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HOT PARTY TRACKS
HOT COUNTRY ALBUMS
HOT BLUEGRASS ALBUMS
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CONNECT!
Sept. 26
Moscone West
San Francisco
Indie Labels Are Seeking Their Fair Share

BY DON ROSE

Independence is about spirit. The spirit of entrepreneurship. The spirit of innovation. And it’s about passion for music. The independent music sector has introduced, developed and nurtured nearly every new musical form that has affected our society since the beginnings of the recording industry. In the present day—perhaps more than ever—the independents are essential to the continuing progression of cultural diversity and innovation in music.

The American Assn. of Independent Music (AAIM) was formed in June to address the concerns of indie labels and provide advancement opportunities for its member companies. AAIM represents a broad coalition of labels that support principles of fair trade and equal access to media and the marketplace. We believe strongly that a healthy independent sector is vital for the music industry at large.

The first exercise at hand as we define the strategy is “to do the math,” because an accurate reflection of the size and scope of the indie label sector is fundamental to pursuing the AAIM objectives.

If one defines the independent music sector by label ownership rather than distribution—all those who control their own destinies—the Nielsen SoundScan market share for independents would be 27.25% (year-to-date, through the week ending July 3).

However, because the current definition, as adopted by Nielsen SoundScan and Billboard, identifies indie labels according to their distribution partners, the indie share is shown as only 18.3%. This is because many indie labels are distributed by one of the four majors, in whose market share their labels are included.

We believe that this is an old, obsolete paradigm.

To further confound matters: Each of the major companies (Universal Music Group, Sony BMG, Warner Music Group and EMI) has an alternative distribution channel that caters to indie labels (Fontana, RED, Alternative Distribution Alliance and Caroline, respectively). The “FRAC” distributors provide a valuable service to the independent music community, but their existence is only one of many anomalies under the current system.

Indie labels are considered indies for the purposes of SoundScan data and Billboard charts only if they are marketed by a FRAC distributor, an affiliated distributor or no distributor at all. An indie label distributed by any of the majors’ primary distribution arms will have its market share included in that major’s share—regardless of the indie’s preference.ATO, Concord, Curb, Disney, Razor & Tie, Wind-up, Rounder, Rounder, Sanctuary and Univation Music Group are some examples of such embedded indie labels.

This status quo represents an institutional bias against the indie sector, distorting its scope and impact for all who depend on accurate information.

In an ideal world, of course, there would be no need to distinguish between majors and indies in the first place. Record companies would compete in an environment where all great music would have equal opportunity to rise to the top of the charts.

But indie records are pragmatic as well as idealistic. So, since the marketplace tends to segregate on the basis of size, let’s allow the market share report to reflect truthfully the considerable size and impact of the indie sector.

It is time to update the definition of “indie label.” It simply no longer works to be identified by the method (of physical) distribution, particularly since the constitutions of the FRAC Centers have long since blurred any distinction based on distribution ownership. Command over one’s destiny should be the key to independence, after all.

Open the definition to every record label in America that is not owned wholly or in combination by one of the four majors, in whose market share their labels are included.

Under AAIM’s proposal, Bienna Vista Music Group—which is distributed by Universal Music & Video Distribution—would be deemed independent, even though its labels are owned by Walt Disney, a major entertainment corporation. Should such a large player be considered independent simply because it is not owned by one of the four major labels?

None of this is to suggest that AAIM’s proposal is without merit, nor that Billboard and its data partners at Nielsen Music are unwilling to consider new ways to measure the independent landscape. It is just that the approach to a busy intersection requires a careful look in all directions before we cross the street.

Don Rose is acting president of the American Assn. of Independent Music.

OPINION EDITORIALS / COMMENTARY / LETTERS

INDIE LABELS ARE SEEKING THEIR FAIR SHARE

BY DON ROSE

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BILLBOARD RESPONDS:

We agree that there is more than one way to define “independent,” and we’ve heard opinions similar to Don Rose’s from some of the label’s he mentions. But we want Billboard’s readers and Nielsen SoundScan’s subscribers to consider some other consequences to the suggested changes.

The decision to determine a title’s independent status by distribution route dates to December 1985, when the Warner Music Group bought a stake in Tommy Boy Records. Despite the change in ownership, most of the label’s albums continued to be distributed by independents. Thus, Billboard continued to define Tommy Boy as an independent label.

Billboard and Nielsen SoundScan could change this approach and provide a new perspective on independent market share. We could alter the rules governing the Top Independent Albums chart.

But that would not change the reality of today’s market. A fact of retail life is that albums included in a major distributor’s catalog have a distinct advantage over indie-distributed titles in terms of gaining shelf space and ad programs from large chains.

Rose’s suggested parameters would yield a larger indie market share, but that same criteria would make it harder for pure independents—including those sold through FRAC wholesalers—to compete on a chart that includes Curb, Razor & Tie, Univation and the like.

Let your colleagues know what’s on your mind. Send letters to Ken Schlager, Executive Editor, Billboard, 770 Broadway, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10003, or e-mail to letters@billboard.com. Include name, title and address and phone number for verification. Letters should be concise and may be edited. All submissions published shall become the sole property of Billboard, which shall own the copyright in whole or part, for publication.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Yahoo Rolls Out Digital Music Search Engine

First it was photos, then video, now music.

Yahoo is the first major portal to introduce a search engine dedicated to finding music and other audio files on the Internet. The Aug. 3 launch is the latest effort by Yahoo and other Internet search portals to organize the growing number of multimedia files on the Web.

One of the key features of the new search tool is its ability to scan the music libraries of almost all legitimate online services selling digital tracks. To do so, Yahoo struck individual deals with more than 15 music services—including iTunes, MSN Music, Napster, Rhapsody and Yahoo Music Unlimited—to aggregate their catalogs into a searchable index. Independent publishers can submit content to the index through Media RSS. Yahoo says its search results page will not give preferential treatment to any individual provider, including Yahoo Music Unlimited. Results are listed in alphabetical order by service provider.

