block of the beach here, past the mountain bikes in the lobby, through the modern/industrial, Christmas light-hung quarters of programmers and engineers, and you'll likely find CEO Chris DeWolfe in his office reading over resumes.

MySpace has been in these offices for just four months, and already has leased a larger space two floors up to accommodate its rapidly growing staff. In the last 16 weeks, the company has doubled in size to about 100, and is hiring new employees on an almost daily basis. Also in the works is the launch of an online music store.

"It's crazy," DeWolfe says. "We're hiring so many people, it's a big enough challenge just learning everybody's name." This challenge is only natural for the man at the helm of one of the hottest, fastest-growing destinations on the Internet. According to Comscore Media Metrix, MySpace in the last two months rose two spots to fifth place on the list of the 10 most-visited Web sites, based on its 7.5 billion unique visitors. That's more than either Google or Hotmail.

And all MySpace does is maintain a collection of user-created blogs organized and connected to each other by shared interests. By providing users the tools to do what they want and otherwise staying out of the way, MySpace has amassed 18.5 million members, and is growing at a rate of 2 million per month. Membership is free.

"The idea was to create this community where people could create accurate representations of themselves and put their lives online," DeWolfe says. "People are starting to understand that the holy grail of the Internet is community. The real potential for the Internet that we were talking about 10 years ago is just now beginning to materialize."

With its focus on 16- to 34-year-olds, MySpace has become a powerhouse for online music promotion. Acts such as Nine Inch Nails, Weezer, the Black Eyed Peas, Queens of the Stone Age, Foo Fighters, R.E.M. and Billy Corgan have used the service to host "listening parties," exclusively streaming upcoming albums in their entirety weeks before street date.

DeWolfe and his partner Tom Anderson meet regularly with label executives on promotional ideas.

"All the people at MySpace were open to trying what we wanted to do. It was just an all around good vibe," says Dan Field of Firm Entertainment. Weezer's management company felt like it was all about the music. It just felt right. The people that run it are doing it for the right reasons."

MySpace was a key component in Weezer's pre-release promotional campaign for the band's new Geffen/Interscope album, "Make Believe." Firm Entertainment gave away tickets for Weezer's pre-release club tour to MySpace users who linked to the band's MySpace profile as "friends." According to Ben Patterson, Firm's former VP of digital music and strategic development, Weezer's friends list shot from 8,000 to 70,000 in two weeks.

Those 70,000 people also were sent an invite to a live CD listening party at their local record stores around the same time as the concert. And the complete Weezer album was streamed from the site the week prior to street date.

"MySpace has such a community element to it," Patterson says. "If we gave tickets away through a Ticketmaster or CitySearch promotion, or even through the Weezer Web site, it's less personal than it is on MySpace. There's more of a connection there not only with the band on a one-on-one basis, but a group connection where fans can meet each other while they get familiar with the new music from Weezer."

More than 240,000 bands have MySpace profiles, using the system to promote and distribute their music through the digital word-of-mouth the site offers.

"When people create a profile on MySpace, they create a representation of who they think they are, and one of the primary things that defines people is music," DeWolfe says.

DeWolfe plans to capitalize on MySpace's role as a digital music influencer with the online music store. He is negotiating with several "major online music retailers" to support a service that lets MySpace users trade playlists and buy new music via the site. This will place MySpace in even more direct competition with AOL Music, Yahoo and MSN, all of which are adding blogging services of their own, integrated with their music, e-mail and instant-messaging capabilities.

"I'd never be so arrogant to say we don't look at those guys," DeWolfe says, "but I think it's much easier to have a social networking environment and add those portal features on top of it than to try to change behaviors like Yahoo and AOL. They have to be all things to all people."

DeWolfe says he has earned the right to be on equal footing with the Web giants—and has the usage numbers to back it up.

"We set out to create the next major portal," he says. "A lot of people are equating what we've built to what MTV was like 20 years ago.

BELKIN SETS STAGE FOR STREAMING

If Apple Computer's AirPort Express system for streaming iTunes music through your home entertainment system doesn't float your boat, Belkin's wired audio adapters might suit you. The company recently introduced the TuneStage.

Unlike the AirPort Express, which relies on a WiFi connection, TuneStage streams music directly from the iPod, it relies in manner similar to an FM transmitter used in Belkin's car audio adapters except it relies on Bluetooth—a shorter range, less bandwidth-heavy technology.

The system comes in two elements—a transmitter that links to any iPod with a dock connector and a receiver that hooks up to a stereo using RCA or 3.5mm jacks. Belkin claims the connection is good up to 33 feet. It requires no batteries, as the transmitter is powered through the iPod. It also ships with a 7-foot RCA cable to extend the placement of the Bluetooth receiver.

Also unlike the AirPort Express, TuneStage allows iPod owners to use their device as a remote control to select the track and volume level and to power the unit on and off.

The system is scheduled to ship at the end of July with a suggested retail price of $179.99.

—Antony Bruno
Virgin Leaves Burbank, Cleans Up Times Square

Virgin Entertainment Group continues to fine-tune its operations. The Los Angeles-based chain is set to begin refurbishing its store in New York Times Square, and it will close its Burbank, Calif., store. In addition, it is finally switching to centralized buying for major-label titles.

The Times Square store will undergo a "pretty complex, phased refurbishment," VEG executive VP Dave Alder says. The store will remain open during the process, he adds, because "we want to maximize business through the summer."

The Burbank store, which has been closed since its roof collapsed after a rainstorm in January, will remain shuttered. However, Alder says the chain hopes to open a replacement: "We are looking for sites in Southern California and the New York region."

Although VEG is set to launch a Hollywood store in September, its nearby Sunset Boulevard store will not close, Alder says, because the chain believes the locations serve different markets.

"The Sunset store caters to local traffic, while the Hollywood store will be skewed toward the tourist market," Alder says, pointing out the similarity to VEG's New York stores in Union Square and Times Square, respectively.

Speaking of New York, its VEG stores—which unlike others in the chain had retained buying responsibilities—will now be supplied via corporate headquarters.

But the move in no way diminishes the importance of the New York buying team, which will continue to report to VEG VP of purchasing Kevin Milligan.

"We are leveraging the New York team's expertise to benefit our other stores as well," Milligan says. The New York locations "carry an increased in-depth selection—more than any other stores—so we feel there are a lot of great minds there that we can tap into to drive sales with other stores in the chain. We will marry their knowledge with our systems."

The New York buying staff continues to make recommendations on major-label orders for their stores, but they will take on greater responsibility for the direction of certain categories chainwide—for example, music imports and adult DVD.

What's more, the New York buying staff is still "driving what's placed on endcaps and how we support local tours," Milligan says. His office "is not programming every piece of real estate in New York."

**CAPARRO SIGHTING:** Although there is nothing official to announce, it is only a matter of time before Jim Caparro is named CEO of Entertainment Distribution Co.

Caparro departed Atari June 9, a move that was expected after Glenaryre Technologies' May 31 acquisition of the North American and European CD and DVD manufacturing and distribution operations of Universal Music Group. Glenaryre then created EDC and named Caparro to the board of directors.

Now Caparro tells Retail Track that he is hard at work trying to build EDC into the company he envisions. His first priority for EDC is to service UMG, then the management staff will begin working on making the operation more efficient. Next, Caparro says, EDC will explore new business possibilities. His fourth goal is to "have a different point of view than the traditional 'silo view' of functional servicing."

In other words, expect Caparro to refer to what he plans to "to rephase manufacturing and fulfillment of physical product to place the business never envisioned."

**BONNAROO SALES:** Music City went to Bonnaroo again, and it is glad it did. Scott "Perk" Perkins, VP of retail for the Nashville-based chain—which runs stores under the Cat's Music and Poplar Tunes logos—reports that sales at the music festival (held June 10-12 in Manchester, Tenn.) were up from last year, even though attendance was down.

Asked how Music City managed to do more business, Perkins responds like a true retailer, citing location. "Our little tent was right in the middle of things," he says. "Of course, we did a few things ourselves to attract more people, including pumping music through a PA system and using floodlights at night, which attracted more business even though the headliners were playing."

The surprise seller was Matinyahu, the Hasidic reggae/rap artist played a side stage as well as the main stage and "went over incredibly well," Perkins reports. "He had the crowd in his hands."

Other breakout sellers included the Benevento Russo Duo, Xavier Rudd, Amos Lee, the John Butler Trio and the DVD from last year's Bonnaroo. "What's so interesting is I only have a couple of stores that come anywhere close to what we do at Bonnaroo, and the acts we sell there don't mean anything at those stores," Perkins says. "I love the fact that we can shift gears and make a store that fits the area we're in, which in this case was Bonnaroo."

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**LAPTOP COMPUTER:** The Apple Mac is making inroads into the workplace, but it still has a long way to go. The company recently introduced a new line of laptops that includes a 17-inch model, which is designed to handle multimedia tasks such as video editing and photo manipulation.

**FITNESS TRACKER:** The Fitbit Charge HR is a popular fitness tracker that features heart rate monitoring and activity tracking. It also has a built-in pedometer and sleep tracking capabilities.

**SMARTPHONE:** The iPhone X is the latest model from Apple, featuring a super retina display, advanced camera system, and improved battery life.

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**WEB DESIGN:** The website for ABC News is a great example of an effective design. It features a clean layout with easy navigation and a focus on user experience.

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**SOCIAL MEDIA:** A strong social media presence is crucial for any business. Whether it's Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or other platforms, it's important to engage with your audience and provide valuable content.

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**CONTENT MARKETING:** Creating valuable content for your target audience is a great way to increase brand awareness and drive traffic to your website. Consider blog posts, infographics, and videos to engage with your audience and establish your company as an authority in your industry.

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**EMAIL MARKETING:** Email marketing remains a key strategy for businesses. By segmenting your list and personalizing your messages, you can increase open rates and drive conversions.

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**SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO):** Improving your website's visibility in search results is crucial for attracting new visitors. Focus on keyword research, on-page optimization, and building quality backlinks to improve your rankings.

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**PAY-PER-CLICK (PPC):** Pay-per-click advertising can be an effective way to drive traffic to your website quickly. Consider using Google Ads or Facebook Ads to target your ideal audience.

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**ANALYTICS:** Tracking your website's performance is essential to understand how users interact with your site. Use tools like Google Analytics to measure key metrics and make data-driven decisions.

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**REPUTATION MANAGEMENT:** Monitoring and managing online reviews is important for maintaining a positive brand image. Respond to negative reviews and engage with your customers to show that you value their feedback.

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**PROJECT MANAGEMENT:** Effective project management is crucial for delivering successful results. Consider using tools like Trello or Asana to organize tasks, set deadlines, and collaborate with your team.

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**INNOVATION:** Staying ahead of the curve in your industry requires continuous innovation. Consider trying new technologies or processes to improve efficiency and customer satisfaction.

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**TECHNOLOGY TRENDS:** The tech landscape is constantly evolving. Keep up with the latest trends and innovations to stay competitive and deliver value to your customers.

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**PRODUCT TESTING:** Before launching a new product, it's important to test it thoroughly to ensure it meets quality standards. Consider using tools like UserTesting to gather feedback from real users.

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**CUSTOMER SERVICE:** Providing excellent customer service is key to building loyalty and driving repeat business. Ensure your team is trained on effective communication and problem-solving techniques.

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**SUSTAINABILITY:** As consumers become more environmentally conscious, sustainability becomes a differentiator for businesses. Consider implementing green practices such as reducing waste and energy consumption.
Music retailers finally received some good news in June, thanks to major releases from the likes of Coldplay, the Black Eyed Peas, the White Stripes and Foo Fighters. Yet independent retailers are not quite ready to throw a party. According to Nielsen SoundScan, year-to-date sales at independent retailers are trailing those of 2004 by a whopping 24%. Overall sales for the year continue to lag those of 2004 by about 8%.

Indie retailers contacted by Billboard say they’ve been hurt by a lack of indie releases from big names. And they have yet to see any runaway surprises like last year’s the Arcade Fire. Retailers also say they are unable to stay competitive with larger retailers even on an indie-friendly release such as the White Stripes’ “Get Behind Me Satan” (V2). In an unscientific survey of independent stores, none reported a decline as drastic as the one tallied by SoundScan, yet few reported an increase in sales and most expressed relief simply to be close to breaking even.

Matt Wishnow, founder of prominent online indie outlet insound.com, says his site has been hit hard the last two months. “The first four months of the year we were up 4% or 5% over last year,” Wishnow says. “The Mars Volta was the biggest release for us. May and June, however, have been down significantly over last year, as much as 15%-20%. There aren’t many big indie releases. There’s the White Snipes, but they’re at the level now where they’re getting so much attention at the chains and mass merchants that we can’t compete.”

About 10% of the first-week sales for “Get Behind Me Satan” came from indie outlets. To Kurt Von Schlemmer, who owns Recycled Sounds in Kansas City, Mo., it is a stat that justifies his decision to radically cutback the number of new releases he stocks.

“Our sales are down again this year,” he says. “We stock half as many new CDs as we did last year. I wouldn’t say we’ve given up on it, but the indie stuff is so much easier to get hold of through major [outlets] that we can’t compete.”

Pat Feeney, who runs Main Street Music in Philadelphia, is facing similar challenges, and says mass merchants in his area are selling new releases for $3 less than he can purchase them. He has taken to buying most of his restocks on major artists from box retailers. “We’ve down a few percent this year,” he says. “It’s all the usual stuff—the downloading and the Best Buys.”

To be fair, not everyone is hurting. David Miranda, an assistant manager at Everyday Music in Portland, Ore., says sales are up almost 10%, and he points to well-performing indie acts such as Spoon, Sleater-Kinney and the Mountain Goats. Additionally, Kyle Richardson, assistant manager at Homer’s Old Market in Omaha, Neb., reports a slight increase in sales. For that, he’s praising heavy metal.

“Metal will be the new indie rock, at least in Omaha,” he says. “We’re selling a lot of Shadows Fall, Mastodon and Iced Earth.”

Albums on the horizon that indie retailers are looking forward to include Sufjan Stevens, Xiu Xiu and Dungen, and some point to releases from Annie, Hot Chip and the Boy Least Likely To as CDs that mass merchants have not yet awakened to. Insound.com’s Wishnow is banking on the major-label debut from Death Cab for Cutie, due this fall, and an EP from the Arcade Fire, slated for August, as releases that may end the drought. In the meantime, his site will launch a major campaign to highlight its catalog. “We’re doing a mid-line catalog program for definitive indie releases, with $8.99 and $9.99 price points on catalog from Modest Mouse, Talking Heads, Sonic Youth and a bunch of others.”
RETAIL

BY ED CHRISTIAN

Supersuckers Go With The Marketing Flow

NEW YORK—Fans of veteran indie band Supersuckers admire the group for offering tremendous live shows and albums and for living the rock-'n-roll lifestyle to the hilt.

But Supersuckers have at least one more distinguishing characteristic: They try to incorporate a marketing element into everything they do. “It’s easy to get the records into the stores,” frontman/bassist Eddie Spaghetti says. “It’s getting them out of the stores that’s the challenge. We look at all of those unsold records as our little orphans that are out there waiting to be adopted.”

So far, 212,000 of the band’s orphans have found new homes, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The most recent of the band’s 12 albums, “Devil’s Food,” has scanned some 5,000 units since its April 5 release. That’s well short of the 20,000 mark the band aims for with each album.

In fact, five Supersuckers titles have reached that goal, including their best seller, “Must’ve Been High,” which has moved 35,000 units.

Like many indie acts, Supersuckers—whose other permanent members are guitarists Dan “Thunder” Bolon and Ron “Rontrose” Heathman—are always looking to gain exposure in a cost-effective way. But for genre-benders like them, that is rarely easy.

Known primarily as a revved-up, double-lead-guitar-powered punk-garage band, Supersuckers also put out country albums, tour as a country band and have collaborated on numerous projects with Willie Nelson.

Initially, that country inclination almost cost the band fans, but Supersuckers figured out how to turn threats into opportunities: They occasionally have the country Supersuckers open for the rock-'n-roll Supersuckers.

The road is key to all of the band’s activities. It performs about 200 shows per year. “There are very few bands who work as hard as we do,” Spaghetti says. The band is booked by Monterey, Calif.-based Monterey Peninsula Artists in the States and by Nottingham, England’s CNL. Touring in Europe. Because they spend so much time on the road, Supersuckers sell space on their van and trailer to advertisers. But instead of going through the hassle of shopping the space around, they auction it on eBay. Winning bidders have included apparel company Hot Leathers and Dynamite Distribution, which distributes tobacco paraphernalia.