“Our always felt that being unbiased was part of the search mission,” says Bradley Horowitz, director of technology and development for Yahoo Search. He says the music search engine breaks down the walls between services and “lets you peer over to see what everybody has.”

To download any song, users must install the appropriate software for the given music service. But the search tool includes a feature that identifies the user’s preferred music service and provides a one-click connection to that service in the search results. Yahoo seems intent on supplanting the internal search tool included with individual digital music services by listing its sources for files that the preferred service may not include and providing access to other types of links that may be of interest. For example, it allows users to narrow results to podcasts or open the search to any file posted online, whether for download or streaming access—including artist Web sites, audio blogs and fan sites.

“There’s a lot of value for an iTunes customer to come in and use this product,” Horowitz says. “We can do a lot of things that are very cool that iTunes can’t.”

The audio search engine is available in a public beta test version via next.yahoo.com.  

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R&B/HIP-HOP  
BY GAIL MITCHELL

Usher, 50 Cent Top R&B Awards

ATLANTA—Representing the best of R&B and hip-hop, Usher and 50 Cent tied for top winner at the Billboard-American Urban Radio Networks 2005 R&B/Hip-Hop Awards. The popular artists each earned three statuettes. Tied at two awards each were Mario and Alicia Keys. Jonathan "Lil Jon" Smith, who led the field as a finalist in five categories, earned kudos as top R&B/hip-hop producer.

The Aug. 5 ceremony, staged at the Compound night-club in Atlanta, wrapped the sixth annual Billboard-AURN R&B/Hip-Hop Conference, which began Aug. 3. This was the first time the conference and awards show were held in Atlanta; previous sites were Miami and New York.

Usher’s wins included top R&B/hip-hop artist, male artist and singles artist. 50 Cent’s “The Massacre” landed him plaudits for top R&B/hip-hop album and albums artist, plus top rap album.

Keys was awarded statuettes for top R&B/hip-hop songwriter and female artist. Mario’s R&B/pop No. 1 crossover single “Let Me Love You” earned accolades for top R&B/hip-hop single and single (airplay).

Fantasia and the Game were first-time R&B/hip-hop award winners. Fantasia’s “I Believe” was top R&B/hip-hop single (sales). The Game claimed the new R&B/hip-hop artist award. Destiny’s Child, which is disbanded after wrapping its current tour in September, was awarded top R&B/hip-hop duo or group.

Interscope wrested the title of top R&B/hip-hop major label from last year’s winner, Island Def Jam Music Group. Repeating as the top independent label continued on >>p6

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LONDON—T-Mobile International’s groundbreaking Pan-European deal with EMI Music and its British star Robbie Williams signals the expectations that telecom operators and record labels have for their future mobile phone service. The 18-month partnership, announced July 27, is one of the longest and geographically broadest agreements involving an operator and a major-label act. Under the deal, T-Mobile — with 60 million customers in nine European markets — will have the mobile phone exclusive on all EMI content related to the artist. In exchange, T-Mobile will support campaigns for Williams’ forthcoming album, scheduled for release later this year, and any possible tours. Financial details were not disclosed.

As one of the first-ever contracts for this length of time, it will be a great way for the two businesses to work closely together and signpost the way forward for other artists,” says John Leahy, the London-based marketing and creative director for EMI Records U.K. “Clinching the deal for Williams is management company J.E. Music. Among other offerings, T-Mobile will provide full-track downloads, streamed live concerts, ringtones, master ringtones, cell-phone wallpaper and logos, and possibly downloads of previously unreleased recordings. “We wanted a partner able to drive as many exclusives as possible,” Leahy says. Analysts see significance in the scope of the deal. “I don’t recall any other operator doing such a deal with an artist for such a long period of time,” says Thomas Hussein, Jupiter Research’s mobile analyst in Paris. Amsterdam-based Paul Jackson, principal analyst at Forrester Research, says 18 months is a long period “for an artist to give himself to such a band.” But he believes Williams will gain from it, because “it never hurts an artist to be associated with a complementary brand; there is nothing about T-Mobile that could be detrimental.”

The full-track download offerings, T-Mobile’s first, will kick off this fall in Germany, followed by other European markets. T-Mobile’s pricing will be similar to existing services in Germany, where master ringtones cost 2.49 euros ($3.03) each, videos are 1.99 euros ($2.42) and wallpaper downloads run 1.49 euros ($1.81). The cost of Williams’ full-track downloads has yet to be announced. Under the deal, Williams’ material will be embedded on Sony Ericsson’s new W800i Walkman handsets, said to be capable of storing the equivalent of more than 10 CDs. The units are due this month.

The entire venture will be supported by a Pan-European T-Mobile TV campaign featuring Williams early next year. Sources say that T-Mobile’s advertising agency, “This partnership underpins our commitment to step up our engagement in the music space,” says Bonn-based Ulli Gritzuhn, T-Mobile International’s chief marketing officer, “Robbie Williams’ broad target audience and the appeal of music are a pull for mobile phones.”

Leahy notes that EMI is not locked in with T-Mobile for its other acts. “We’re always talking to different operators,” he says.

R&B/HIP-HOP AWARDS (cont.)

from >>p5

was TVT.

Chiaka Khan and A Tribe Called Quest were this year’s Founders Awards honorees in R&B and hip-hop, respectively. These special awards acknowledge achievements by pioneering artists. Previous recipients are Isaac Hayes, KRS-One, Betty Wright, Grandmaster Flash, the Isley Brothers and Afrika Bambaataa. Rounding out the evening were energetic performances by Ying Yang Twins, Puffy Koo, Chris Brown and Keyshia Cole, as well as guest appearances by Donell Jones, De La Soul, Jiggedy Edge and Essence magazine co-founder Clarence Smith.

www.billboard.biz/atlanta

The Billboard team’s complete R&B/Hip-Hop Conference coverage

Comprising 17 categories, the Billboard-AURN R&B/Hip-Hop Awards honor the most popular albums, songs and artists, as well as the top songwriters, producers and major/independent labels. The awards are based on sales data from Nielsen SoundScan and radio airplay information from Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Finalists and winners reflect the performance of recordings on the Billboard R&B/hip-hop and rap charts during the period from the May 29, 2004, issue through the May 21, 2005, issue. New artists are those who have not appeared on a Billboard album chart prior to the March 27, 2004, issue or have not been a new artist finalist in the past.

For a complete list of winners from the 2005 Billboard-AURN R&B/Hip-Hop Awards, visit billboardevents.com.
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**Philippines**

**HALF-MILLION DACS**

More than 500,000 pirated optical discs were seized during a violent, multiforce raid in the Philippines, according to the Motion Picture Assn. In the July 29-30 raids, 440 law enforcement officers and support personnel served 123 search warrants, seizing discs and related equipment valued at $1 million, the MPA says. The piracy rate in the Philippines is estimated at 89% of available product, among the highest in the world.

—Susan Butler

**STUDIOS GET THEIR LAWSUITS ON**

Major motion picture studios filed four lawsuits Aug. 12 in Texas against individuals sharing unauthorized copies of movies through peer-to-peer services. Motion Picture Assn. of America worldwide anti-piracy director John Malcolm says, “With these lawsuits, our message to Internet thieves becomes loud and clear: ‘You can click, but you can’t hide.’ ”

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**BUSH SIGNS CAFTA**

President Bush on Aug. 2 signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement, setting in place stronger intellectual-property protections for the entertainment industry in that region and forging a template for future free-trade pacts. CAFTA will lift trade barriers and tariffs between the United States and El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

—Bill Holland

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**Tierra Caliente Heats Up**

Southern Mexican Dance Music Heads To Top Of Latin Albums Chart

**Philippines**

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**HMV, Virgin To Relaunch U.K. Download Services**

LONDON — Retail British retailers HMV and Virgin will mark their turf in the digital space next month.

Both heavyweights plan to relaunch their digital music services, but in an increasingly crowded online marketplace, will it make any difference?

Mark Mulligan, U.K.-based senior analyst/research director at Jupiter Research, thinks so. “There’s a very strong realm for traditional retailers in that they’ve got strong brand affinity with customers, strong retailing and programming expertise,” he says.

He calls the two retailers’ plans to lure customers online “very carefully timed. There’s no point getting into the market too early.”

Richard Branson’s London-based music and entertainment specialty division Virgin Retail plans to relaunch its download service Sept. 2, just three days before HMV does the same.

Britain’s download business—the most advanced in Europe—has been a fruit in the past 12 months. The Trade association the British Phonographic Industry recently published figures indicating that more than 10 million legitimate downloads were purchased by Britons in the first half of the year.

In 2004, with Apple Computer’s dominant iTunes Music Store opening for business, the United Kingdom saw 5.7 million downloads sold. It’s way too early to be talking about this market being either saturated or mature. It’s at a very early stage,” Mulligan says.

HMV and Virgin are the power players in Britain’s download market. HMV grabbed a 24.7% share of the single market last year, compared with Virgin’s 22.5% stake, according to figures collated by charts compiler Millward Brown for the TNS Audio Visual Trak survey. During the same period, HMV had a 22.6% share of the albums market to Virgin’s 10.2%.

The BPI welcomes the online push. “The combination of well-known brand names and what are expected to be significant marketing campaigns will further drive growth in a U.K. download market which is already growing at a phenomenal rate,” a BPI spokesman says.

One industry notes that the relaunched services focus on selling music, rather than on driving sales of digital music players—a core strand in Apple’s online music strategy.

HMV and Virgin already have online services in place, but the September relaunches represent the retailers’ intentions to get serious in the digital space.

“At the end of the day, it doesn’t really matter who launches first, as digital customers will ultimately only care about who has the best, easy-to-use service and the greatest range of recordings,” HMV head of digital Mark Bennett says.

Virgin Megastores U.K. marketing director Steven Kinscald says his company’s strong brand and heritage in retailing will underpin its goal to “become the ultimate download destination.”

Across the English Channel, France’s Virgin Mega and Fnac have already translated their retail brands into online real estate. The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry pointed to their online affiliates in its 2005 Digital Music Report as pillars of France’s nascent download market.

Virgin and HMV will re-up their online ambitions under the brands Virgin Digital and HMV Digital, respectively. Both sites will be powered by MusicNet. The chains plan to leverage their brands with record labels of live in-store performances that will be available for purchase through their respective download stores. Neither company has announced pricing details.

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LEGISLATION  
BY BILL HOLLAND

**Senator Puts P2Ps On Notice**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As Congress adjourned for its annual August recess, a clearly peeved senior Senate Republican leader warned peer-to-peer Internet companies that they better come up with new file-sharing standards or face legislation to regulate their practices.

The comments by Alaska senator Ted Stevens follow the Supreme Court’s 9-0 ruling June 27 that anyone who distributes P2P software with the intent of promoting copyright infringement is liable for its users’ actions (Billboard, July 9).

Stevens, the no-nonsense co-chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, also said he would have help from the other side of the aisle in such legislation.

Referring to committee member Barbara Boxer, a liberal Democratic senator from California and a music industry ally, Stevens cautioned: “Sen. Boxer and I rarely agree, but when we do, I think people ought to listen. At a July 28 hearing, witnesses from the content community and legitimate online music services suggested letting the lower courts interpret unanswered questions about liability in the Supreme Court’s ruling before moving ahead with any legislation.