The band also uses auctions to promote itself and its shows. Supersuckers have held auctions for trips to see them live, for a guitar lesson from Heathman and for a seat on the stage during one of their concerts.

“Band ask us all the time, ‘How do you do it?’” manager Chris Neal says. “And the answer is, ‘We just do it.’” This band is open to so many ideas that a lot of bands will turn down.

The band and Neal started their own label, Mid-Fi Recordings, which goes through Redeye Distribution. Not only does that allow them a greater portion of revenue per album, it also allows them to release product more than once every year or two. In the last six months, Mid-Fi has issued two Supersuckers live albums, “Live at the Magic Bag” and “Live at the Tractor.”

Supersuckers’ do-it-yourself marketing weapons include an e-mail list 15,000 strong and a fan club with 1,000 members. For annual dues of $15, fan club members get a few free singles a year and a chance to buy exclusive Supersuckers recordings. They also turn up on the band’s guest list at shows and receive e-mail updates from Spaghetti at least once a month.

The fan club lets the band “know exactly who our customers are,” Neal notes. It also serves as a distribution channel. Despite that direct connection, Neal says, “We know that retail is really important for our fans because they tell us. People like to go out and shop.”

And there is plenty to peruse. Supersuckers’ Web site and merchandise tables at their shows offer albums, fan club recordings, T-shirts, branded lighters, pint glasses, shot glasses, mugs, patches, rings, dog tags, belt buckles and guitar-pick necklaces.

“We are a guerrilla warfare band,” Spaghetti says. “This is a great job to have. In order to keep on doing it, if we want something done right we have to do it ourselves. It certainly is a lot of work, but the goal is to have no boss.”

RETAIL

BY JILL KIPNIS

Some Retailers Wonder If DVDplus Adds Up

LOS ANGELES—There’s another format on the CD/DVD block, but not everyone is welcoming it to the neighborhood.

The June 28 debut of the DVDplus title “Twisted Sister’s Live at Wacken the Reunion (Eagle Rock) is, not surprisingly, seen as innovative by its creators. But for some retailers, the notion of a new DVD format could be potentially confusing to consumers.

Like the increasingly accepted DualDisc, DVDplus offers an audio CD on one side of a disc and DVD content on the other. However, DVDplus provides full-length DVD content, whereas DualDisc typically offers about 30 minutes.

Both formats are adapted from technology invented by Dieter Dierks, CEO of Germany-based DVDplus International.

“One person see what DVDplus can do, more people will gravitate toward it,” predicts Phil Carson, head of DVDplus U.S.

Carson says he is working on a slate of DVDplus titles with some of the major labels. Releasing are expected by year’s end.

But so far it is the DualDisc that has received support from all of the majors. More than 2 million units have been sold in the format since its debut last year. More than 500 DualDisc releases—including major projects such as Dave Matthews Band’s “Stand Up” (RCA)—will have reached the market by the fourth quarter (Billboard, May 28).

Only a few DVDplus releases have trickled into the marketplace, such as last year’s “Live From the Bowery Ballroom,” a Kathleen Edwards EP from Rounder Records. That title has sold 5,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Artemis Records is also understood to have released a few DVDplus titles.

Eagle Rock Entertainment is preparing for the release of the Twisted Sister DVDplus with strong hopes that its content and a $19.98 suggested retail price will appeal to consumers. Most DualDiscs sport a similar price point.

“We’re offering 105 minutes of new DVD content plus 75 minutes of audio with this release,” says Mike Carden, Eagle Rock North America president of operations and executive VP of Eagle Rock Entertainment. “I don’t think any fan could be disappointed with this compared to DualDisc, which might only have 20 minutes of visuals.”

The DVD portion of the Twisted Sister title features the group’s set at the Wacken Open Air festival in Germany in 2003, and interviews with the band members—vocalist Dee Snider, guitarist Jay Jay French, guitarist Eddie Ojeda, bassist Mark Mendoza and drummer AJ Pero—about their breakup and reunion.

The CD side features five previously unreleased live tracks recorded between 1980 and 1982—such as “Born to Be Wild” and “I’ll Never Grow Up Now”—as well as six songs from the Wacken concert, including “What You Don’t Know (Sure Can Hurt You)” and “The Kids Are Back.”

Carden says that future DVDplus titles will be based on availability of suitable audio and visual content.

For its first foray into the format, Eagle Rock will be "pounding hard on the press side and doing as much advertising as we can," Carden says. “The packaging will have a big sticker on the front. It will be a process to make people aware of this format, but we are committed to it.”

Some retailers are less than pleased.

“I’m irritated by this whole thing,” says Jerry Suarez, senior music products manager for Virgin Megastores. “We might choose not to bring [the Twisted Sister title] in to avoid the nightmare of confusion with DualDisc. We are not going to do a DVDplus section now.”

Carson, who is also Twisted Sister’s manager, suggests that retailers can stock DVDplus in CD and DVD sections.
At These Shows, The Video Screen Is The Star

LOS ANGELES—Videogame composers Tommy Tallarico and Jack Wall believe that gamers will turn into concertgoers once they hear about the new Video Games Live tour. Each two-hour show on the 23-date tour, which begins July 6 at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, will feature orchestral versions of videogame scores, a laser light show and videogame competition.

"Fans all over the place were asking where else they can hear the music from their favorite videogames, so we started putting this together," says Wall, who composed scores for "Myst III: Exile" and "Splinter Cell."

Clear Channel Music Group partnered with the duo to promote the tour, and the William Morris Agency’s Marc Geiger signed on as the booking agent because of the potential of tapping into the videogame world.

U.S. consumers spent $2.2 billion buying videogames in first-quarter 2005, according to the NPD Group. That is a 23% increase over the same time period last year.

"The potential impact that videogames have on young males is massively underrecognized," Geiger says.

Outside of the Hollywood Bowl date, the tour will be routed only through CC-owned venues, primarily amphitheaters. Locales and ticket prices are still being determined.

"Playing our venues gives us a certain sense of protection," CCMG VP of touring Brad Wavra says. "If we are successful, this will continue to roll out and could play theaters and arenas in the winter time. We see no reason why we can’t take this overseas."

Video Games Live dates will be promoted through an Internet campaign, as well as TV, print and radio ads in local markets.

Geiger notes that this will be a "build year" for the event because it is a new concept. He predicts that attendance at each stop will average between 3,000 and 5,000.

Wall adds that the tour would have bowed sooner, but getting clearances for its featured scores, which include "Halo," "Warcraft" and "Tomb Raider," took about three years.

During that time span, videogame publisher Square Enix first tested a similar concept surrounding music for the "Final Fantasy" series.

A two-hour orchestral concert featuring the games’ music, created by Nobuo Uematsu, debuted in May 2004 as a kickoff event for the E3 conference in Los Angeles at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

The success of that show—it sold out in three days, according to Square Enix—led to this year’s tour. Dear Friends—Music From Final Fantasy launched in February at the Rosemont Theatre in Illinois, and continues through June 25 at the Atlanta Symphony Hall.

Kensuke Matsushita, executive producer of the event through Square Enix’s music publishing division, says the company has not yet decided if the tour will be annual.

Music is increasingly factoring into touring events that are videogame-centric. For example, the Nesquik GameRiot Summer tour, featuring kiosks with the latest games and live game contests, will feature a new Battle of the Bands music competition in 10 markets this summer, ending July 28 at the Roseland Theater in Portland, Ore.

The winner from each stop will have a chance to place a song on the upcoming soundtrack to 2K Sports’ "College Hoops 2K6." The final winner will be determined by votes on myspace.com.

"Games alone aren’t enough to attract someone out of the house," notes Matt Ringel, executive producer of GameRiot, which will be handled by local promoters.

Similarly, the Game and Music Experience, developed by CNET Networks, will feature game play and live music performances when it launches in fourth-quarter 2005. Exact locations and band participation has not yet been determined.

CCMG will promote the event.

Three’s Company For Trio!

Stanley Clarke, Béla Fleck, Jean-Luc Ponty Team For World Tour

LOS ANGELES—in a summer packed with big-budget and big-production shows, the Trio! tour featuring bassist Stanley Clarke, banjo player Béla Fleck and violinist Jean-Luc Ponty does not need all the bells and whistles to present top musicianship.

On this 43-date world tour, these three celebrated artists will present new music they crafted together.

The outing, which began June 12 at the Flynn Theatre in Burlington, VT, is slated to close Oct. 22 at Dreyfoos Hall in West Palm Beach, Fla. More dates may be added.

"This music is free and warm," Fleck says. "We are choosing to do something more difficult than playing our individual hits. There are a lot of paths you can take as a musician, and I always looked to ones that placed musical growth as the highest priority." Clarke and Ponty first tested the trio touring concept in 1995, after the pair recorded the well-received album "The Rites of Strings" (Capitol) with guitarist Al DiMeola. Clarke, Ponty and DiMeola also came together for another tour in 2004. No box office information is available for either tour.

Though DiMeola had other commitments this year, Clarke and Ponty were interested in extending the show.

"I had worked with Béla a couple of years ago and wanted to play with him again," Clarke recalls. "We all met in Nashville and it was really special. The chemistry just works. Though it looks on paper like an odd pairing, the bass, violin and banjo is a nice acoustic experience."

Booking Trio! proved to be easy, says Bob Zievers of the Agency Group in New York.

"Almost every promoter and festival presenter said, ‘We’ve got to have this,’” he adds. "This combination of talent is something people recognized right away."

Initially, Zievers focused on jazz and bluegrass festivals, such as Freightner’s Jazz Festival (June 25-26 in Saratoga, N.Y.), the Newport Jazz Festival (Aug. 12-14 in Newport, R.I.) and the Fidelity Investments Park City Jazz Festival (Aug. 26-28 in Park City, Utah).

From there, Zievers wanted to bring the tour to venues that could best showcase the music regardless of size. Trio! is playing facilities ranging from 700 to 10,000 seats in major and secondary markets.

"It wasn’t so much that we decided this is going to be a theater tour or a shed tour," he says. "This was going to be designed to play the right venue in each market."

Ticket prices differ for each show, ranging from $15 to $50. Promoters are banking on the artists’ name recognition.

Park City Jazz Foundation executive director Kris Severns says "those names are extremely exciting. We’ll try to appeal to smooth jazz, crosstown and bluegrass audiences in our advertising, and will also do destination-type promotions to nearby markets such as L.A. and Phoenix."

Mike Sturgill, director of programming for Britt Festival, promoter of the tour’s Aug. 31 date at Britt Pavilion in Jacksonvile, Ore., notes that more than 1,000 tickets have already been sold. Britt Pavilion seats 4,400.

"We’ve been announcing the show en masse and doing a lot of direct mail," Sturgill says. "We also might target people who have bought tickets to similar shows in the past. It’s great to have artists we know and love here in a new version."

Clarke adds that the three-some may create a DVD based on the tour. "I think there is a huge fan base of people that love to see guys really play their instruments," he says. "I don’t think that will ever change. It’s culture."
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Silverstein’s 2003 debut ‘When Broken Is Easily Fixed’ has sold over 175,000 units to date. ‘Discovering The Waterfront’ will DEBUT TOP 30 - IN STORES AUGUST 16TH.
Take my personal June 11 music lineup: Ozomatli thrums and grooves, Kings of Leon rattle off a string of three-minute glories, Yonder Mountain String Band covers the Beatles’ "Dear Prudence" with aplomb, the Black Crowes delight a rain-soaked crowd with a sublimt two-hour set, and Widespread Panic does what it does better than any American rock band for more than three hours. Now that's a day of music.

For Superfly president Jonathan Mayers, booking Bonnaroo is a labor of love. "From a creative standpoint, I love introducing people to new music. I look at my record collection and there are so many different types of music, and I think it's that way for most people. We really want to keep our door open to doing a wide range of programming, and I think that's what will keep this event going year and year and year again." 

**HE'S THE ONE:** The addition of 17 North American summer tour dates to Bruce Springsteen's heralded Devils & Dust solo tour (billboard.biz, June 13) is hardly a surprise, considering the tour's success.

As the first U.S. leg, Springsteen will play a combination of theaters and theater-in-the-arena configurations, beginning July 18 at the Corel Centre in Ottawa and concluding Aug. 1 at the Pontiac Theatre at GM Place in Vancouver.

"We always sort of make our plans and try not to announce too far in front of general," says Springsteen's manager, Jon Landau. "At the shows we've added, combined with the shows we played before Europe, we have played 27 or so of our primary markets, which is a good portion of the country."

Landau says more dates likely will be added for the fall, in response to critical and financial success. "I would, as a proud manager, say that in terms of single-artist shows you would have to go a long, long way to find something more compelling," he says. "The European shows, which are always intense, have been remarkable. In its own way, they have been as emotional an experience as the rock shows."
Q: What is BET’s biggest challenge now?  
A: With cable just getting started 25 years ago, Bob Johnson’s vision was to create a programming network that appealed to the African-American community and make it part of the cable universe. Today it’s about how do we compete, build the brand and keep up technologically, be it wireless or video on demand.

Q: How does that challenge influence BET’s programming strategy?  
A: We’re an expert in the music industry. That’s how we grew up, and we’ll never leave that. But from a programming standpoint, the way to make the core network better is with more original programming. So we launched a new program development unit in February. Some of our programs like “Access Granted” and the reality show “College Hill” have done well. [As have our] special work—the BET Awards, Walk of Fame, Celebration of Gospel, the Comedy Awards. We’re also going to do original films.

Q: What’s happening with BET’s film initiatives?  
A: We did 10 made-for-TV movies two years ago. But we hadn’t done anything theatrical until we invested in Tyler Perry’s recent film success, “Diary of a Mad Black Woman.” Now we’re looking at creating our own film division. We’re also going to expand internationally. Budgetary constraints led to cutbacks of channels we had in Africa, the U.K. and Japan. But we’re defining how to get back into the international market, because that’s a high-growth area and our programming will work there.

Q: Has the reaction been to the program development unit’s first series, “Blowin’ Up: Fatty Koo”?  
A: It has been OK, but not a huge success. We’ve been disappointed that it hasn’t worked as well as “College Hill,” which recently finished its second season.

Q: Why hasn’t “Fatty Koo” clicked?  
A: I think part of it is the audience just didn’t fall in love with the band. It’s really based on the personalities and what captures the audience’s imagination. Like with anything, some of it will work and some of it won’t. We’re hoping “Fatty Koo” will do better. It’s just the nature of the game. We’re learning more about reality programming as we go along.

Q: Do you view black-targeted cable newcomers TV One and Black Family Channel as potential threats?  
A: They say competition makes the leader stronger. We’re clearly the leader after 25 years. We reach more than 80 million homes, so we haven’t started to see the effects of other black-targeted networks. What I worry about are the Foxes, UPNs and other major networks who are going after our audience.

Q: Time Warner now owns another black media icon, Essence. What do you tell detractors who still label BET’s sale to Viacom as “selling out”?  
A: People who understand business realize that you have to be open to different strategies if you want to grow your business. The important thing is to maintain your editorial perspective.

It was important to us to be autonomous when Viacom acquired us almost five years ago so we could say to the black community, “Hey, we’re making the decisions, not Viacom. They bought BET because of the market. They’re not going to tell us how to program.” I think the same is true at Essence. They’re going to keep their editorial voice and be true to their audience. And I’m sure Time Warner will put more resources into it and make it a better magazine.

Q: What is the major difference between today’s BET audience versus that of 25 years ago?  
A: Our target audience is younger, 18–34. When we started, the videos featured Lionel Richie, Earth, Wind & Fire and Michael Jackson. Music has changed, and that has changed our programming.

There are so many other programming choices now, especially on the mainstream side. “American Idol” is going after our audience, as are other cable networks. So we’re a bit more focused on the younger audience.

Q: How do you address complaints from older adults about BET’s youth-focused content?  
A: When we started out, we tried to appeal to everyone. We were the only black network. But we’re not doing something out there and thought that was our responsibility. But we’re realizing you can’t do all things to all people. That makes you schizophrenic, and then people don’t know what to expect.

We try to service the older demographic through bet.com, plus the Sunday gospel and family movie programming. We reach both audiences with our annual Walk of Fame special, during which younger artists pay tribute to legends. That has worked well for us, so we’ll continue to do specials that have broad audience appeal.

Q: What is your reaction to ongoing criticism regarding questionable videos, especially in rap/hip-hop?  
A: Videos are made by the music industry and by artists using their voices to say what they want. As a distribution outlet, we give them the opportunity to do that—as does MTV or any other music network. The question is, What are the artists trying to say? It may not be the messages we want to send, but we have to work with young artists and show them there are different ways to express themselves. All videos don’t have to look alike.

We also need to teach young people how to use the media and understand that these videos aren’t necessarily portraying a lifestyle that anyone is supporting.

People expect high standards from us. We have a committee that reviews videos. Sometimes we’re sent back to the labels to edit, sometimes they’re rejected out of hand. If there are real issues, they come to me and we discuss the free speech aspect or whether something is so egregious that we’re not going to put it on.

Q: After 25 years, only a few females—black or white—are running the executive suites in media and entertainment.  
A: It’s not that I run into discrimination every day. It’s always there, but it’s not like it was 25 years ago. However, there’s still a lot to be done.

The e-mails and congratulatory notes I received from women reminded me there aren’t that many, especially black women, in the media. There just needs to be more women executives in general. I just hope the numbers increase. The more women who can prove we can do it, the more opportunities there will be.
On July 2, fans hoping to view the webcast of the Live 8 poverty awareness concerts — Bob Geldof’s ambitious follow-up to 1985’s Live Aid — can do so only via America Online, which won the exclusive Internet broadcast rights to the event.

They will not have to sign up for an AOL account, though. The deal is AOL’s latest effort to lure viewers with exclusive programming, as the company expands its focus from providing Internet access to generating ad revenue as an online portal that services broadband users. At the end of June, AOL brought 27 Internet channels — previously available only to its Internet subscribers — to the open Web.

The strategy switch is part of an ongoing battle for Internet supremacy among AOL, Microsoft’s MSN and Yahoo. These Web portals are vying to become media companies with a mass audience rivaling that of TV or radio broadcasters.

The Internet portal wars began in the early ‘90s as a skirmish over who would best aggregate the massive amount of information available on the Internet. The battle then migrated to who had the best services (e-mail, search engines, instant messaging, blogs). The next front will be programming, as the war wages to see who can most effectively integrate content across a variety of services. And whether it’s streaming and downloadable audio tracks or video-on-demand access to exclusive live events and artist interviews, music is the heart of this multimedia strategy.

“People are recognizing that music is a primary driving force of people’s consumption on the Web,” Yahoo head of label relations Jay Frank says. “We want people to look at music as a community. You can see that any time music and community are put together, fantastic results are achieved.”

In redefining itself as an open portal, AOL is counting on the strength of its programming, executive VP Kevin Conroy says. AOL controls a loosely affiliated collection of Web sites that includes aol.com, aolmusic.com and Netscape, as well as the sites of Time Inc. magazines, Moviefone and MapQuest. All told, according to ComScore, these sites attracted 117 million unique monthly U.S. visitors in May — more than half of whom are non-AOL subscribers.

AOL hopes to capitalize on this base with upgraded programming. It hosted a special Coldplay concert June 7 and offered the event’s footage as a webcast, played 700,000 times in its first week — one of AOL Music’s most-watched live shows to date. The company features multiple live shows each week, and recently launched the Full CD Listening Party feature, starting with Coldplay’s latest Capitol album, “X&Y,” which was played more than 200,000 times. AOL is also inking deals with major and indie labels to expand its library for on-demand playback of music videos. (Labels give access to their content differently; Warner Music Group and Universal Music Group charge Internet outlets for video assets, while others, including EMI, view the relationship as promotional.)

AOL is developing a number of original music programs for the Web, including “Sessions@AOL,” featuring A-list bands in the studio; “AOL Music Top 11,” which executives view as a next-generation version of MTV’s “TRL”; and “The Biz,” a Warner Music Group reality show in the vein of NBC’s “The Apprentice.”

Yahoo, the leading Internet portal with 119 million unique visitors in May, plans a significant programming push as well. Its new Los Angeles offices serve as the heart of its media and entertainment division, led by former ABC Entertainment Television Group executive Lloyd Braun. The company most recently bolstered the original content available on Yahoo Music by adding a revamped version of the former TV show “Pepsi Smash,” featuring on-demand video segments of exclusive band performances, interviews, animation and other content developed exclusively for the site.

Yahoo is positioning “Smash” as a focus of Yahoo Music, along with its existing Internet radio service Launchcast and the new Yahoo Music Unlimited subscription service and à la carte download store, currently in a public beta test phase. Music news, videos and individual artist spotlights round out the portal.

MSN, whose properties include Hotmail, Encarta, Slate magazine and msnbc.com, drew 110 million unique visitors in May. It has been more focused on driving traffic to its sales channels than acquiring original programming.

MSN integrates links to its MSN Music Store throughout its services, and label executives view it as having the best built-in commerce capabilities. Its MSN Search tool spits out direct links to individual tracks available at the MSN Music Store. The MSN Spaces blog service allows users to link their playlists directly to the MSN Music Store, where visitors can listen to 30-second clips or buy the full track.

“We want to make music services as accessible to users as we can by going to where they are,” MSN Entertainment senior director Rob Bennett says. “When you talk about making music more mainstream, that’s what drives us around community rather than forcing users to go find a store.”

MUSIC IS THE KEY FOR AOL, MSN, YAHOO

PORTAL
MSN has kept perhaps the lowest profile of the three portals on the music front, but that is changing—fast.

This month, it launched a major promotional effort for the MSN Music Store, giving away five free songs for each paid download and tapping such stars as Gwen Stefani to be the face of the promotion.

AOL and Yahoo have seen staggering traffic without much push. Ahead of its portal launch, AOL's biggest gainer is AOL Music, which was quietly brought from behind the subscriber wall and rose 37% between fourth-quarter 2004 and first-quarter 2005. Before launching the public test phase of its Yahoo Music Unlimited subscription service and download store, Yahoo's "music portal" was really just the Launchcast Internet radio service, and it still generated more than 25 million unique visitors per month.

DIVVING UP EXCLUSIVE CONTENT

It is easy to understand why the music industry has come to see Internet portals as an important promotional outlet for breaking new acts and hyping album releases. The challenge, however, is to find ways to elevate certain acts and releases in an environment of unlimited inventory.

"You're competing for floor space and attention with a million SKUs online—how do you get any attention at all?" one major-label executive asks.

Giving the portals the exclusive they are after is the most obvious choice. "It's a tightrope walk," the exec says. "We need to determine what an exclusive is going to bring us versus what damage it's going to cause with our other partners."

Labels also are not keen to see the online retail market mirror brick-and-mortar stores, where one dominant retailer can undercut all others. As a result, labels often offer different exclusives to each portal—giving one an exclusive video while the other may get a special bonus track from an album.

And even though each portal aims for the broadest user base possible, each has a unique culture that factors into the labels' decisions on which exclusives to grant.

"I'm trying to figure out a way to position the right records with the right people," Interscope/Geffen/A&M VP of new media Courtney Holt says. "I've seen things react really well on Yahoo that may not have reacted well on MSN and AOL. . . . if we can find the right artist that fits with the right network, typically we find a great reaction."

Aolmusic.com currently features acts like Hilary Duff, Lindsay Lohan and Avril Lavigne. MSN is pushing the Bravery and Brazilian Girls, while Yahoo touts Billy Corgan and Mariah Carey.

Big-name artists drive traffic, and ultimately ad dollars for the portals, but it is interactive elements that have labels most excited and that may allow these eyeball-aggregating brands to compete with the big dog in the digital music world: Apple Computer.

"The iPod has a huge following and loyal fan base that will carry it for a long time, because people are getting what they expect," AOL Entertainment director of transactions John van Suchtelen says. "When they realize they need more—a service that provides other ways to find music—that will be the tipping point."

Portals are applying services like instant messaging, blogs and search engines to their content. In a recent Wired magazine article, Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang perhaps outlined this strategy best. "Access isn't sufficient," he said. "You also have to find—and then share with others."

Yahoo is considered to have the strongest community applications available. The Yahoo Messenger service, for instance, lists what each user is listening to on Launchcast in their IM profile, inviting others to select a link to access the same song. Its Yahoo 360 blog service lets users share playlists and make music recommendations, all through the Yahoo Music Engine. And the company is expected to launch a music search tool in the coming months.

MSN instant-messaging users can display in their IM profile the song they are playing in either Windows Media Player or the Windows iTunes program and provide a link to MSN Music to sample or buy it. Future developments include a joint listening technology that would allow users to set up virtual listening parties, with multiple users listening to the same track via the same source (such as a user's hard drive) and then linking to MSN Music to buy it.

For the labels, this integration complements more overt marketing strategies like exclusive programming and advertising.

"That turns your consumer, your fan, into your evangelist," one major-label executive notes. "It's so much better than a banner ad."

But it is still not better than TV or radio—yet.

"Radio still seems to be the primary driving force for selling music," Holt says. "The online thing is harder to justify because it's more fragmented. We can't build the same kinds of impressions we can in a more traditional medium. My hope is that over time we can start to see clean lines between sales and video spins and airplay on the Internet."

BY ANTONY BRUNO AND BRIAN GARRITY
production before the Civil War. When her trial came up, there was a prolonged argument about whether she should be tried for murder, which was what the abolitionists were calling for, because the court would have to admit that she and her children were human beings. The pro-slavery groups wanted her tried for destruction of property, because her status as a slave would have remained intact. In a way, her trial became a public discussion about the nature of the Afro-American slave.

"In the newspaper articles of the day," Morrison observes, "everyone remarked on the fact that she was so young, she was in her 20s. And also that she was so calm when she killed her daughter. She wasn't a raving maniac. She was very san- guine about it. Not cool, but unrepentant."

Morrison emphasizes that even well before the day that brought Garner to infamy, the enslaved woman had already marked herself as a maverick.

"Margaret was married," Morrison notes. "When I was writing the novel, I was aware that women were being given more choices about their lives: whether to have children or not, whether to get married or not, all these beginnings of a feminist discourse. And it occurred to me that those choices—that of marriage, of children—for slave women were quite the opposite, and yet Garner chose to do so," she says emphatically.

"Marriage for slaves was illegal, and if you did do it, it was an assertion of freedom, rather than the opposite. But the kick about children was that the women were encouraged, if not required, to have children. They could not parent them, and they did not own them. So for her, having children was not an accommodation to a woman's place; it was a radical assertion of freedom."

Graves observes that even very much more than anything else, "Garner observes somberly, "is that this woman probably felt—and the circumstances of her existence told her—that her life was of no importance, that it was completely insignificant. Yet, here we are, 150 years later, telling her story. I'm her daughter. I'm somehow the daughter of the daughter of her daughter. I'm connected to this woman."

The creative team and cast involved in "Margaret Garner" underscore the fact that they hope to reach nontraditional audiences with this work as well as draw the usual opera crowd.

"It was especially important to us to première this piece in cities with historically large African-American populations," Danielpour stresses. "And in the case of Ohio, that connection was particularly crucial, because part of the action takes place there."

Despite the enthusiastic critical and public response "Margaret Garner" has already received in Detroit, there are no plans yet to record the production. Because of prohibitive costs, bringing an opera to an even wider public via CD or DVD is nearly impossible today:

"There is nothing more expensive to record within classical music than opera," says Bogdan Rosic, VP of A&R at Deutsche Grammophon. "There are more people involved, and the works are so long. So when sales in [classical recordings] faced a downturn, opera is where it was felt first."

According to sources, recording an opera in Europe can cost from $250,000 up to $1 million, depending on the size and scale of the production. A U.S. recording would run even more, largely because of the cost of using American orchestras, which play under specific union rates.

In fact, few top-tier American orchestras have recording contracts. Exceptions—as with the newly linked Philadelphia Orchestra deal with Finland's Ondine label, the Minnesota Orchestra's recordings for Sweden's BIS and five successful self-released titles from the San Francisco Symphony—are newsworthy in part because of their rarity.

Given the steep costs, there is little chance of turning a profit on an operatic recording in today's market. Operas tend to be premium-priced, multi-disc releases, and few turn up in the top 25 of the Billboard Top Classical Albums chart.

Even so, hopes among the "Margaret Garner" team remain high that some recording avenue might be found eventually. Some operas, for example, are recorded live for CD or DVD, thus greatly cutting costs—although potentially at the expense of production quality.

When asked about the possibilities of recording "Margaret Garner," Danielpour says, "I'd certainly love to see that happen. Garner's story, though true, has become, in a way, an American myth—it has that power. And one of the things that the opera screams, over and over again and hopefully without preachiness, is a reminder that we're all part of the same human family. It's good to be reminded of that."
The creative team that is bringing "Margaret Garner" to U.S. opera houses includes, from left, composer RICHARD DANIELPOUR, baritone GREGG BAKER, mezzo-soprano DENYCE GRAVES, librettist TONI MORRISON and soprano ANGELA M. BROWN.
MIAMI—Daddy Yankee’s runaway reggaeton hit “La Gasolina” was written and produced on a handshake and a smile.

“Many people ask, ‘You did “Gasolina”? Wow, You must be a millionaire,’” says Luny, half of hot reggaeton production team LunyTunes. The pair produced “La Gasolina,” which is on Daddy Yankee’s album “Barrio Fino,” and came up with many of the beats that accompany the track.

Daddy Yankee paid no fees, and no contracts were signed. Only a friendly agreement was voiced: I give you this song for your album, you give me a song for mine.

And so LunyTunes' most recent release, “Más Flow 2” (Más Flow/Universal), a collection of previously unreleased songs currently in the top 10 of the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart, features 10 artists, including Daddy Yankee. Nothing beyond the informal agreement was needed.

“That’s the way it has been,” Luny said during the Billboard Latin Music Conference in April.

Or rather, that’s the way it was. Reggaeton, which a year ago was largely an underground industry ruled by nepotism and gentlemen’s agreements, has become Latin music’s hottest new sound. Today, with major labels, publishers, managers and radio looking to cash in on the craze, the handshake deals that once dominated the writing, production and publishing of reggaeton titles are being replaced by bona fide contracts with clear-cut business rules.

“Reggaeton is music we literally made in our backyards,” Luny said. “One day I’m in my backyard playing PlayStation with Wisin (of reggaeton duo Wisin y Yandel), and suddenly we’re No. 1 on the Billboard chart. I told him, ‘Wisin, check this out!’ It happened so quickly, we didn’t even know we had to register the song or anything like that. But now we’re going to get organized, and we’re going to do things the way they should be done.”

LunyTunes are signed to Universal Music Latino under a distribution and manufacturing deal for their own label, Más Flow Music. Their songs have been appearing on the Billboard Latin charts for two years, but they created publishing companies with affiliations to ASCAP and BMI just three months ago, and they are currently negotiating a deal with a major publisher.

“Más Flow 2,” lists no composer or publisher information for any of its tracks, which were written and sung by some of the biggest names in reggaeton, including Daddy Yankee, Héctor “El Bambino” and Ivy Queen.

Of these three, only Héctor has a major publishing deal, recently inked with Universal Music Latino. Even Tego Calderón, who earlier this month signed a recording deal with Atlantic (Billboard, June 18), has yet to forge a publishing deal.

Calderón says the money he makes comes from shows, publicity campaigns, sponsorship deals, collaborations I do as work for hire. But from my music, goes. I only get my ASCAP checks. That will change . . . I don’t think I’m the same artist I was two or three years ago. Now that the majors are involved, I’m in a position to demand what’s best for me.”

The word “reggaeton” entered mainstream consciousness only last year, when a slew of Puerto Rican acts began popping up on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart. The breakthrough releases received zero airplay and no media attention but climbed the charts nonetheless, based on club play and the buzz from live shows, especially in Puerto Rico. These artists were not new, however. Most had been toiling for the past decade, making their music for almost nothing, yet selling thousands of copies in Puerto Rico’s underground circuit.

The sudden slew of chart appearances came about largely because of major distribution deals that placed reggaeton titles in U.S. chain stores and mass merchant accounts.

But while sales soared, everything else—from airplay to contracts—lagged behind. Now, everybody is playing catch up.

“We’re in the process of transitioning a business that was truly informal,” says Nestor Caso, regional managing director of EMI Music Publishing Latin America.

“Now that labels and publishers are involved, artists are realizing they can’t get into those areas if their business isn’t more formal,” Caso says. “If they continue to do business so informally, there are many legal risks.”

Artists are only now taking the basic steps to protect themselves as songwriters: copyrighting the song with the appropriate splits and authors; registering with a performing rights organization; including all information on the album’s label copy to ease mechanical collection.

However, as much as the established publishing world would like reggaeton to fit neatly into its parameters,
these emerging artists say they fully expect to honor the informal agreements they have been struck. Publishing deals, in addition to advances, depend on precisely what the publisher stands to reap.

"We have to be beyond flexible," says Ivan Alvarez, son or VP for Latin America at Universal Music Publishing Group, whose reggaeton roster includes Tito Clan, Busy Rasta and Gringo and the rest of the acts on Hector’s Solid Star Records.