Still, Stevens seemed steamed at the losses the music and movie communities have sustained because of P2P networks. He said that other lawmakers have prodded him to develop a bill that followed up on the Supreme Court decision.

“If you’re listening,” he barked to Adam Eisgrau, a lobbyist representing P2P companies including Grokster and the Electronic Freedom Foundation. Recording Industry Assn. of America chair- man/CEO Mitch Bain- wol dismissed a plan Eisgrau offered for a summit meeting to foster a voluntary collective licensing agreement with P2Ps as “a scheme.”

“That sounds good, but it doesn’t work,” he said. “There is no practical way to follow that suggestion. It’s a dodge.”

Stevens, speaking to Eisgrau, said he held the hearing “to listen to you, to see if there’s any indication” that the P2P companies have a plan to modify their behavior. He said he had heard little.

“We’ve got to find some way to meet this concept to protect our intellectual prop- erty,” he said. “We can hardly accuse the people abroad of stealing our intellectual prop- erty if we can’t protect it at home. That’s the message we have to give you.”

After the hearing, Bainwol told Billboard, “The chairman did what he does best—he cut through the fog of misinformation and put the bad actors within the P2P community on sharp notice to go legit or face the consequences. His pa- tience has obviously worn out. I’m hopeful we’ll see a volun- tary response quickly.”

Stevens carries a lot of weight on the Hill. In his role as president pro tempore, he presides over the Senate in the absence of the vice president and is third in the line of suc- cession for the presidency.

Stevens said he will hold a second P2P hearing this fall with an additional focus on child pornography and spyware related to P2P activity.

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**Print Publishers Keep Classic Repertoire Alive**

Recently a jazz lover told me about his frustration in trying to find old jazz to listen to. He was worried that the music is lying on libraries’ shelves, destined to be forever lost for future generations.

Print publishers, who generate a relatively small portion of overall revenue for music publishers, may be the saving grace.

“We’ve been transcribing jazz like mad,” says Keith Mardak, CEO/chairman of Hal Leonard Corp. He says they are working on pieces by all of the piano guys, guitar guys and sax guys.

“We’re living in a time where we’re losing a lot of those guys—they’re getting up there in years,” presi- dent/COO Larry Morton adds. “We’re transcribing all that music that’s never been put into print.”

Among their jazz collections are works by Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans and Stan Getz.

The company will also be taking a virtual bow with Music Theater International, which has rights to create stud- ent productions of classic Disney films.

The new “Disney’s Kids Collection” offers 30-minute theatrical adaptations for “less experienced casts” through the ninth grade to perform in their classrooms or school theaters. Showkits for “Cinderella,” “101 Dalma- tians” and “The Jungle Book” include a director’s guide, vocal/accompaniment CD, piano score, choreography DVD, script sections and a parent’s guide to the rehearsal and performance process. They sell for $395 with a li- cense to perform the produc- tion for about a year.

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**Showcasing New Talent**

Advertising Business To Get A Look At “Who’s Next”

NEW YORK—The advertising industry will get a first-hand look at top new music talent this fall as Billboard hosts its second annual Adver- tising Week showcase here.

The event—titled Yahoo Who’s Next Music Showcase Presented by Billboard—is part of the magazine’s special role in New York’s annual celebration of the advertising industry. Adver- tising Week will run Sept. 26-30 at locations throughout the city.

The Billboard showcase will take place Sept. 27 at the B.B. King Blues Club & Grill. Co-produced with the Mecantine Entre- tainment Group, the live show will provide an opportunity for up-and-coming artists to perform at an invitation-only audience of advertising and media agency personnel. A limited number of Who’s Next show- case slots for signed recording artists remain available. To secure a slot, send a CD and press kit to Ed Miecon, Advertising Week in New York City, c/o Yahoo, 45 West 18th St., 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Billboard will also host a panel discus- sion of music’s role in advertising. The session, featuring top ad and music indus- try executives, will take place Sept. 27 at a venue to be announced.

Admission to the panel is free for Bill- board readers, but seats are limited. Con- tact Joe Knaus at 646-654-4634 to reserve a seat.
EA Scores One For New Music With ‘Madden’

“Madden NFL” is one of the most successful videogame series in the Electronic Arts oeuvre. And—as is the case with most EA titles—music is an integral part of its appeal. “We have a great track record with this game,” EA worldwide executive of music and audio Steve Schnur tells Billboard. “People come to ‘Madden’ for the game itself, but they also have high expectations for the music.”

Gamers rely on Schnur and the powerful gaming company to deliver new and breakthrough music. With the Aug. 9 release of “Madden NFL 06,” EA is upping the ante.

The game’s 21 featured songs, in addition to various remixes by Da Riffs, will receive much play at stadiums during NFL games. Additionally, Schnur says the music will be incorporated into NFL Films projects. “You’ll also see a major band from ‘Madden’ past perform at the upcoming NFL kickoff game between the Patriots and the Raiders,” he adds.

The reality is this: Kids are discovering sports through videogames. This is forcing the live game to go virtual, resulting in the integration of the entire experience. We would not be surprised if NFL execs are wondering whether the on-field action sounds enough like the videogame.

To be sure, because of the success of the “Madden” series, there has been a deeper integration of music and entertainment into the actual sport. That explains why more artists and bands—labels, managers and publishers, too—want to work with EA.

“For emerging and veteran acts alike, videogames have become the new radio in terms of launching new music,” one major-label executive says. “Videogames take chances with new music where radio does not.” Such words take on added meaning in light of the recent payola revelations.

“Madden NFL 06” finds Schnur bringing together music from such newer acts as Avenged Sevenfold, Fall Out Boy and Funeral for a Friend—all making major-label debuts—and more established bands like Foo Fighters, Disturbed and Godsmack.

Disturbed is offering an exclusive track, “Ten Thousand Fists.” So is Godsmack, who contributed “Bring It On.”