"This genre has grown organically with its own set of rules and norms. Their system of 'exchanges' as opposed to royalties is one which is at times difficult to grasp and creates issues on a national and international level. As a company wanting to be part of this movement, we have to be willing to understand how they work and adapt ourselves to it in a way which allows us to grow the business without burning the bridges which they have built amongst themselves."

This means some royalty fees are collected, some are not.

With radio stations dedicated to reggaeton popping up by the week, artists are suddenly finding out that while their songs get airplay, they are not collecting the money due to them for public performance because they are not listed as authors of the songs.

"When you register the song, the performance rights organization honors what is on the registration," says Alexandra Liouditik, senior VP of Latin membership for ASCAP. "They can have gentlemen’s agreements, but we go by what is on paper."

Hector is one of the few reggaeton stars who has a major publishing deal. He inked an administration deal three months ago with UMPG.

"I did it so things would work as they should," says Hector, who was formerly part of the duo Hector and Tito and now collects 50% of what he wrote as part of that act.

Like most reggaeton acts, Hector has songs and collaborations in myriad compilations, many of which he does not even know about. Now, he says, UMPG "will start to collect everything. I even had songs playing in Australia."

But the reality is, because there is no publishing paper trail, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to determine what an artist is owed. In addition to the multitude of compilations that circulate in the reggaeton world, there are cover versions of songs that have no clear versions among authors.

"When we started, we were just making music," says Ines Saldaña, LuniTunes manager and Luni’s sister. "We didn’t know about royalties or publishing, and if we didn’t know about it, we just wanted the music to be out there with people listening to our work. We told singers, ‘You need our music, and we need you to sing our music.’ We made handshake agreements to work together with no amounts involved.

"Now we have to look at every single case," Saldaña says, noting that the duo’s catalog comprises about 400 songs. "Some of the trade-offs will remain trade-offs, some will change to come up with an agreement."

Going forward, she says, everybody is clear on what percentage they are going to get, and contracts are signed for every song that LuniTunes and their team work on, with every split determined beforehand.

Daddy Yankee, who realized the value of his publishing early on, says he appreciates the clear guidelines of the music business.

"This isn’t the street, where you negotiate with your word," he says. "With my close friends who began with me and have been with me forever, I still work like that. I eventually sign a paper, because we’re clear with each other. But I do that with very few people."

Yankee signed with ASCAP in 1996. He has his own label and his own publishing company, El Congri. He is on the verge of signing a major record deal, and that, he says, will determine the future of his publishing.

"I’ve held back because the publishers’ interest will be bigger depending on what kind of deal I close with a label," Yankee says. "I’ve been offered publishing deals before, but not anything that was in my best interests. I know what my publishing is worth. Even two years ago, I knew it."

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STARS ON THE STRIP

The history of pop music is woven into the history of Las Vegas.

As the city continues a yearlong celebration of its centennial, it has played host recently to music events ranging from the 40th annual Academy of Country Music Awards to Celine Dion's ongoing residency at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace.

But since the first major hotels went up in Las Vegas in the early 1940s, the city has drawn major musical talent.

The El Rancho Las Vegas and the Last Frontier featured big-name performers, such as Jimmy Durante and hat "King" Cole, right from the start.

These two hotels laid the groundwork for Las Vegas to become a major entertainment destination. Not only could guests see the biggest stars of the day, but they could eat, shop, swim, go horseback riding and gamble all at the same location.

That allure only intensified in the 1950s with the opening of the Desert Inn and the Sands. All these hotels were deemed classier than their predecessors. And perhaps more important, they featured Frank Sinatra as a prime attraction.

"There was nobody bigger than Frank Sinatra," says Charlie Pignone, archivist for the Sinatra family and author of "The Sinatra Treasures" (Bulfinch). "He played in Las Vegas from the '50s through the '90s, and you still hear his music in the casinos today."

The Sands became "the" place for music acts throughout the '50s Sinatra even became a partial owner of the hotel.

In 1962, The Sands was host to some of the most notable performances in Las Vegas' history.

The Rat Pack—Sinatra, Dean Martin, Joey Bishop, Sammy Davis Jr. and Peter Lawford—were on location filming the original "Ocean's 11." They would film during the day and perform together at the Sands late into the night.

"Imagine seeing that kind of star power," Pignone says. "They had such a camaraderie. They were friends, like brothers, which you can't fake. I don't think we'll ever see the likes of that again."

Elvis Presley made his Las Vegas debut in 1956 at the New Frontier (formerly the Last Frontier) as a support act to comedian Shempy Greene—and bombed.

Presley actually started his long relationship with the city in 1963, when he filmed "Viva Las Vegas" or location. Four years later, he married Priscilla Beaulieu in Las Vegas.

In 1966, he was the top performer at Kirk Kerkorian's new International Hotel, the world's biggest and most expensive at that time ($60 million). (The International was renamed the Las Vegas Hilton in the mid-1970s.)

"Elvis was the first performer to make money for the showrooms," says Alanna Nash, author of "The Colonel: The Extraordinary Story of Colonel Tom Parker and Elvis Presley" (Simon & Schuster). "He was also the first entertainer to work seven days a week."

Presley was playing two shows per day two months out of the year for $100,000 per week, a pitance for that kind of schedule.

"He never played anywhere else," Nash says. "It was unbelievable that the Hilton hotel people got the biggest man in show business for the lowest amount of money."

Presley was a Las Vegas attraction right up to the time of his death in 1977.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, two other performers that are tied to Las Vegas lore—Wayne Newton and Liberace—were the mainstays on the Strip.

Newton had been a regular in downtown clubs for years before he came to the Strip with top billing in 1963, the year he got a recording contract. He went on to headline the Flamingo, the Frontier, the Las Vegas Hilton and the Aladdin, and still performs today.

Liberace performed in Las Vegas regularly for 40 years at hotels including the Las Vegas Hilton and Caesars Palace. He died in 1987 at his home in Las Vegas.

NEW ATTRACTIONS

The type of performer that was a big draw to Las Vegas started to change in the 1970s.

White-tiger wranglers/magicans Siegfried & Roy first appeared in 1971 as a specialty act and started a wave of family shows.

The duo were the first entertainers to have a theater named after them at the Mirage, hotel baron Steve Wynn's first building on the Strip. It featured a special habitat for Siegfried & Roy's tigers.

"When they set up shop, this was part of this change to more family entertainment in Las Vegas," Nash says.

Circus Circus opened without any hotel rooms in 1980, but had a circus arena, a pink-and-white big top and a carnival midway. Accommodations followed, with 2,800 guest rooms by 1983.

Circus Circus Enterprises expanded Las Vegas' family fare with the opening of Excalibur Hotel and Casino on June 19, 1990. The hotel hosted a medieval dinner show in its 900-seat King Arthur's Ale.

The family trended throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and Las Vegas became known more as a place where aging performers could get gigs.

Cirque du Soleil helped revitalize entertainment options for the city. Its first permanent show, "Mystere," opened at Treasure Island Hotel & Casino in the early '90s. "O" followed at the Bellagio Hotel & Casino in the late 1990s. "K" debuted this February at the KA Theatre at the MGM Grand.

"When we arrived," Cirque du Soleil composer Ange René Dupéré recalls, "Steve Wynn was trying to make Las Vegas a family-oriented city. Mystere was a revolution at the time. It was the only show that was jam-packed every night. We think our shows are for everybody, for kids and adults."

The most adult Cirque program, "Zumanity," premiered in 2003 at the New York-New York hotel & casino. Cirque du Soleil currently has four permanent shows in Las Vegas. Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, top acts started to set up shop permanently, as they did in the city's old days, even amid a wave of hotel mergers.

The first hotel joint venture, in 1996, was the Monte Carlo, owned by Mirage Resorts and Circus Circus Enterprises. MGM Grand bought Mirage Resorts in 2000 to create MGM Mirage, in essence ending the Wynn-controlled empire, which by then included the Bellagio, the Mirage and Treasure Island.

In this climate, Caesars Palace built a $95 million, 4,100-seat theater called the Colosseum specifically for a new stage show for Dion, which opened in 2003. Last year, "A New Day..." sold out 183 shows and 1 million tickets.

The Colosseum also hosts Elton John's "The Red Piano" show. Each of its 43 shows also sold out last year.

Caesars Palace president Mark Juhlman says Dion's exclusive contract will run through July 2007. John's will run through 2008.

This year has already brought a number of changes that could affect music entertainers on the Strip.

MGM Mirage merged with Mandalay Resort Group earlier this year. The MGM's Grand Garden Arena and the Mandalay Bay's Event Center had been competitors for top touring acts, and are expected now to work together on bookings.

Also, the return of Dion with the opening of the Wynn Las Vegas may result in new entertainment opportunities.
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ZOMBA RAMPS UP GOSPEL BIZ

NASHVILLE—Through a mix of smart acquisitions and strategic partnerships with some of today's most successful artists, Zomba has quickly become a dominant force in the gospel industry.

In an effort to continue the growth, Zomba has formed Zomba Gospel, naming Verity Records president Max Siegel head of the new entity.

Zomba Gospel includes Verity, GospoCentric (which it purchased last year) and four artist-owned imprints—Donald Lawrence's Quiet Water Entertainment, Kirk Franklin's Fo Yo Soul Entertainment, John P. Kee's New Life Records and Fred Hammond's F. Hammond Music.

Siegel says that once the purchase of GospoCentric was completed, "we wanted the gospel labels all together. Plus we wanted to mirror [parent] Zomba Label Group's structure."

The individual labels under Zomba Gospel retain their own presidents, except for Verity. Siegel's ascension is so new, there is no word as to whether a new Verity president will be named.

As it was before the roll-up, marketing, sales and promotion are shared services. (GospoCentric's divisions were "blended in," Siegel says.)

For Zomba Label Group, gospel serves as an integral part of the overall mix. "We initially got into gospel music because we are all gospel music lovers and we appreciate the gospel artists," Zomba Label Group GM/senior VP of sales and marketing Tom Carrabba says. "Gospel is a great niche. These are real artists with a real base."

One reason for Zomba's gospel success, Siegel says, is that although gospel may be a niche market, Zomba pushes it with the same verve as mainstream music.

"One of the things I've appreciated about the company is that they've treated gospel just like every other genre of music," he says, adding that at
Ying Yang’s ‘Whisper’ Speaks Volumes

Not many rappers can boast of whispering their way up the charts, yet that is exactly what Ying Yang Twins are doing. Their latest single, “Wait (The Whisper Song),” peaked at No. 2 on billboard.com’s Hot Rap Tracks chart. Members D-Roc and Kaine are hoping the single will propel sales of their album “U.S.A. (United State of Atlanta),” which hits stores June 28 from Collipark/TVT.

The album features guests Anthony Hamilton, Pitbull, Teedra Moses and Mike Jones, among others. Maroon5’s Adam Levine even lends his vocals to “Live Again.”

Though some of the collaborators may seem unlikely for a group steeped in crunk music, D-Roc says they were simply exploring their creative side.

“We came up with all the songs first, then we figured out who would be nice on it. We met Maroon5 at [MTV’s Video Music Awards] and knew that [Levine] would be good. If we meet you and we’re cool, let’s do a song,” he says.

The album also includes a remix of “Wait” featuring Missy Elliott, Busta Rhymes, Lil Scrappy, Mr. Collipark and BET’s “106 & Park” co-host Free. The song itself is a sharp departure from the Twins’ usual loud, in-your-face delivery. The change in pace was intentional, according to D-Roc.

“We’re at the club, it’s very unattractive to be yelling in a girl’s face. So you whisper in her ear and that turns her on. We whispered a whole song, now you’re all waiting to hear what our album sounds like.”

‘STATEMENT:’ Afu-Ra’s “State of the Arts,” released June 14, is the first album from the rapper’s own label, Decom distributed Life Force Records. Joined on the set by Kardinal Offishall, Royce Da 5’9” and Masta Killa, Afu-Ra says he wanted to bring something new to his fans.

“I wanted to make something that was musically on another level from my previous records. I wanted to do an album where people weren’t going to see me coming,” he tells Billboard.

Four albums deep, he admits that it has not been easy being an independent artist.

“It’s really a gamble in the sense of making music that people are going to love. I can do a million songs, but at the end of the day, I can’t determine the success. All I can do is be the best Afu-Ra I can be.”

SUMMER FUN: Studio Distribution and Brooklyn, N.Y.-based label Female Fun Records hope to make this summer a hot one with two gems in stores.


The second is production/virtual artist Ge-ology’s futurist “Ge-ology Plays Ge-ology,” which dropped June 21. The debut full-length compiles 30 of his best mixes, instrumentals and rarities.

Sony has a dedicated gospel staff, however such gospel acts as Mary Mary, Anointed and Kim Burrell are assigned directly to mainstream labels Columbia and Epic instead of to a gospel imprint.

Siegel says it is too early to tell whether Sony and Zomba will merge the gospel entities. Sony BMG Music Entertainment CEO Andrew Lack “is being very sensitive to maintain the individual corporate cultures,” Siegel says. “While some of the backroom services are being combined and we’re trying to become more efficient from an operational standpoint, there’s a lot of respect for the Sony culture and the BMG culture.”

FROM ARTIST TO EXEC

The Zomba culture has been extremely appealing to some of the biggest acts in the gospel world. When singer/songwriter/producer Lawrence was looking for a new label home as an artist and a place to launch an imprint, he chose Zomba.

“The machine is very strong and very aggressive when it comes to selling records,” says Lawrence, who signed in January 2004. “I wanted to have a home for Quiet World Entertainment where I could produce, write and develop artists. They allow me to do my thing.”

Lawrence has signed two acts to Quiet World, the Murrills and Dewayne Woods, and plans to release projects from both next year. The Murrills, a family act comprising five brothers and one sister, will debut first with their album “Family Prayer.”

Lawrence feels one of the reasons Zomba has been successful in the gospel field is that “they knew who to sign. They sign people who can do more than one thing and are self-starters.”

“I think Zomba is going to be a place for artists to turn into execs,” he says. “Any artist coming there needs to come with the mentality of learning how to become an executive.”

Siegel agrees, adding that he looks for enterprising artists. “I feel like our job is to help shape and enhance ministries and take careers to the next level, not necessarily to create a vision for our artists. So we tend to align ourselves with people who are very developed creatively and have a very strong vision of where they’re going.”

In addition to continuing to develop talent, Siegel says he expects to expand Zomba Gospel’s reach by broadening its visual media offerings, which Lack has said is a companywide priority.

With the combination of talent it has been able to assemble and its potential in the marketplace, Carrabba is confident of Zomba Gospel’s future. “We feel it’s a niche, but it’s a growing niche,” he says of gospel music. “Most records are up and over in six to nine months, but a great gospel record you could be working for a couple of years.”

Siegel says Zomba Gospel is also dedicated to taking the music further into the mainstream by “dealing with the mass merchants more. Obviously you need the independents and the chains, but [we want to] really expose more at a mass-merchant level. We have seen growth there and we will continue to see growth. We are in it for the long run.”

Beats & Rhymes
IVORY JONES ijones@billboard.com

ZOMBA (cont.)
Mayer Stretches Out In Trio Setting
Threesome Includes Steve Jordan And Pino Palladino, Who Also Appear On Artist's Forthcoming Album

To John Mayer's way of thinking, it would be just plain wrong not to explore musical avenues outside of the pop world that has brought him so much fame and fortune.

To that end, the Aware/Co-lumbia guitarist has formed the John Mayer Trio, which includes accomplished journeyman Steve Jordan on drums and Pino Palladino on bass. The threesome start a club tour Sept. 6 at the Fillmore in San Francisco, which will be followed by a live album in December.

"I would feel like I'm not making the most of my life if I don't take this success and turn it into other opportunities," Mayer tells Billboard in his first interview about the trio.

The group will play a mix of covers, past Mayer hits re-worked for a trio setting and new material. "The challenge is choosing which tunes to play," Mayer says. "I have six strings, all Pino has is four and Steve his drum set."

Playing as part of a triad forces each musician to be at the top of his game. "Every person has to be full blast," he says. "If not in their intensity, then just in being fast on their feet. You can't rely on anything superfluous."

Jordan and Palladino are also on Mayer's new studio album, which he is in the midst of writing and recording. They have deeply influenced how he works in the studio.

"The assembly line is so short right now," he says. "The artist gets almost trained to believe it takes 50 people and 12 months to make a record. It takes four people. You get on tape, you listen back and ask, 'Does it make you feel something, yes or no?' When you got it, you move on."

Mayer says the new album, titled "Continuum," has "a kind of Sam Cooke" vibe to it. While he has yet to write what he calls a hit single for the project, Mayer knows he needs one before he turns it in. "My job is to find the perfect balance that fits into the record and can fit on the radio."

He stresses that he loves having hits and has no intention of turning his back on the pop formats that have allowed him to veer off into this side project.

"Holding up the middle finger gets very tempting when you've had some success and people say you can do whatever you want to do," he says. "Then I realize that I do covet having hit songs. The last thing I want to do is raise the finger at the very thing that gave me the ability to do this with Steve and Pino."

Mayer and Jordan are producing the album; no release date has been set.

Mayer has been making the guest rounds lately, appearing on records by Eric Clapton, Rob Thomas, Kanye West, Common, B.B. King, Buddy Guy and Herbie Hancock, but he says that is about to end—before he wears out his welcome. "I'm probably within one song or two of overkill," he admits.

SEDAKA IS BACK: Neil Sedaka is the latest songwriter/artist whose material is Broadway bound. "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do," a musical with a story crafted around 20 Sedaka tunes, will begin work-shopping in regional theaters in July, with a move to Broadway planned in mid-2006. Harbor Entertainment is producing. "I'm thrilled, I've waited my whole life for this," Sedaka tells Billboard. "There are hits, but I also picked songs that are less well-known to move the story along."

Sedaka is also pushing a Christmas album on QVC. He will appear on the home shopping channel in July and October.

And, as Chart Beat's Fred Bronson recently noted on billboard.com, the Sedaka-penned "(Is This The Way To) Amarillo" just spent seven weeks atop the U.K. singles chart. The song, recorded by Tony Christie, was a charity project for Comic Relief.
Lina Unveils ‘Inner Beauty’

MUSICALLY, singer/songwriter/producer Lina may have one foot in the past, but she is definitely facing forward.

In the four years since “Stranger on Earth,” her debut on Atlantic Records, the Los Angeles-based artist has stayed busy. In 2003, she signed with Hidden Beach Recordings and launched her own label, MoodStar Records.

Earlier this year, she produced and sang on the first album in MoodStar’s “Save Your Soul” compilation series. And she returns June 28 with her sophomore album, “Inner Beauty Movement.”

Even with these changes in her life, Lina says, some things remain constant: “I still have the same friends, and we still have the same guy situations.”

And while those “guy situations” provided inspiration for several tracks on “Inner Beauty Movement,” the Epic/Sony Music-distributed album is not just more of the same.

“(The album) is an evolution,” Lina says. “It’s more about the concepts this time than the music.”

Lina maintains her signature vintage vocals and ‘40s jazz- and swing-inspired instrumental. However, she increases the hip-hop and R&B beats, giving the album a more modern sound than her debut.

“She’s sexy soul,” says D-Rock, PD for adult R&B KNEK and R&B/hip-hop KRQF Lafayette, La. “There’s always room for good soul music and people who are individuals.”

Songs about finding someone who will never leave flow seamlessly into songs about taking control of a failed relationship and standing up for oneself. The overall theme of self-empowerment reinforces the album’s title.

“The inner beauty movement is your truth,” Lina explains. “My plan is to get people to realize themselves, focus on who they are and love that person.”

The album’s 16 tracks were chosen from nearly 40 songs, according to Hidden Beach founder and CEO Steve McKeever. “Every single meeting we had to close the record out, she would come in and say, ‘Oh, I just wrote this last night. What do you think?’”

First single “Smooth,” for example, was the last song Lina wrote for the project. This soulful tune about the joy and pain of a strained relationship was added during the mastering process. The track goes to radio the last week of June.

“It may be a slow burn, but this is a solid album,” Musicland director of urban products Sonya Askew says. “If they can get the word out about this project, I would expect solid sales.”

Hidden Beach marketing director Dana Mason echoes Askew’s assessment.

“We are in it for the long haul,” Mason says. “[We’re] starting small and growing throughout the whole year.

While past tours with Craig David, Joan Osborne and Guru have garnered Lina fans from R&B, pop and hip-hop, the label is taking a more focused approach this time. Two promotion teams are working the album: one is focusing on six major markets, the other is launching a lifestyle campaign to capitalize on Lina’s strong gay and lesbian following.

In addition, Lina was featured on iTunes throughout June. That campaign included exclusive and advanced downloads, an album pre-sale and a preview of the “Smooth” video directed by Lionel Martin.

Lina also invited fans to participate in her songwriting process. She posted the first verse and hook to the song “More” on her Web site, inviting visitors to write the rest of it. The winning entry may appear on a future album.

FACT FILE

Label: Hidden Beach Recordings
Management: Panda Entertainment Group
Booking: No signed agreement; United Talent Agency is working on potential touring
Publishing: Starfeel Music Publishing (BMI)
Top-selling album: “Stranger on Earth” (2003), 40,000

In The Spirit

DEBORAH EVANS PRICE dprice@billboard.com

Gospel World Mourns Winans

The gospel music community is mourning the June 17 passing of Ronald Winans. A member of the famed Winans family, he died at Harper Hospital in Detroit from heart disease. The second of 10 siblings, Winans would have turned 49 on June 30.

“Ronald Winans is part of the history of gospel music,” Donalid Lawrence says. “I got my start in recording through Ronald Winans Family & Friends;’ in 1987. It was my brother, he was my friend, and we’ll all miss him very much. He went to heaven like a true saint of God with the biggest smile on his face. The family has decided to celebrate his life as opposed to mourning his death. Let us all follow that same path.”

Fred Hammond also credits the Winans family with giving him his start in gospel music, and offers words of comfort to the family: “You all know your loss of Ron is truly my loss as well,” he says. “Ron was a great friend and I, like many, will miss him dearly.”

Winans began his career when he and brothers Marvin, Carvin and Michael were discovered by the legendary Andre Crouch. They released their first album, “Introducing the Winans,” in 1981 and became one of the most successful groups in gospel music.

Winans endured a massive heart attack in 1997 and doctors told the family he likely would not survive, but he did, and against the odds, resumed his recording career. “Once I got back, I said, ‘Lord, if you are able to do that, I want everything back,’ ” he told The Spirit earlier this year, “because they thought I was going to be a vegetable.”

He survived and died. His most recent project, “Family & Friends 5: A Celebration,” was released in January on Enthos Records, a Detroit-based label founded by producer Doreonne Stramler. The project was recorded in May 2004 at Detroit’s Greater Grace Temple, and was also released on DVD.

“Ron Winans was a beautiful spirit,” Donald Lawrence says. “I always loved watching and hearing him in concert. He will be missed.”

That sentiment is echoed by Take 6’s Alvin Chea. “Take 6 is deeply saddened by the loss of our big brother Ronald,” he says. “We say ‘our big brother’ because the black gospel community is truly that—a family. We all root for each other, pray for each other, compete against one another but, most importantly, we love each other. Ronald was an ambassador of praise,” whose music, not only with his three brothers, but also with his beloved choir, transformed lives.”

Chea remembers Winans as “a big, lovable teddy bear who adored his family, especially his sisters. Being one of the few living souls who actually dated a Winans daughter, I definitely know that firsthand.

“Ron will be missed,” he adds. “His loss is a loss for not only the black gospel community and Detroit but the world at large. His scope and influence was as large as his smile.”

The thing I’ll remember about him was his warm personality, the joy he exuded during our interview and that he knew something better was waiting for him. “I’m so convinced that we never die. Spirits never die, it’s just houses that we live in,” he said. Recalling his near-death experience in 1997, he added, “I didn’t see Jesus because if I had, I wouldn’t have come back.”

This time he didn’t have to return.
ALL-4-ONE’S JONES SWEARS BY SOLO DEBUT

It has been 11 years since All-4-One scored major R&B/pop hits with "So Much in Love" and "I Swear." Now Jamie Jones, the frontman on those songs, is taking the solo route. His self-titled album is due June 28 on his own Genesis Entertainment, which is distributed by Image Entertainment.

Astute music fans will recall that this is not Jones’ first solo outing. He issued the modern gospel album “Illuminate” in 2004. In fact, “Jamie Jones” re-vamps “Illuminate” with the addition of five new songs.

Jones says the main goal of his first album was to attract a bigger distributor. When Image stepped onboard, it was decided that “Illuminate” should be reworked to avoid marketplace confusion.

“We had been talking to majors like Verity,” Jones recalls. “But we already had this offer and, at the end of the day, decided Image was the best way to go. We own the masters and it’s an artist-friendly climate. We’re a priority there. And in my years of experience in this business, when you can be a priority, that’s where you want to be.”

Jones says the reworked album carries a more inspirational vibe than its gospel predecessor. Besides gospel, the album draws from Jones’ contemporary R&B/pop influences. Proceedings get off to a strong start with the catchy midtempo number “Don’t Stop,” which features comedian/actor Wayne Brady and singer William Cartwright.

It is one of two songs from the album being worked simultaneously to radio. “Don’t Stop” targets adult R&B, while uplifting ballad “Rise” was sent to gospel. Other notable tracks include “Higher Love” and the steppin’ remix of “U Gonna Be Alright.”

Jones is busy readying a video for “Don’t Stop.” He is also itching to get on the road with his band.

“Right now it’s an eight-piece, and I know eventually I’ll have to scale it down. But right now it’s nice to have all the parts covered.”

The Jones-Brady hookup goes beyond “Don’t Stop.” Brady is working on his own solo album with the Heavyweights—the production team of Jones, Jason Pennock and Jack Kugell. Among the trio’s credits are songs for Martina McBride and Jim Brickman.

“I’ve been telling Wayne, ‘You need to start singing,’ ” Jones says. “So I got him to join me and William on ‘Don’t Stop.’ In fact, there’s also a version of the song with just Wayne on it. He can sing.”

Jones’ ties with Genesis artist Cartwright date back to the latter’s stint with the duo SupaNova, which was signed to Jones’ production company. SupaNova inked with Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds and Andre Harrell’s label Nu America, but the Interscope-distributed company closed shop before Supernova could release its project.

Judging by the All-4-One guest appearances on “Jamie Jones,” fans might wonder if a reunion album by the group is in the offing. In addition to providing backing vocals on “Rise,” Jones’ former Atlantic cohorts—Delious Kennedy, Alfred Nevarez and Tony Borowiak—kick up their sweet harmonies on “Take My Hand.”

Jones says the quartet, together since 1993 and still touring, has not broken up.

“There will be another All-4-One record after this,” he adds. “We’re negotiating that right now. Our goal from day one was to be this generation’s Four Tops: to stay together 30-40 years and in between do solo projects.”

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Tommy Conwell used to be a rock star. Now, he plays then on the radio.

The one-time leader of rock band Tommy Conwell & The Young Rumblers—who recorded two albums for Columbia Records—has been the midday personality on active rock WYSP Philadelphia since 2003. But in the 1980s and early ’90s, Conwell was a local guitar hero and one of Philly’s most promising native sons.

Conwell, now 43, began playing music professionally at age 20, when he was a student at the University of Delaware. In 1984, he formed Tommy Conwell & the Young Rumblers, who quickly built a following playing at Philly area clubs and campuses. Locals lined up around the block to see the blond, spiky-haired rock god and his band perform their high-energy, sweat-drenched sets.

Such was the band’s popularity that when a contest was held in 1987 for a free concert at a local high school, area teens sent in more than 11 million postcards.

After a label bidding war, Conwell and his band signed with Columbia and released their major-label debut, “Rumble,” in 1988. That album was followed by “Guitar Trouble” in 1990.

In those heady years, the group got airplay on MTV and exposure and appeared on the American Music Awards and on talk shows hosted by David Letterman and Arsenio Hall.

But “Guitar Trouble” marked the band’s swan song, and the beginning of the end of Conwell’s music career. In 1993 he formed a new band, a punk rock/blues outfit titled the Little Kings, who released two albums, including 1997’s “Sho Gone Crazy,” on a tiny, independent label.

By then, Conwell saw the writing on the wall, as both his career and his hair started to disappear. He went back to school, received his degree and became an elementary school teacher.

“I always said, ‘When I’m not sitting at the table in the music industry anymore, I’m not going to hang around begging for crumbs,’” he says of the career change.

He taught at an elementary school for five years before deciding that teaching was “entirely too much work for my lifestyle.” He then began selling fencing for a friend’s company.

In 1999, Conwell was still employed outside the music business when Infinity’s WYSP tapped him to host its Sunday evening local-music show, “Loud & Local.”

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Four years later, the station ran a contest to find its new midday jock. Conwell auditioned and was chosen by the audience to fill that role.

Sabeans says Conwell’s local connection is part of his appeal. “He talks about Philly and can relate to Philly. As an added bonus, Sabeans says, Conwell is “recognized on the street from his rock-star days.”

One advantage Conwell’s past has given him is that he is totally comfortable at the many public appearances he does for the station.

“I know what to do with a microphone in front of a live crowd,” he says, noting that standing before an audience is hard for some jocks because “I’ve been his ‘bread and butter for a lot of years.”

Conwell continues to host the hour-long weekend program “Loud & Local,” a part of his job he especially enjoys because he has complete creative control of the show.

As a former Philly musician, his main goal for “Loud & Local” is to give exposure to bands for whom that kind of airplay means so much. “I try to make them all feel like rock stars, because I know how good that feels.”

He also knows what the flip side feels like—when radio gives an artist the cold shoulder. During his major-label days, Conwell and his band visited hundreds of radio stations while on tour, and with each visit, he says, “you never know what you were going to get. You might get treated like the Rolling Stones or you might get treated like a nuisance.”

So when musicians visit his station, Conwell’s rule is simple: “You need to be sweet to them.” Having tasted life in the major leagues, Conwell has no regrets about the twists and turns. “I’ve been lucky my whole life—from having the good fortune I had to make records on Columbia and tour the world, then that goes away and this [career] pops up. I’m on the No. 1 rock station in Philadelphia—the station I grew up listening to.”

Asked what is appealing to him about his radio career, Conwell, who still performs sporadically cites a new kind of creativity and notes that “the hours are great.” But mostly, he confesses, “I like being famous.”

In fact, Conwell admits that making the transition from rock star to third-grade teacher was extremely difficult.

“When I went into teaching, it was time to get over myself,” he says. “There was a lot of ego deflation that needed to occur, but it was great for me. Some of the best lessons I learned were in that time period.”

That experience made him appreciate his newfound notoriety much more. “When it’s taken away and then given back, that’s when it’s really the sweetest.”

Robyn Flies On Fourth Set

Following the domestic success of her self-titled fourth album, Swedish pop/R&B singer/songwriter Robyn is seeking to license it internationally.

“Robyn,” on the singer’s Konichiwa Records imprint, entered the Swedish album chart May 5 at No. 1. The BMG Music Publishing writer is the label’s solo artist. Bonnier Amigo handles Scandinavian distribution.

Robyn says she set up the label “because I needed the freedom and more space for my creativity.” She is looking for major or independent partners in Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the United States. “I want a record company that really understands what I want to do,” she says.

Robyn debuted in 1995, at 16, with her internationally successful RCA album “Robyn Is Here.” It provided two top 10 hits in the United States in 1997 and peaked at No. 57 on The Billboard 200, but two further albums (on RCA and Jive/Zomba) never had U.S. releases.

Robyn is touring Scandinavia this summer, booked by Stockholm-based EMA Telstar.

FUNKY LOGIC: EMI Italy is eyeing other European markets for the second album by Neapolitan electronic outfit Planet Funk.

Its English-language album “The Illogical Consequence” (Virgin) debuted at No. 4 following an April 1 release. “It rapidly shipped platinum [40,000 units],” EMI Italy deputy GM/VP of A&R Fabrizio Giannini says.

“Consequence” is the follow-up to 2002’s “Non Zero Sumness,” which included the European hit “Inside All the People,” featuring guest vocalist Dan Black of U.K. band the Scientists.

Black is one of four featured vocalists on the new set, singing on three of its 13 tracks.

“The band spent a lot of time preparing this album,” Giannini says. “It is more English and less dance-orientated than its predecessor.”

A rollout in other territories is planned for September. The act is published by Warner/Chappell/Famous Music Publishing. —MARK WORDEN

BUILDING WALLS: Irish alternative rock four-piece the Walls are hoping for international action after a successful chart return in their homeland with second album “New Dawn Breaking,” released on their own Dirtbird Records label.

The RMR-distributed album debuted at No. 5 on the Irish chart in May, cementing a protracted comeback that began with European shows in March 2004.

Financial problems at previous label Earshot Records in 2003 delayed the recording of the band’s follow-up to 2000’s Irish hit album “He-Lo.”

Sibling songwriters Steve and Joe Wall financed the new record by re-forming their previous band the Stunners—one of the most popular homegrown Irish acts of the late ’80s/early ’90s—to tour behind a remastered version of its 1990 Earshot album, “Paradise in the Pictures”—which reached No. 2 in Ireland in September 2003.