On the hip-hop front, the game spotlights tracks by K.D. Jay and protégé Bump J, West Coast rapper Spider Loc (who is part of S.O.Cert’s G-Unit family), Eminem discovery Stat Quo, Memphis Bleek and others.

A track like Rev. Run’s “Mind on the Road” perfectly merges the worlds of rock and hip-hop. For many bands, hearing their song for the first time in a videogame has replaced the excitement of hearing it first on the radio.

“With the kind of rotation—usage—and distribution they have, videogames rival radio play,” Disturbed lead singer David Draiman says. “And because a broad spectrum of ages play games repeatedly, the amount of exposure a band receives is phenomenal.”

According to Schnur, “Madden NFL 06” is expected to sell 7 million units. On average, 2.5 people play each sports game sold—and each game is played between 50 and 90 hours per enthusiast. With software that rotates and IDs songs, “Madden NFL 06” offers much crucial mainstream exposure for the featured artists.

In a few months’ time, one song can receive nearly $1 billion spins, Schnur claims. (Featured artists are further promoted on the EA Web site, ea.com.)

This game marks the first time Disturbed has given a song exclusively to one videogame. The fact that it is the title track of Disturbed’s new album (due Sept. 20 from Reprise) holds special significance for the band. Draiman says, “But ‘Madden’ is a force to reckon with.”

Previous in-game soundtracks in the “Madden” series have introduced tracks from Green Day, Blink-182, Yellowcard, Good Charlotte, Jet and Ozzomatik.

Schnur says he likes to get on tracks early: “We use our real estate to champion these bands.” With more than 3,000 submissions from around the world for the new “Madden” title, the stakes are high. “Everyone wants to be in the ‘Madden’ game,” he continues. “It becomes an integral part of the marketing plan for labels.”

Indeed, while videogames have not replaced radio, radio is simply not as critical to today’s youth. Videogames occupy a space previously filled by CDs, radio, music video networks and other forms of entertainment.

In other words, Avenged Sevenfold manager Larry Jacobson of World Audience in Los Angeles says, “Videogames are an impactful way to reach the youth audience. They expose kids to new music within a very active experience. The benefits are many.”

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Kmart And Target Ads Get Hip With Under-The-Radar Acts

K mart has gone cutting-edge with a back-to-school TV campaign that uses a revolving door of hip music from under-the-radar acts like OK Go and Fannypack.

Meanwhile, rival Target—which is already perceived as a cool brand—is incorporating similarly edgy sounds in its back-to-college “webisode” series.

For Kmart, the goal is to create a youthful image by utilizing “undiscovered talent,” Kmart VP of advertising Jon Gieselman says. The retailer’s accompanying print campaign features real kids in real situations.

According to Gieselman, the TV spots required music that was equally fresh and real: “Music that speaks to kids.”

For the campaign, which launched last month, Kmart and ad agency Grey Worldwide also have licensed music from Fuzz Townshend, Super Preachers and others.

Also part of the mix is a “garage-band spot” with Winona Riders’ cover of Kim Wilde’s early-80s top 30 hit “Kids in America.” Grey senior VP/director of music Josh Rabinowitz says.

Rabinowitz—who works alongside Grey music producers Jaret Schlemovitz and Lauriana Zuluaga and Grey music supervisor/director of licensing Amy Rosen on the Kmart ads—sees significance in Kmart’s approach. “We’re talking about a mainstream brand taking a non-mainstream approach to its TV spots,” he says.

Since January, Kmart has employed a unique strategy of changing its TV spots on a weekly basis—with each one featuring a different piece of licensed music. Rabinowitz calls it “52 songs in 52 weeks.”

While the Kmart ads come and go in seven days, artists, managers and labels hope that the music resonates for much longer.

OK Go manager Jamie Kitman, president of the Hornblow Group USA in Nyack, N.Y., confirms that there has been an uptick in interest in OK Go since Kmart ran the spot that used the band’s song “Here It Goes Again.”

But Kitman views such interest as “seed planting” rather than “watering it.”

For maximum impact, Kitman and others stress that a long-term ad campaign is needed.

The ad’s real impact on OK Go will not be truly felt until Aug. 30, when the band’s sophomore album, “Oh No,” arrives from Capitol. It includes “Here It Goes Again.”

For its back-to-college campaign, Target is using a six-part webisode series of mini-films called “Odds Against 7even,” which can be seen at target.com and oddsagainst7even.com.

Produced by the Peterson Mills Hooks ad agency, the webisodes spotlight the sounds of Bloc Party, the 22-20s, the Hold Steady, British Sea Power and others.

Music is an integral element of the Target spots, says Matt Wishnow, president of alternative marketing company InSound/DrillTeam, who worked with Target and Peterson Mills Hooks on music supervision for the campaign. He adds that Target wanted bands that were new and emerging, as well as relevant to college students—like the characters in the films.

Some brand marketers and analysts wonder if these national chains are trying too hard to appear cool. “The youth market is attracted to indie music because it is authentic,” says Paul Anthony, CEO of music licensing company Rumblefish. “Indie bands are human beings, not sugar-glazed rock stars.”

Anthony believes that when a brand exploits indie music incorrectly, youthful consumers reject the brand.

While it is too soon to tell if Aug. 9’s music exposure will help with emerging acts in the retail campaigns, Dutch band the Raveneetees received a strong spike in CD sales following a 2004 Kmart campaign.

BRAND MARKETING

BY MICHAEL PAOLETTA and CHRIS M. WALSH

www.americanradiohistory.com
Labels Open Up To Podcasts’ Potential

Los Angeles-based band Goldspot was pleasantly surprised at the turnout for its latest gig. After years of playing smaller venues like the Viper Room and Hotel Cafe, in late July Goldspot graduated to the larger Troubadour, drawing a capacity crowd. The band even had to delay its curtain time to accommodate the long line of fans waiting to get in.

Russ Rieger, founder and partner of the band’s label and management firm, Union Records, credits Goldspot’s appearance on local non-commercial triple-A KCRW’s “Morning Becomes Eclectic” and resulting podcast for the newfound popularity. While the L.A. buzz on Goldspot had been slowly building, Rieger says, the podcast of the band’s recent KCRW in-studio performance gave it a level of exposure previously unavailable.

“It had a huge impact,” he says. “There’s no question, it was KCRW and the podcast. Normally when you do a radio appearance, there’s a spike of interest and then it starts to slowly dissipate. With podcasting, we had that spike, but it kept going.”

Traffic to the band’s Web site quadrupled the day of the KCRW broadcast, according to Rieger. But instead of dropping off, the traffic stayed at that high level until five days later, when it actually increased another 150%.

The potential for these sorts of results, despite all the hand-wringing over licensing rights, has major and indie labels alike embracing podcasting to promote their acts.

Union is hardly the only small label benefiting from the trend. Texas indie Compucade Records began podcasting live “Eclectic” host Nic Harcourt says the demand for—and potential of—music podcasts has pared the interest of the major labels. Until recently, majors and even some larger indie acts as Nine Inch Nails, Audioslave and Queens of the Stone Age. The first podcast also cracked iTunes’ top 10 the week it was introduced.

“It well exceeded our expectations,” Interscope VP of new media Courtney Holt says. “It made me want to continue and put not just the same amount of energy we put into the first one, but expand the resources we apply to it.”

Future installments could include previews of unreleased albums, contests and ticket giveaways, Holt says, but not full songs.

“Podcasting is a great way to introduce new music to consumers in the same way that MP3 blogs are, but I believe in selling digital content, not giving it away,” Holt says. “Podcasting isn’t about a download. It’s about a relationship. If a consumer is going to subscribe to a podcast, you have to give them an ongoing, decent program. The end goal is to deepen the relationship between the band and the artist, and the byproduct of that is selling more albums. But for the format to work, it’s got to be something different than [fans] can’t get somewhere else.”
**Floods Hit Indian Biz**

Disastrous Weather In Mumbai Brings Industry To A Halt

NEW DELHI, India—The music industry here is counting the cost of the calamitous weather that hit Mumbai, the heart of the subcontinent’s entertainment industry, July 26. The torrential rains that flooded the city and surrounding state of Maharashtra have claimed more than 940 lives to date, according to official sources.

For several days after the first downpour, the city’s airport was regularly closed to domestic and international flights, and local schools remained shuttered. The rains also disrupted telephone and electrical service across the state before easing up on Aug. 1.

According to Savio D’Souza, general secretary of labels body the Indian Music Industry, “Just about any activity (came) to a halt, from recordings to retail.”

He admits that “as things stand, we are totally clueless as to the total impact of this breakdown on the business. Once things start normalizing, we will try and assess the situation with whatever data we can get our hands on.”

With the city swamped by more downpours, transport was at a standstill in the weeks following July 26, and authorities advised people to stay indoors.

Most of the 13 Mumbai studios of leading music chain Planet M “hardly opened” in the week following the onset of the rain, according to chief merchandiser Navin Savla. “Typically, we touch a weekly retail sales figure of about 7 million rupees ($160,000),” Savla says, “but we’ve hardly touched half that figure since the rains hit.”

Savla estimates that the total retail loss in music sales across the state for the industry as a whole could surpass 50 million rupees ($1.2 million).

“Our flagship store (near Victoria Terminus station in the center of the city) usually gets at least 600 walk-ins daily,” Savla adds. “When we opened on July 31, we hardly got 60 people.”

Warehouses and recording studios across the city also reported damage. Leading video distributor Shemaroo Video told retailers that it “would not be able to supply...stock for quite a while until things normalize,” Savla says.

EMI Music India managing director Shameer Tandon says that production schedules for some domestic titles will be delayed as a result of the floods.

“The recording studios have shut down,” he says. “And of course, our office was virtually closed for a week, leaving our 30-old staff to stay home.”

Universal Music managing director Rajat Kakar says his company’s main warehouse on the outskirts of northern Mumbai in Bhiwandi was severely hit, and stock with a manufacturing value of $930,000 was destroyed. “Multiply that figure by about four times and you get the loss in retail value,” he says.

Kakar claims the destruction will “seriously disrupt” supplies nationwide for at least the next two months.

Ongoing domestic promotional campaigns for international repertoire from U2, the Black Eyed Peas and Audioslave have been affected, he adds.

Meanwhile, office life was also disrupted at digital-rights-management company Soundbuzz India. GM Mandar Thakur says, “Our staff could not go on the 26th, forcing them to send the night at the office. And some of us were stuck in traffic for over eight hours. Though Mumbai is used to heavy rains every year, this year has been a disaster, with the city’s infrastructure collapsing.”

The weather has also hit the massive Mumbai-centered film business, with production schedules wiped out and virtually every cinema closed. India’s music business is heavily dependent on sales of film soundtracks from the so-called “Bollywood” studios.

In the wake of the floods, a number of film industry professionals have formed the group Jaago India (which translates to “Wake Up India”).

The group said July 31 that it intends to file public interest litigation in a Mumbai court against the state government. A Jaago India statement says the litigation would urge the court to ask the government why it should not be held accountable for the collapse of its administrative system during the floods.

**New Canadian Acts Wait Out Q4 Congestion**

TORONTO—Developing acts could lose out as Canadian labels and broadcasters prepare for the key fourth quarter.

A glut of domestic product is raising fears that emerging acts will be squeezed out of the radio during what is typically the year’s prime sales period.

The situation is complicated by the requirements of Canada’s Broadcast Act, under which radio must play a minimum amount of domestically produced content. Stations say they often rely on established stars to meet their quotas, crowding out newer acts.