Plans for outside Ireland are tentative, but vocalist Steve Wall says U.S. A&R interest followed plays of album tracks on noncommercial triple-A KCRW Santa Monica, Calif.’s “Morning Becomes Eclectic” show. “That has started the ball rolling for us,” he says. “There’s obviously industry people out there listening closely to what gets played.” —NICK KELLY
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Earning Their Greencards

Two Australians And A Brit Make American Roots Music

Until they speak, it is easy to mistake the Greencards for an American band. After all, their music straddles two genres born in the United States: bluegrass and Americana. And they are currently opening tour dates for a pair of American icons: Bob Dylan and Willie Nelson.

But the Greencards comprise two Australians and a Brit who came together in Austin over a shared love of bluegrass and acoustic music. The Australians are bassist/lead vocalist Carol Young and mandolin player Kym Warner. The Brit is fiddler Eamon McLoughlin. Despite being part of the same Austin scene, they almost did not meet.

In his search for a fiddle-player to join the band, Warner got McLoughlin’s number. But hearing the British accent on his voice mail, Warner assumed McLoughlin’s “wasn’t the style of fiddle playing I was looking for.”

When they finally did meet, Warner says they hit it off both personally and musically as they discovered that despite having grown up “a world apart,” they did so listening to bluegrass and country music.

Warner says the band’s musical style is hard to categorize. “The grounding of the music we play is obviously drawn from bluegrass,” he says. “But we have so many more influences than that, and that’s created the sound that the Greencards are.”

Following a critically-acclaimed independent album in 2003, the Greencards will issue their second album, “Weather and Water,” June 28 on Duotone Records. That label has also picked up national distribution of the band’s first album, “Movin’ On,” via a licensing deal.

The group was drawn to Duluth because “it was evident early on that they would let us make the kind of record we wanted to make,” Warner says.

When they couldn’t agree on a producer, the band members decided to produce themselves. After 250 dates a year on the road, Warner says, “We were much more comfortable with the understanding we had about the band than with anyone else at this stage.”

After several years working the Austin scene, the Greencards moved to Nashville at the beginning of the year to be closer to their business interests—Duotone, manager Heather Bohn and booking agent the Keith Case Agency—and for the ease of touring from Nashville. Now, they like to joke that they’re “not from around here,” telling people they are from East Tennessee just to get a reaction.

When they finish their 31-date run playing minor league baseball stadiums with Dylan and Nelson, they’ll spend August on the road with fellow Aussie Kasey Chambers.

“We have three goals,” the conductor says. “First, we must take care of our concerts here in the Twin Cities and the tours we do all around Minnesota. The second is to do recordings that hopefully make music writers all over the globe sit up and take notice. Thirdly, we need to tour all the important music centers around the world, to prove to audiences that what they hear in our recordings is true live. Each goal feeds into the other. When critics in London and New York are writing good things about us, more people in Minnesota will come to our home concerts, because their curiosity has been piqued.”

The orchestra is recording the Symphonies Nos. 3 ‘Eroica’ and 8. A recent visit to Minneapolis during these sessions reveals just how close the collaboration among Vanska, the players, producer Robert Suviff and the rest of the BIS team is. (Vanska and Suviff have made dozens of recordings together already with Vanska’s other ensemble, the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which the conductor has carefully built up from a provincial Finnish band into a first-rate orchestra.)

No one could ever claim that Beethoven’s symphonies are underrated. There are thousands upon thousands of recordings of the individual symphonies available, not to mention more than 100 complete cycles. So what led conductor Osmo Vanska, the Minneapolis Orchestra and Swedish independent label BIS to undertake yet another complete cycle?

Finnish conductor Vanska, who became music director of the Minneapolis Orchestra two seasons ago and recently announced that he will stay in Minneapolis through the end of the 2010-11 season, thinks there is plenty of justification.

“The orchestra is so good that people have excellent reason to buy these CDs, and to travel to Minnesota to hear these players,” he says firmly. “It’s true that the Minnesota Orchestra’s stock is rising rapidly. Recent U.S. and European tours have won raves, and the first entry in the orchestra’s Super Audio CD Beethoven cycle—vigorously, clean and bright readings of the Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, released last fall—has been heartily embraced by critics worldwide.

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The orchestra is recording the Symphonies Nos. 3 ‘Eroica’ and 8. A recent visit to Minneapolis during these sessions reveals just how close the collaboration among Vanska, the players, producer Robert Suviff and the rest of the BIS team is. (Vanska and Suviff have made dozens of recordings together already with Vanska’s other ensemble, the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, which the conductor has carefully built up from a provincial Finnish band into a first-rate orchestra.)

A

Latin Notas

Shakira Rings Up Hot Ringtone Sales

Although ringtones are becoming big business in the Latin music industry, few Spanish-language tracks have hit high spots on the Billboard Hot Ringtones chart.

Enter Shakira and her latest single, “La Tortura” (featuring Alejandro Sanz), which jumped 31-18 the week of her album’s release. This issue, the track is No. 13, making it the highest position reached by a Spanish-language track.

Aside from Shakira, Latin-flavored tracks that have appeared on the ringtone chart have been few and far between. Notables include Frankie J and Baby Bash, who reached No. 12 with “Obsesión” via Pittbull. On the top 20 with “Toma” and N.O.R.E. spent a week at No. 33 with “Oye Mi Canto.”

However, these tracks were English-language songs with only touches of Spanish, whereas Shakira’s “La Tortura” is in Spanish.

THINK CREATIVELY: The list of players with their eyes set on marketing and sponsorship opportunities is growing. The newest kid on the block is Creative Alliance Entertainment, a Minneapolis-based partnership between League of Their Own and ASquare.

ASquare is a production advertising company created by former Telemundo VP of sales and marketing Rita Hernandez and video director/producer Ariel Rubalcaba.

Together as ASquare, the two companies look to provide artists with deals inside and out of the musical world, and is also producing TV shows for the U.S. and international markets.

“We’re filling such a big void,” says Eagan, formerly senior VP of marketing for EMI Latin USA. “We come from the industry and we know precisely what the industry and what the artists need.”

ASquare is working on deals for veteran singer Ana Gabriel and up-and-comer Litzy and has also put together a promotional tour for Miami fusion band Locos Por Juana.

FIRST CLASS: While ringtones are being hailed as a hot new genre, other Latin dance forms are being recognized for their classic style.

Witness the collection of U.S. postal stamps titled “Let’s Dance.” The four-stamp set, which aims to be available in September, features designs that represent merengue, salsa, cha-cha and mambo.

This marks the first time that Latin dance forms will be celebrated on a U.S. stamp.

The “Let’s Dance” idea came from the American public, says David Fallor, executive director of stamp services for the USPS. “We get in the neighborhood of 50,000 people per year proposing stamps,” Fallor says. The resulting stamps are vivid displays of color and movement, with some added educational value. Each stamp has information on its respective dance printed on the back.

NEW RADIO PANEL: Billboard is creating a Latin rhythm radio panel. But until it launches, all burbun/ringtone stations on the Billboard charts will continue to report only to the tropical panel. For now, newly flipped stations XQXL Los Angeles, WCCA New York and WODA in Puerto Rico have been added to the tropical list and removed from the Latin pop panel, effective June 23. The tracking period will run June 20-26. The stations will later be added to the new panel.
The #1 event focused on marketing to teens is coming to New York City. what {teens} want {east} marketing to teens using music, movies & the media july 12, 2005 marriott marquis, new york city

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**REVIEW SPOTLIGHTS**

**ALBUMS**

**GEORGE STRAIT**

_Somewhere Down in Texas_

Producers: Tony Brown, George Strait

Release Date: June 28

George Strait has thrived nearly a quarter of a century in country music not so much because he's so damn good (which he is), but because he's so good every time. This remarkable consistency is very much on display on Strait's 33rd album, from the frothy opener "If the Whole World Was a Honky Tonk" to the redemptive neo-classic "By the Light of a Headlight." Strait's song selection is peerless and doesn't rely on the core of his catalogue, but the title cut and the cover of "Dreams" are so perfectly chosen to stretch his vocal range that they are almost mandatory. The key to enjoying a George Strait album is to take it for what it is—a conjunto-flavored crooner singing with authority. Hopefully it's neither, because it would tarnish an otherwise promising album. —IMJ

**DWIGHT YOAKAM**

_Blane the Va{}m Prod{}ucer: Dwight Yoakam

Release Date: June 14

Dwight Yoakam's 20-year musical renaissance continues with 'Blane the Va{}m,' his first album in 20 years. Yoakam's signature twang and rocking guitar sound are still present, but the album features a more varied sound with a mix of country, rock, and pop influences. Yoakam's vocals are as strong as ever, and his songwriting remains top-notch. Overall, 'Blane the Va{}m' is a solid release that should appeal to fans of country rock. —MP

**CASSIDY**

_I'm a Hustla Producer: Various

Release Date: June 28

Kelly's got a hit on his hands with the release of his new album, "I'm a Hustla." The album features a mix of pop, R&B, and hip-hop influences, with Kelly's signature baritone voice driving the tracks. The first single, "Attention," has already garnered attention and has several other tracks that are sure to follow suit. With his Hustl-a music empire, Kelly is proving that he's more than just a rapper. —PP

**SINGLES**

**ROB THOMAS**

_This Is How a Heart Breaks (3:50)_

Producer: Matt Serletic

Writers: R. Thomas, C. Karlos, H. Jonbæk, P. Winninger

Publishers: U Rule

Music/EMI April (ASCAP)

For every lead singer that successfully steps outside of his originating comfort zone, another five go down in flames. Matchbox Twenty's Rob Thomas has spurned solid gold with the multiformat success of solo debut "Lonely No More." As that first single holds its lock at No. 1 at adult top 40, Thomas is ready to move on to "This Is How a Heart Breaks." While the title might imply a tender, forlorn ballad, the album opener actually flips the bird at his lost love—alongside some passionate tribal drums and gospel vocals. This is Thomas' most aggressive single yet, that rare beast known as "a sure thing." And deservedly so. "Heart Breaks" represents a master at his peak.—CF

**DELTA GOODREM**

_Last Without You (3:28)_

Producers: Matthew Gerrand, Mark Endert

Writers: M. Gerrand, B. Benenate

Publishers: various

Columbia (CD promo)

Aussie singer/songwriter Delta Goodrem joins a short list of entertainers with the goods to endure for as long as she chooses. U.S. debut single "Last Without You" is a powerful, piano-driven anthem with superb hook lines, radiant vocals and tempo-flourishing acoustic production. At home, Goodrem is the most acclaimed new female singer in history: seven No. 1 singles and eight Australian Record Industry Ass. Awards, all in little more than a year. Now, after nearly as long in development stateside, Columbia launches this tigress of talent. She's gorgeous and graceful, youthful and she writes and plays ... boy, is the United States primed for a true, gimmick-free talent. Welcome 2005's best new artist.—CT

**HIP-HOP**

**YING YANG TWINS**

_U.S.A. (United State of Atlanta)_

Producers: various

Release Date: June 28

The key to enjoying a Ying Yang Twins album is to take it for what it is—a typical pop burner. Their music is all fun and games, with no guest appearances than one can keep straight (including Anthony Hamilton, Missy Elliott, Bustra Rhymes). When the twins aren’t imploring and partying, they are trying to engineer a very explicit scene in the bedroom with cuts like "Wet (The Whisper Song)," "Pull My Hair," and "Bedroom Boom." They switch things up with a little "23 Mr. Lock Down," which centers on incarcerated U.G.K. member Pimp C. "U.S.A." will have fans back to throwing "boobs and shaking various body parts in no time.—IMJ

**POP**

**ESTHERO (2)**

_Wicked Lil' Grrls_ Producers: various

Release Date: June 28

Canadian singer/ songwriter Esthero delivered a golden jewel in 1998 with "Breath From Another." Though critically acclaimed, the debut album sold slowly and never gained much attention. But now that we're living in a world that celebrates the iPod shuffle, this could be her time. The album opens with "We In Need of a Musical Revolution," which rails against racism and MTV. From there, she takes listeners on another eclectic musical trip. While there are some missteps (including the Blu Cantrell-like title track), they are overshadowed by such pop gems as the sunny "Every Day Is a Holiday (With You)," which features Sean Lennon, and the sensual, Sade–shaded "Thank Heaven for You." —MP

**LATIN**

**ARTURO SANDOVAL**

_Live at the Blue Note_ Producers: Arturo Sandoval

Release Date: June 7

In his more than 40 years of performing and recording, this trumpeter Arturo Sandoval’s first live CD/DVD. That alone makes "Live at the Blue Note" a collector’s item, but the sheer vitality of this album transcends that. A bastion of Latin jazz and one of the most technically impressive trumpeters around, Sandoval is also an innovator who is not only performing with pop, but on the cover of Alicia Keys' "If I Ain't Got You." The album features mostly Sandoval-penned tracks. Opener "Blues Kickin’" is dazzling, but most surprising is the timba/jazz of "Eso Es Lo Que Hay," which features Sandoval rapping, and later dissolves into one of the most astounding trumpet solos in recent memory.—LC

**RED**

**PATTI LABELLE**

_Classic Moments_ Producers: various

Release Date: June 2

This is a given for veteran artists to pay homage to music from the past. Sometimes it’s a throwback to the Aretha Franklin nugget "You’ll Never Know," or the more explicit "No More Tears (Enough Is Enough)," and others. Classic Moments is appropriately titled. In fact, it’s those two words that hearken back to the kind of “Classic Moments” is appropriately titled. In fact, it’s those two words that hearken back to the kind of music once considered passé. Other highlights: “You’re Gonna Make Me Love Somebody Else” (The Jones Girls’ “To Be His Lover”) and "Pimpin’ (The Pretenders) “and ”Love Ballad” (L.T.D.) Throughout, LaBelle’s gift—that voice—is front and center.—MP

**WORLD**

**FEMI KUTI**

_Live at the Shrine_ Producers: Sodi

Release Date: June 28

Femi Kuti—the eldest son of Afrobeat savant Fela Kuti—cuts this live CD with his Band Positive Force in a renovated warehouse in Lagos, Nigeria. It is a powerful articulation of the state of Afrobeat in 2005. Femi and his band keep the vibe of Fela’s Water No Get Enemy. The accompanying DVD brings the music to life with interviews and Lagos street scenes.—PVV

**MORE**

**MOUNTAINS OF WAYNE**

_Out-of-State Plates_ Producers: Chris Collingwood, Adam Schlesinger

Release Date: June 28

When a pop band puts together a collection of previously unreleased tunes, bonus tracks and B-sides, the perspective is imperative. Fountains of Wayne aren’t exactly prolific (three albums in nine years). But the band has enough in the vaults to justify this 28-song double album, with some of its material dating as far back as 1994. Throughout, this is a mixed bag of pure-pop lyricism and throwaway curios (from Eli St. Jackson Browne), though FOW’s take on Britney Spears’ “...Baby One More Time” remains a bonus track and B-side. But the band is strong: the strongest tracks are the rockers: “Maureen” and “The Girl I...” Not surprisingly, the strongest tracks are the rockers: “Maureen” and “The Girl I...” Starring yet another inebriated protagonist.—DO

**DEVLIN/DEREK**

_The Fury of Our Maker’s Hand_ Producers: Colin Richardson

Release Date: June 28

DevilDriver’s "The Fury of Our Maker’s Hand" gives a brutal impression of what
God’s wrath will sound like when the almighty finally slaps the human race back into oblivion. The quintet is intensely focused on “Driving Down the Darkness.” “Hold Back the Day” and “Impending” (featuring vocal star Dez Fafara) delivers the chorus of “Just Run” as a terrifying scream. DevilDriver also borrows from songs with that, and there, mostly on “Pale Horse Apocalypse,” where a passage from “Creeping Death” pops up, although that instance might have been intentional. If the group can reproduce its studio sound onstage, it will be one of the must-see bands on the just-launched Sounds of the Underground tour.—CLT

ERIC JOHNSON Bloom
Producers: Eric Johnson, Richard Millen
Favored Nations
Release Date: June 14
When Eric Johnson embarked on building a home studio, extenuating circumstances led him to unexpectedly take a musical hiatus for several years. His fans and guitar aficionados will be grateful for the 15 new songs “Bloom” contains, plus an expletive-laden ode to Bob Dylan’s “My Back Pages.” The album has pleasant moments, as Johnson traverses jazz (penned for “Headless” and smooth on “From My Heart”) and re-creates the dreamy atmospheres found on his “Venus the Venus” (the Latin “Ciel” and the ethereal “Sea Secret”), “Summer Jam” and “12 to 12” (both from “Ezio”). The album is propelled by his blues and pulse. But their familiarity feels more like Johnson is checking in with listeners to show off the results of his chops. The tone on his “Tribute to Jerry Reed” is a little too polished, a flaw that mars some of the other cuts.—CLT

LEGEND & CREDITS
EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS) AND CHUCK TAYLOR (SINGLES)
CONTRIBUTORS: Keith Caulfield, Lela Cobo, Katie Hardy, Ivery M. Jones, Dan Duetlet, Michael Padetta, Jonathan Cohen, Chuck Taylor. Christina L. Titus, Philip Van Vleck, Ray Waddell
PICK A: A new release predicted to hit the folk half of the chart in the corresponding format.