“The fall rush has started,” says Wayne Webster, music director at adult top 40 station CKFM in Toronto. “We’re getting singles now, so when the album hits in September everybody is aware. But we’re also seeing new acts not releasing (records) because they could be lost in the fall shuffle.”

Universal Music Canada director of national promotion Jeremy Summers says mid-July has become the time to start servicing radio with tracks from major fourth-quarter releases.

“We want to be at mass saturation with a second single on Dec. 5,” Summers says. “It takes us five weeks to get there; that works out to Nov. 1 to service it. The first single might last 20 weeks. That works out to July 15 for release of the first single.”

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission’s “CanCon” quotas mean that all new domestic recordings compete against each other for airplay.

A recording is considered to be CanCon if it meets two of four criteria: It contains music composed by a Canadian, it contains lyrics written by a Canadian, it is performed or sung primarily by a Canadian, or it was recorded in Canada.

**BIG ACTS FILL QUOTAS**

Since Jan. 3, 1999, the CanCon quota for English language commercial radio stations has been 35%. However, most stations licensed in the past five years have a quota of 40%.

With a heavy load of Canadian singles leading the fourth quarter, broadcasters here—particularly at mainstream rock, modern rock and adult top 40 stations—are meeting their quotas with selections from such established Canadian acts as Our Lady Peace, the Trews, Sum 41, Matthew Good, the Arcade Fire and Simple Plan.

“We just don’t have room right now for new acts,” says Don Mitchell, music director at modern rock CFNY in Toronto. “I have labels grinding me over stuff that we are not playing. It’s not a case [of] we don’t like some of it; it’s a case [of] we don’t have room on our playlists. We have so many priorities right now.”

The problem is unlikely to ease soon, with releases by Canadian heavyweights the Tragically Hip, Nickelback and Metric expected in the fall.

**Oz Report Recommends Biz, Gov’t Cooperation**

SYDNEY—An Australian government-funded report due in mid-August proposes ways for the country’s music business and various levels of federal and state governments to work closer together.

However, key voices within the local industry are querying whether internal differences can be put aside on important issues so a unified voice can be found to engage the government.


It drew on input from 100 sources across the music sector, including trade group the Australian Record Industry Assn. and authors’ rights body the Australian Performing Right Assn.

The report’s recommendations will be assessed during the next 12 months by relevant ministries covering the arts, trade, copyright, technology, tourism and indigenous affairs. Government sources estimate that any approved recommendations could begin to be implemented by July 2006.

Paul Bodovich is the Perth-based executive officer of the West Australian Music Industry Assn., a nonprofit organization that promotes and supports Western Australian talent. He says support from the government would be well received on major issues.

“Traditionally there’s been resistance from a large element of the Australian music industry...about working with the government.”

Bodovich says, “But industries like mining and agriculture have shown that the bigger you get, the more support you need from government.”

Music executives largely agree that issues including copyright protection, expanding export initiatives and tax benefits for investors in recording or live entertainment require a closer
and Pilate on the way. “Every major alternative core act is coming out now,” Mitchell says. “There is so much Canadian product from majors, indies, established acts and breaking artists now,” Warner Music Canada VP of radio promotion Steve Coady says. “It’s different than it has ever been.”

Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems Canada director of Canadian operations Paul Tuch says the adult top 40 sector is “where there’s the big glut of product now.” There are records crossing over from other formats into adult top 40, he adds, noting that there are adult top 40 stations “playing Our Lady Peace and some playing new [rock] singles by Sum 41 and Simple Plan, which are new to the format.”

Programmers and label sources concur that new domestic acts face significant obstacles at Canadian radio, particularly those on independent labels that lack extensive promotional and marketing support. Labels confirm they are holding back releases by new acts until the new year to avoid the fourth-quarter logjam. And broadcasters say that is good.

“There is so much stuff coming out now, but in January and February it is tough to find Canadian product,” says Rob Farina, PD at adult top 40 CHUM-FM in Toronto. “Then they have a better shot at airplay.”

relationship with the government, including funding where appropriate. However, in the past, state funding has been seen as piecemeal and ultimately ineffective.

Industry insiders also acknowledge that failure to present a unified voice to the government has cost them in the past on such issues as parallel importing and CD copying.

Phillip Mortlock, managing director of Sydney-based independent Origin Music, admits that the industry has previously come across as “an in-fighting rabble... But most of us have realized we have to put up a cohesive face, not just to the government but to the public.”

The report identified the two best options for cooperation between the parties. One would set up a government-supported music industry body similar to the New Zealand Music Industry Commission.

The NZMIC was established in 2002 with government funding. It is a collection of executives from major trade bodies that works in partnership with other trade associations, the private sector and government departments to expand exports and develop new markets overseas. It also works to increase domestic airplay for local acts.

The other option is to introduce a forum, the Industry Action Agenda, where government lobbying groups as the Sydney-based Music Managers Forum and Brisbane-based Assn. of Independent Record Labels (AIR) have emerged in the past eight years.

Alistair Cranney, an MMF member and managing director of Adelaide-based What Management, argues that outsiders see the AIRA as “the main voice of the industry, but [with] its own agenda. [However], issues can be resolved if everyone realizes it’s for the better good.” Cranney says the music industry in Australia is “so fragmented that resolving an issue can often seem impossible.”

AIR chief executive Stuart Watters insists, though, that the leaders of the country’s various industry organizations “deeply understand the issues at stake and know the importance of working together or losing everything.”

Mortlock, who is a member of the AIR board and an associate independent member of the AIRA board, adds that there is “already a lot of dialogue and exchange of information and contacts between the heads of AIR and AIR.”

Executives from major labels, the broadcasting sector and live entertainment wanted more time to study the report before commenting to Billboard.

The bigger you get, the more support you need from government.”

—Paul Bolderovich, West Australian Music Industry Assn.

and music industry executives would meet regularly to share information and develop cost-effective solutions to the industry’s challenges.