CRITICS’ CHOICE #1: A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for purchase. All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and songs review copies to Chuck Taylor at Billboard, 770 Broadway, Sixth Floor, New York, NY 10003 or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

POP

RIHANNA Pon de Reap (3:37)
Producers:Vadu Nobles, Dan Rogers, Carl Sturken
Writers: various
Publishers: various
Def Jam (CD promo)
There is a reason why Rihanna’s debut single, “Pon de Reap,” has already catapulted into the top 40 on The Billboard Hot 100. This song is for the club and for the airwaves, and it is the perfect party anthem. Rihanna’s vocals are in top form, and the beat is infectious. This song is sure to be a hit on the dancefloor.—DEP

CHRISTIAN

MATTHEW WEST History
Producers: Kenny Greenberg, Jason Hood
Universal South
Release Date: June 14
Great concept albums are a rarity today, but on his sophomore Universal South set, Matthew West serves up a wonderful collection of songs that are intensely personal yet universal, connecting with emotions everyone can relate to. First single “Nothing” is a vibrant snapshot of the artist’s salvation experience and ensuing walk of faith. “The Day Before You” (previously recorded by Raschal Flatts) is a beautiful ballad penned for his wife, Emily, while “The Last Ones” is a poignant look at the hard work and determination inspired by a young girl with Down syndrome. West is an incredibly gifted songwriter and an engaging vocalist who knows how to communicate a lyric. He contends that all of our lives are history in the making, and while sharing his experiences through these songs, he reminds listeners that each decision they make shapes their own history.—DEP

ADDITIONAL REVIEWS:
- Graham Parker, “Signs of No Conclusion”
- Indigo Girls, “Melting Fades
- Orange Park, “Songs from the Unknown”

ROCK

INCUBUS Make a Move (3:12)
Producer: Brendan O’Brien
Publisher: Hungrykoya Music/EMI April Music (ASCAP)
Epix/Paramount/Sony (CD promo)
Incubus’ “Talk Shows on Mute” was a steady presence on modern Rock and Mainstream Rock charts last year, and “Megalomaniac” penetrated The Billboard Hot 100 in addition to those two lists. The band’s 2005 offering is part of this summer’s influx of movie-related music. “Make a Move” is on the soundtrack to action film “Steed.” The driving combination of Mike Einziger’s guitar and Ben Kenney’s bass, blended with Jose Pasillas’ slamming drums, puts the song in the vein of AC/DC’s “You Shook Me All Night Long,” and it’s an adrenaline kick where it counts.—CLT

DANCE

JODY WALTLEY Looking for a New Love (7:40)
Producer: not listed
Writers: J. Watley, A. Cymone
Publishers: various
Remixers: variety
Peace Biskuit/Curve Recordings (CD promo)
Jody Watley has wisely dusted off her newly 19-year-old chart-topper and invites today’s remixers to do their thing. Seven rugged mixes offer stylings from tribal and progressive house to electro and even a mash-up (“Looking for a New Love” by Jody Watley Vs. Alison Limerick) while mixes from Chus & Ceballos, ROCASound and Levon Vincent will cause damage on dancefloors. It is the percolating mash-up, with some raw, organic riffs, that gives the track the just-right jolt it needs—and deserves.—MP

www.americanradiohistory.com 43
JULY 20, 2005
The theatrical release of Palm Pictures’ “Gunner Palace” established this documentary as a darling among the art house crowd. For its June 28 DVD release, however, the studio is targeting a different demographic.

Joplin were to the Vietnam era, both hip-hop and country are to the war in Iraq.”

Eclipse, who hosts mix-tape program “The Halftime Show” on college station WNYU New York, says, “What better way for people to hear what’s have ‘Hava Nagila’ cut into programming or kind of crash conventional radio.”

The label will also target on-line and retail outlets, with promotional partners including AOL, Entertainment Weekly, Circuit City and Budweiser.

"When you look at the audience directly affected by the war (in Iraq), it isn’t necessarily the audience that was being reached through the art house circuit,” Palm Pictures GM Lisa Nishimura says.

To remedy this, Palm issued a vinyl record, produced by Chops and DJ Lt. Dan, to more than 450 DJs in the mix-tape community. Side A features clean and explicit versions of “Fresh Under Pressure,” a compilation of the freestyle raps of the soldiers in the film, which is also included on the DVD. Side B features sound bites from the documentary, including a two-part freestyle by Richmond “Hotline” Shaw.

“We’re really trying to use the music as a vehicle to start a dialogue about the war and refocus the project within the communities where a lot of these young men and women grew up and probably listened to these mix shows,” Palm Pictures radio promotions head Greg Seese says.

He hopes the project will inspire on-air discussion about the role of music during wartime: “What bands like Jefferson Airplane and Janis going on over there in the military than through music.”

SAY I DO to the July 12 release of New Line Records’ “Wedding Crashers” soundtrack. The film’s stars, Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn, are in good company with a coveted lineup that includes Spoon, Death Cab for Cutie, Rilo Kiley, Jimmy Eat World, Bloc Party and the Flaming Lips, who contributed the exclusive track “Mr. Ambulance Driver” to the New Line Films release (out July 15).

“It’s quintessential Flaming Lips and we’re incredibly proud to have an early look at their next record,” says soundtrack supervisor Jason Linn, who is executive VP of music development and head of New Line Records. The song will appear on the Warner Bros. Records act’s next studio effort, “At War With The Mystics,” expected in early 2006.

With quirky bonuses like Wilson and Vaughn’s rendition of “Hava Nagila” with the Klezmer Juice Band, Linn says New Line is looking to do “as much commercial-radio stunt promotion as we can” with the soundtrack. “We may Linn adds that summer festivals like the Vans Warped tour and Lollapalooza are also possible promotional venues.

Linn says the soundtrack is not only a souvenir from the film, but it also plays as a standalone compilation that captures a moment in time of what’s going on in music right now.”

A video for a remixed version of the Isley Brothers’ “Shout”—featuring a montage of clips from the film—is included on the enhanced CD.

MAD HOT: Veteran Broadway composer Joe Baker (Bakerboys: Music) and song-writer/performer Steven Lutvak teamed for the title song to Bulletproof Records/Rykos’s “Mad Hot Ballroom” soundtrack, due June 28. The whimsical scat tune leads an acoustic underscore of piano, guitar, marimba and percussion, also composed and produced by Baker.

Distributed by Paramount Classics and directed by Marily Agrello, the documentary about ballroom dancing in New York public schools has already charmed theatergoers in limited release. It opens nationwide July 4.
On a chart where Coldplay's "X&Y" becomes the first album in 10 weeks to take consecutive weeks at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Foo Fighters earn their biggest sales week and Backstreet Boys make a noteworthy return, many eyes will instead be riveted on an artist who had been absent from the list since February.

Seems Michael Jackson was in the news during the tracking week. Maybe you heard about it.

During the frame when he was acquitted of all the child molestation allegations brought against him, Jackson's solo albums sold a combined 22,000 copies. That might not sound like much, but it more than doubles his Nielsen SoundScan sum from the prior week.

The most conspicuous beneficiaries: "Number Ones," the hits set that re-enters the airplay chart for the first time since the Feb. 26 issue (No. 134, 9,000 copies, up 138%), and his monster album "Thriller," which re-enters Top Pop Catalog (No. 37, up 141%).

During the week the jury deliberated, Jackson's solo titles sold around 9,000 copies, about equal to what they sold during the week of closing arguments and about 1,000 more than he sold during the last full week of testimony.

A year ago, in the week ending June 20—after charges were filed but before the trial began—those same Jackson albums (minus boxed set "The Ultimate Collection," which would not hit stores until November) sold 10,500.

In the week that ended June 23, 2003, some four months after the broadcast of the ABC special that probed prosecutors' interest, Jackson's albums moved 13,000 copies, while 14,000 were sold in the comparable week of 2002, well before the hubbub began.

So, did this second round of allegations lessen his sales appeal, or are those smaller numbers a simple reflection of an artist who is 21 years removed from the biggest album of his career—which in his case just happens to be the biggest-selling studio album ever?

Consider this: In 1984, when "Thriller" spent 26 weeks in the top 10, including 15 of the 17 weeks it cracked at No. 1, 38 different artists placed albums in The Billboard 200's top 10. Of those 38, Jackson is one of only eight to notch 10 albums since the current decade began.

By sunset of June 14, the day after the verdicts were read, Michael was no longer the most talked about Jackson in Southern California, as the Los Angeles Lakers announced the return of basketball coach Phil Jackson.

In fact, neither Michael nor famous sibling Janet lay claim to being the best-selling Jackson of the SoundScan era, with ch began in 1991. During that span, he launched three No. 1 albums and sold 17.8 million copies of his combined solo titles; Janet scored three of her own chart-toppers and sales of 18.3 million.

Both all shy of country king Alan Jackson. He also owns a trio of Nos. 1 on The Billboard 200, and generated 31.6 million in album sales, ninth among all acts since 1991. I'm pretty sure he's not related—for one thing, he's taller than any of Joseph and Katherine's kids.

ROCK'S SOLID: First-day numbers had suggested that Backstreet Boys would score The Billboard 200's Hottest Shot Debut, but Foo Fighters came from behind, not only notching the band's best-ever sales week but making a serious run at No. 1.

Dave Grohl's group rakes 310,000 copies, just 12,000 shy of Coldplay and more than double the Foo's previous best (121,000, when fourth set "One by One" entered at No. 3).

In fact, there were but three weeks when Grohl's other band sold more. Nirvana's ground-breaking "Nevermind" rang 373,500 in Christmas week of 1991; "MTV Unplugged in New York" started with 311,000 in November 1994 and also hit 318,000 in that year's Christmas stanza.

A light June 21 release slate makes Coldplay's "X&Y" a good bet to hold at No. 1 a third week.

Of the last seven acts to top the big chart, the only second-week declines smaller than the band's 56% drop belonged to Rob Thomas (42%) and Bruce Springsteen (54%).

Backstreet Boys start at No. 3 with 291,000 sold, which is a far better post-peak-sum than most teen-fed acts ever see.

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The Billboard 200

**Chart Data for the week of July 2, 2005**

**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**

1. **Coldplay**
2. **Eminem**
3. **Toby Keith**
4. **Daughtry**
5. **Pink**
6. **Green Day**
7. **Shakira**
8. **Eminem**
9. **Coldplay**
10. **Eminem**
11. **Eminem**
12. **Eminem**
13. **Eminem**
14. **Eminem**
15. **Eminem**
16. **Eminem**
17. **Eminem**
18. **Eminem**
19. **Eminem**
20. **Eminem**

**ARTIST**

1. **Coldplay**
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18. **Eminem**
19. **Eminem**
20. **Eminem**

**Title**

1. **X&Y**
2. **Encore**
3. **A Moment Like This**
4. **American Idiot**
5. **Encore**
6. **American Idiot**
7. **In Your Honor**
8. **Danger Days**
9. **American Idiot**
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11. **Encore**
12. **Encore**
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14. **Encore**
15. **Encore**
16. **Encore**
17. **Encore**
18. **Encore**
19. **Encore**
20. **Encore**

**DISTRIBUTING LABEL (PRICE)**

1. **Atlantic**
2. **Interscope**
3. **Interscope**
4. **UMG**
5. **Interscope**
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20. **Interscope**

**SALES DATA COURTESY OF**

1. **Billboard**
2. **PolyGram**
3. **Atlantic**
4. **Interscope**
5. **UMG**
6. **Interscope**
7. **Interscope**
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20. **Interscope**

**Bestselling Albums of 2005**

1. **American Idol**
2. **American Idol**
3. **American Idol**
4. **American Idol**
5. **American Idol**
6. **American Idol**
7. **American Idol**
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19. **American Idol**
20. **American Idol**

**Data for week of July 2, 2005 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 62**

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ANTHONY HAMILTON
SOULIFE

THE LOST ALBUM FROM THE GRAMMY® NOMINATED SOUL SINGER THAT WENT UNRELEASED UNTIL NOW!

Features

BALL AND CHAIN &
LOVE AND WAR (FEATURING MACY GRAY)

IN STORES JUNE 28TH!

www.anthonyhamilton.com
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ATLANTIC
RHINO

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Label</th>
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| 1     | "Blessing"
      | Casting Crowns            | Casting Crowns                           | $16.98   |
| 2     | "I Am Not Alone"
      | Casting Crowns            | Casting Crowns                           | $16.98   |
| 3     | "Cry"
      | Casting Crowns            | Casting Crowns                           | $16.98   |
| 4     | "Healing"
      | Casting Crowns            | Casting Crowns                           | $16.98   |
| 5     | "Redeeming Love"
      | Casting Crowns            | Casting Crowns                           | $16.98   |

**ARTIST**

Casting Crowns

**Label**

Casting Crowns

**Price**

$16.98
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>3</td>
<td>Just a Lil Bit</td>
<td>Lifehouse (Atlantic)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>We Don't Talk Anymore</td>
<td>A Day To Remember (Epic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Thousand Years</td>
<td>Celine Dion (Sony BMG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>Jenn Bostic (RCA)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>I'm Gonna Miss You</td>
<td>Michael McDonald (RCA)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Livin' For A Song</td>
<td>The Killers (EMI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Calm Down</td>
<td>Kid Rock (Interscope)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Don't Speak Softly</td>
<td>Kate Voeck &amp; The Birds (S)</td>
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### ADULT CONTEMPORARY

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<td>Michael Weymouth (MCA)</td>
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<td>Somewhere Over You</td>
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<td>Live Like You Dying</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>One More Time</td>
<td>Joe Nichols (RCA)</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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<td>Michael McDonald (RCA)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Livin' For A Song</td>
<td>The Killers (EMI)</td>
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<td>Kid Rock (Interscope)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Kate Voeck &amp; The Birds (S)</td>
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<td>Kelly Clarkson (A&amp;M/Interscope)</td>
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<td><em>Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood</em></td>
<td>Faith Evans (Ultra/Atlantic)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><em>Let It Go When You're Ready</em></td>
<td>Kelly Clarkson (A&amp;M/Interscope)</td>
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<td><em>My Confession</em></td>
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<td><em>Kiss</em></td>
<td>Destinys Child (A&amp;M)</td>
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<td>Westlife (A&amp;M/Interscope)</td>
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<td><em>With You</em></td>
<td>Sarah Gorden (PolyGram/RCA)</td>
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<td><em>By Your Side</em></td>
<td>Mariah Carey (Epic/Sony)</td>
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### POP 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>Missy Elliott (G-Unit/Interscope)</td>
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<td>Gwen Stefani feat. No Doubt (Interscope)</td>
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<td><em>Bitchcraft</em></td>
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<td><em>Hate It Or Love It</em></td>
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<td><em>Lose Control</em></td>
<td>Outkast feat. B.o.B (Atlantic)</td>
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<td><em>Survivor</em></td>
<td>Destiny's Child (A&amp;M/Interscope)</td>
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### POP 100 HITS

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### HITPREDICTOR

- Chart Legend on Page 62
### TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

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### TOP BLUES ALBUMS

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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

Fat Joe notches his best sales week ever as "All or Nothing" bows at No. 4 on the R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. No. 6 on The Billboard 200. The set shifted 166,500 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan, with 39% of those sales coming from the R&B core panel of retailers. While the rapper has hit No. 2 on the R&B chart before, this is has best showing on the big chart. His previous high on The Billboard 200 came with 939,050 copies of "Don Cartagena," which also set his previous one-week sales record with slightly more than 106,000 when it opened at No. 7. Meanwhile, Fat Joe's new single, "Get It Poppin'," featuring Nelly, marches 14-17 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs.

—Raphael George
**HOT COUNTRY SONGS**

**TOP 20**

1. Fast Cars and Freedom [Rascal Flatts]
2. Memories of Us [Rascal Flatts]
3. Lot of Leavin' Left to Do [Dierks Bentley]
4. Somethin' More [Sugarland]
5. In the House [Kenny Chesney]
6. Mississipi Girl [Faith Hill]
7. If Something Should Happen [Daryle Singletary]
8. Goodbye Time [Brandy Clark]
9. Alcoholic [Brantley Gilbert]
10. Pickin' Wildflowers [Keith Urban]
12. That's What I Love About Sunday [Crissy Mogan]
13. Don't Worry About a Thing [Sheryl Crow]
14. My Sister [Bobby Pinon]
15. The Talkin' Song Repair Blues [Alan Jackson]
16. Do You Want Fries with That [Keith Urban]
17. Help Somebody [Van Zant]
18. Somebody's Hero [Pat Green]
19. Georgia Rain [Travis Book]
20. It's a Heartache [Trick Pony]

**WILD WEST SHOW**

1. 7 P.M. Sundown [Deana Carter]
2. Southern Bell [Jason Aldean]
3. Broken Bow Slides [Hank Williams Jr.]
4. Brown (C.Mayo)
5. DAY TRIpper (J.SPILLMAN,D.TURNBULL)

**COUNTRY SINGLES SALES**

1. Inside Your Heaven/Independence Day [Keith Urban]
2. If She Were Any Other Woman [Deana Carter]
3. Dream Big [Rascal Flatts]
4. Restless [Sugarland]
5. Hurt [Sugarland]
6. Over You [Rascal Flatts]
7. Baby Girl [Deana Carter]
8. By Yourself [Rascal Flatts]
9. Wild West Show [Rascal Flatts]
10. You Don't Lie Here Anymore [Deana Carter]

**HITPREDICTOR**

**AIRDATE/PLAY DATE**

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<th>Chart Rank</th>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLS**

w.jess@billboard.com

**FLATTS REVERSES POSITIONS WITH URBAN**

After losing a narrow battle to Keith Urban last issue, "Rascal Flatts" reclaims its fourth No. 1 single as "Fast Cars and Freecones" gains 931,000 audience impressions and rises 2-1. Urban's "Making Memories Of Us" slips to No. 2.

The trio previously logged time in the No. 1 spot with "These Days" (November 2002), "Dreamer" (April 2004) and "Bless the Broken Road," which dominated for five weeks this year, starting with the Feb. 12 issue.

**AMERICAN COUNTRY**

Among groups that have spent time atop the chart this decade, Rascal Flatts rises to second place. Lonestar has hit the bull's-eye seven times since 2000, while Diamond Rio and Dixie Chicks are tied for third place with three No. 1 singles during that frame.

Also of note is a No. 59 bow by "American Idol" winner Carrie Underwood, who starts with spins at 24 monitored stations.

**DATA FOR WEEK OF JULY 2, 2005**

For chart reprints call 646-654-4633.
### Latin Airplay

#### Pop

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#### Tropical

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### Latin Albums

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### Latin Singles

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### Regional Mexican

#### Airplay

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### Mexican Albums

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### Billboard Dance

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</table>

Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete chart data.
### JAPAN

**Singles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ベルベット・ノイ (First Limited Version)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ベルベット・ノイ (Original Version) 오스카리 센포르티</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ディスコランド</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ベルベット・ノイ (Original Version) 国家のエンターテイメント</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ラブ・パラダイス</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>イクレタチニカドーコバクシカン / ヒカル・エミヤ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ココノシキナサカナカナン</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>KI NI OCHITARA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>TONGARI KIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>несен</td>
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### UNITED KINGDOM

**Singles**

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<th>No.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>我校 F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SHOT YOU DOWN 球でプレイする</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE MONKEES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GIRLS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>FEEL GOOD INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>WHY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MRS. MILLER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>KATY TAYLOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>NUNCA Volvera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>RAINING AGAIN</td>
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### ITALY

**Singles**

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>INCOMPLETE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>UNA POESIA ANCHE PER TE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>LA TORTURA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SPEED OF SOUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I THING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>FEEL GOOD INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>HATE IT OR LOVE IT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### SPAIN

**Singles**

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LA TORTURA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SPEED OF SOUND</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I THING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>FEEL GOOD INC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>HATE IT OR LOVE IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>HORROR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>HATE IT OR LOVE IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SHAKIRA</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### SWITZERLAND

**Singles**

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AXEL F</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>THE CORNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GO &amp; TIGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>THE HAND THAT FEEDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>JUICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DUBI DAM DAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SHAKIRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
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### DENMARK

**Singles**

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<th>No.</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DUBI DAM DAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SHAKIRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>NUNCA Volvera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RAINING AGAIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>THE TAMPERED SONG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>UNA POESIA ANCHE PER TE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>DUBI DAM DAM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SWITZERLAND

**Singles**

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>UNA POESIA ANCHE PER TE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>SHAKIRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
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</tbody>
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### FINLAND

**Singles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>BANDY CALYPSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ROBERTO CARLOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE CORNER</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SHAKIRA</td>
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<tr>
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### GREECE

**Singles**

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MUSTA ILLEKI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NOT ENOUGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>THE CORNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BANDY CALYPSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ROBERTO CARLOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>THE CORNER</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

### HUNGARY

**Singles**

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NOT ENOUGH</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>THE CORNER</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BANDY CALYPSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ROBERTO CARLOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>THE CORNER</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>COLDPLAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>THE HAND THAT FEEDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTIST</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
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<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAMELA MANN</td>
<td>I'M NOT GIVING UP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMOKIE NORFOLK</td>
<td>ANOTHER DAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Moss</td>
<td>THE MOSS PROJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSISSIPPI MASTERS CHOIR</td>
<td>KEEPTALKING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHEKINI GLORY MINISTRY</td>
<td>LIVING sanitizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Moss</td>
<td>THE MOSS PROJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTHA MUNIZzi</td>
<td>NOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUBEN STUDDARD</td>
<td>IT'S MY LOVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOSPEL FACE</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISHOP G.E. PATTERSON &amp; CONGREGATION</td>
<td>EVERYDAY IS A PEACEFUL DAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLISS FOR YOU</td>
<td>THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPMAN JACOBA</td>
<td>A LITTLE LIGHT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ERIC CARRINGTON PROJECT</td>
<td>THE SINNERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE GOSPEL MIRACLES</td>
<td>(I'M IN) YOUR PRESENCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTIST</td>
<td>TITLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIOUS ARTISTS</td>
<td>IL DIVO</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAMELA MANN</td>
<td>I'M NOT GIVING UP</td>
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<td>SMOKIE NORFOLK</td>
<td>ANOTHER DAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>J Moss</td>
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<td>MISSISSIPPI MASTERS CHOIR</td>
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<td>LIVING sanitizing</td>
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<tr>
<td>J Moss</td>
<td>THE MOSS PROJECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTHA MUNIZzi</td>
<td>NOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUBEN STUDDARD</td>
<td>IT'S MY LOVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOSPEL FACE</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>BISHOP G.E. PATTERSON &amp; CONGREGATION</td>
<td>EVERYDAY IS A PEACEFUL DAY</td>
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<td>A LITTLE LIGHT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ERIC CARRINGTON PROJECT</td>
<td>THE SINNERS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Single Charts

**Radio Airplay Singles Charts**

Compared to a national sample of data compiled by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems, Charts are ranked by number of gross audience impressions, computed by cross-referencing exact stems of airing from Nielsen's data. The exceptions are the Rhythm Top 40, Adult Top 40, Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are tracked by direct methods.

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

**RECORD 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 rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs & Tracks and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs & Tracks for more than 10 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Pop and Top 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Pop100 for more than 30 weeks and rank below 30. Songs are removed from the Hot Country Singles & Tracks if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 15. Provided that they are still gaining enough spins to debut, songs are removed from the Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Adult R&B, and Hot Adult Rock Airplay charts if they have been on the chart for more than 16 weeks and rank below 15 (for Modern Rock).

**Singles Sales Charts**

The top 000 singles compiled from a national panel of retail stores, mass merchandisers, and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/Hip-Hop Songs Singles, sales data is compiled from a national subset panel of core R&B/Hip-Hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

Singles with the greatest sales gains.

**CONFINEMENTS**

- CD singles available
- Digital Download available
- Digital single available
- Vinyl Jazz Single available
- Vinyl Single available
- CD Max-Single available

### Hot Gospel Songs

Data for week of July 2, 2005

|-------|-------|------|--------------------------|------|---|----------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

### Album Charts

**Independent Albums**

- Independent Albums: Standards for release of 50,000 albums (CI/RIAA)
- RIAA certification for net shipment of 50,000 albums (Slate)
- RIAA certification for net shipment of 100,000 albums (Slate)
- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 albums for singles (Slate)
- RIAA platinum certification for sales of 100,000 units for singles
- RIAA platinum certification for sales of 200,000 units for singles
- RIAA platinum certification for sales of 500,000 units for albums
- RIAA multi-platinum certification for sales of 1 million units for albums
- RIAA diamond certification for sales of 10 million units for albums
- RIAA platinum certification for sales of 1 million units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 500,000 units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 1 million units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 2 million units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 3 million units for albums
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- RIAA gold certification for sales of 76 million units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 77 million units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 78 million units for albums
- RIAA gold certification for sales of 79 million units for albums
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Rosa Jaquez bbevents@billboard.com
646.654.4660

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SONGWRITERS

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BIRTHS
GIRL: Emmy Christine, to Ginger and Jimmy Matrangi, June 19 in Nashville. Father is fiddle player for bluegrass group the Grascals.

DEATHS
Ricky Allen, 70, of cardiac arrest, May 29 in Chicago. A staple of the Chicago soul/blues scene in the 1960s, Allen had only one hit on the Billboard R&B chart, but he helped pave the way to national success for local blues artists like Denise LaSalle.

Karl Mueller, bassist and founding member of the Minneapolis-based rock act Soul Asylum, died June 17 at his home. He was 41.

Diagnosed with throat cancer in May 2004, Mueller underwent radiation treatment and was in and out of the hospital in recent months.

In the early 1980s, Mueller formed Loud Fast Rules with singer/guitarist Dave Pirner and drummer Dan Murphy, a band that became Soul Asylum three years later. The band achieved mainstream success with its 1992 breakthrough, “Grave Dancers Union” (Columbia).

The album peaked at No. 11 on The Billboard 200 and has sold 2.1 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The set featured the single “Runaway Train,” which peaked at No. 5 on The Billboard Hot 100.

Mueller’s cancer was in remission in October when Minneapolis music scene veterans including the Replacements’ Paul Westerberg and Husker Du’s Bob Mould staged a benefit concert to help with spiraling medical costs. Mueller also joined his Soul Asylum bandmates for a performance at the show. Mueller is survived by his wife and mother. Donations can be made to the Karl Mueller Memorial Fund, c/o Smith Barney, 345 St. Peter St., 1800 Landmark Towers, St. Paul, Minn. 55102-1637.

—Barry A. Jeckell

Soul Asylum’s Karl Mueller, 41

Hits can be found on compilations from Storyville and Fuel 2000. Allen enjoyed recent festival dates in Sweden and Canada and in 2002 played at the Chicago Blues Festival. He is survived by his wife and two children.

Georgie Woods, 78, of a heart attack, June 18 in Boynton Beach, Fla. The legendary radio personality is credited with introducing Philadelphia to the Temptations and Stevie Wonder as a DJ with the city’s WDAS-AM and WHAT-AM in the 1950s and 1960s.

Woods, who also helped book then-newcomers James Brown and Aretha Franklin at Philadelphia’s landmark Uptown Theater, marched with Martin Luther King Jr. and helped charter buses for Philadelphians to attend King’s historic 1963 march on Washington, D.C. He served as a VP of the local NAACP chapters and in 1967 ran for city council, narrowly losing after a recount.

Woods will be inducted into the Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame in November.

FOR THE RECORD
In the June 18 issue, the number of Napster subscribers was incorrectly listed in the story “The Digital Future Is Not Here Yet.” Napster has 410,000 subscribers.

Contrary to an article on Creative Commons in the May 28 issue, the amicus brief filed by Creative Commons in the Grokster case before the Supreme Court did not list as supporters the artists whose music was on a Wired magazine CD. The amicus brief only cited the artists as examples of those who have used a Creative Commons license.

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The Nashville Songwriters Ass'n international raised $25 million to help fight global hunger and poverty. The group, led by ASCAP, BMI and SESAC, included country, pop, rock and rap songwriters. The event, which included a special concert at the Ryman Auditorium, was attended by A-list artists and executives from the music industry. The evening concluded with a performance by Garth Brooks, who received the ASCAP Founders Award for his work on the hit song "The Dance." The night also featured performances by Dolly Parton, Reba McEntire, and Kenny Chesney, among others. The event was sponsored by the Recording Industry Association of America and benefitting the United Nations World Food Program. The night was hosted by ABC News' George Stephanopoulos and included a special message from President Bush, who congratulated the songwriters for their efforts to help feed the world.

Jr. Paddy's organization World Hunger Year celebrated its 20th anniversary, with a special concert at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee. The event honored those who have made a difference in the fight against global hunger and poverty, including artist Michael McDonald, ASCAP's Marilyn Bergman and Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt. The gala concluded with a surprise award presentation, which was attended by A-list artists and executives from the music industry. The evening concluded with a performance by Garth Brooks, who received the ASCAP Founders Award for his work on the hit song "The Dance." The night also featured performances by Dolly Parton, Reba McEntire, and Kenny Chesney, among others. The event was sponsored by the Recording Industry Association of America and benefitting the United Nations World Food Program. The night was hosted by ABC News' George Stephanopoulos and included a special message from President Bush, who congratulated the songwriters for their efforts to help feed the world.

The music industry's top executives gathered May 4 in Los Angeles for "May 4," an event to kick off a special fundraising campaign by the Music & Entertainment Industry Support Group. The initiative will culminate with an Oct. 20 gala honoring Clear Channel's Mark drills, who hosted the event. The evening featured performances by A-list artists and executives from the music industry, including Garth Brooks, who received the ASCAP Founders Award for his work on the hit song "The Dance." The night concluded with a surprise award presentation, which was attended by A-list artists and executives from the music industry. The event was sponsored by the Recording Industry Association of America and benefitting the United Nations World Food Program. The night was hosted by ABC News' George Stephanopoulos and included a special message from President Bush, who congratulated the songwriters for their efforts to help feed the world.
in Blender magazine. Between such activity, Bice has been laying down tracks for his debut album, which includes his remake of Ives of March's "Vehicle," accompanied by Bon Jovi guitarist Richie Sambora. And that rumor that the 'Idol' graduate might collaborate with Carlos Santana on a track for the new Santana album? Track hears that it is now fast, with the song completed and in the can.

BOONE'S GOSPEL

Yea, that's Bono you hear on Pat Boone's "Thank You Billy Graham," a tribute track to the revered reverend. But he's not the only guest: LeAnn Rimes, Kenny Rogers, Michael McDonald, Jeffrey Osborne, Billy Dean, David Pack and Larry King also make their voices heard. And yes, each guest artist appears in the song's video. The track is included on Boone's new gospel album, "Glory Train: The Lost Sessions," due Aug. 9 from RED/distributed the Gold Label/Oak Records.

BABY RASTA MAKES GROWN-UP DEAL

Major labels cannot get enough of reggae. The latest signing is rapper-producer Baby Rasta, who 'Track understands has inked a joint venture deal with Universal Music Latino. Baby Rasta, formerly of Baby Rasta & Gringo, will release his solo album, "La Ultima Risa," on Universal through his own illegal label. He is seeking new artists to sign to Illegal Life and is currently producing tracks for a variety of acts, including Chaka and Ginny.

MOVING ON

Marillyn Snyder tells 'Track that his last day at Virgin Records is June 24. As the label's senior director of publicity, Snyder worked with several key artists, including Janet Jackson, Brooke Valentine, Guerilla Black and Ricky Fanté. Snyder says he is leaving to pursue other opportunities.

DISTURBED SHOTS

Disturbed will headline the Jagermeister Music tour, which will run from early November through mid-February. Routing is not yet complete, but the tour will likely play intimate venues with multiple dates in major markets.

GOOD WORKS

Paul Shaffer is organizing a benefit concert for Mike Smith, lead singer of the Dave Clark Five, who was permanently crippled in an accident in 2003 in his home in Spain. Two shows are planned for Aug. 2 at B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in New York. Popular Beatles tribute band the Fab Fauxs and the Zombies are confirmed for the British invasion-themed concert, along with Peter & Gordon, who have not publicly played together in 35 years. Other iconic British rockers from the '60s are being considered for the show. If all goes as planned, the benefit concert will be turned into a TV special and DVD release, which would mean additional funds for Smith.

Boone's new gospel album, "Glory Train: The Lost Sessions," due Aug. 9 from RED/distributed the Gold Label/Oak Records.
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