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Global Newsline

>> WOOLWORTHS SELLS OFF MVC

British retailer Woolworths Group has sold its 67-store specialty music and DVD chain MVC in a cash deal worth £5.5 million ($9.6 million).

Woolworths announced in March that it was looking to sell off the underperforming unit. It was bought July 30 by a group of investors led by Chris Steed, managing director of London-based Argyll Partners.

The deal follows the recent collapse of discussions between Woolworths and potential suitor Music Zone, an independent, Manchester, England-based chain.

In a statement to the London Stock Exchange, Woolworths CEO Trevor Bish-Jones said the disposal of MVC “removes a loss-making business from the group and allows us to be solely focused on our retail business.”

Woolworths said that as a result of the sale it would incur an exceptional loss of about £3 million ($5.9 million) for the half-year ending July 30.

—Lars Brande

>> SONY BMG STRIKES SFR DEAL

Sony BMG France has struck a content deal with French mobile operator SFR to supply 100,000 tracks for domestic download on SFR’s third-generation cellular phone service.

The deal will bring the number of titles available on SFR’s service to 500,000, representing all the majors.

SFR rolled out the first music download service in November 2004 in France, offering 50,000 titles. It has since adopted an aggressive strategy on music to support its 3G service. The operator claimed 150,000 3G subscribers at the end of June and aims to have 500,000 by year’s end.

—Aymeric Pichevin

>> EMI LINKS WITH CENTURY MEDIA

EMI Music has inked an exclusive, multiliterary licensing and distribution agreement with European rock/metal label Century Media.

Under the pact, announced July 29, EMI will distribute the independent label’s product in the United Kingdom, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. It is the first time Century Media’s European distribution has been consolidated under one company.

The first album distributed by EMI under the deal is Seattle band Nevermore’s “This Godless Endeavor,” released July 25.

Century Media is based in London and Dortmund, Germany. Its catalog has been distributed in the United States by EMI-owned Caroline since 1997.

—Lars Brande

>> PANASONIC LAUNCHES MUSIC SITE

Panasonic, the consumer-brand division of Japanese electronics manufacturer Matsushita, has created a digital music site (panasonicmusicstream.com), aiming to drive sales of its new MP3 players.

The Panasonic Music Stream service, launched July 26, is available to U.K. users only. It is powered by digital service provider OD2, the European subsidiary of Seattle-based Loudye.

Its catalog of more than 400,000 tracks includes repertoire from the four majors and independent labels, priced at £0.79 ($1.37) per download and 1 penny (less than 2 cents) per streamed track.

The new service arrives simultaneously with the U.K. launch of Panasonic’s SVMP10 and SVMP10 MP3 players. Each holds between 70 and 140 tracks and costs from £75 ($137) to £125 ($226).

The players support Microsoft’s digital rights management-protected Windows Media Audio.

—Juliana Koranteng

>> BMG PUBLISHING UPS JENKINS

BMG Music Publishing stalwart Andrew Jenkins has been named president of the company’s international operations. London-based Jenkins was formerly executive VP.

Jenkins takes profit and loss responsibility for the publisher’s worldwide operations outside North America. He continues to oversee London-based BMG Music Publishing International.

He reports to Nicholas Firth, chairman/CEO of BMG Music Publishing Worldwide, who is based in New York.

—Lars Brande
DVD’s Mature Market, New Formats Focus Of Confab

LAS VEGAS—The DVD debuted eight years ago and has become the fastest-growing consumer electronic category in history. It is now considered a mature market, challenging content owners to find the best way to keep revenue growing while they await the arrival of next-generation technology later this year.

At the Video Software Dealers Assn.’s annual Home Entertainment conference held here July 25-28 at the Bellagio Hotel & Casino, talk centered on how to best take advantage of the mature market.

Independent DVD companies said they have a distinct advantage at retail right now because the more consumers that are in the market for DVDs, the more diversity of product they are looking for. They also said consumers are less interested in purchasing big theatrical titles, particularly given the recent sales disappointments for such titles as “The Incredibles” (Disney/Pixar) and “Shrek 2” (DreamWorks) (Billboard, July 30).

Dan Gurlitz, VP of video for Koch Entertainment Distribution and GM of Koch Vision and Koch Lorber Films, contends that DVD is not a mature market but a “well-developed market,” he said, “Avenues have really opened up for the niche categories.”

New Koch releases will include a wealth of independent films like the South Korean project “Save the Green Planet” (Sept. 6) and other such niche product as “The Lenny Bruce Performance” (Nov. 8) and a series of Self magazine fitness titles.

Retailers may seek out such special-interest DVD product as documentaries and music because these categories are less price-sensitive than theatrical releases.

Ventura Distribution executive VP/GM Jim Weatherson said that he is offering product that is not priced as a loss leader at retail like most large theatrical releases. The company has teamed with Clear Channel Entertainment Home Video to release the DVD “Motley Crüe: Carnival of Sins” (Oct. 4), shot entirely in high definition. Ventura will also offer a diverse slate of comedy, urban and Latin titles.

“We have nothing but opportunity right now,” Weatherson said. “We aren’t as price-sensitive, and offer higher margins for retailers.”

If niche titles are backed by marketing, the sky is the limit, industry executives said.

Within the music category, for example, it is critical to “commit a year at least to creative marketing,” according to Palm Pictures GM Lisa Nishimura. “We don’t put something into the market and walk away.”

For its slate of new director’s label titles coming Sept. 13—featuring Anton Corbijn, Jonathan Glazer, Mark Romanek and Stéphane Sednaoui—the company’s campaign will include a partnership with MTV2 for a series of broadcast specials (Billboard, Aug. 6) and ties with a variety of lifestyle companies that are still being determined.

Conference attendees also discussed the upcoming introduction of two HD DVD formats and the opportunities surrounding the Universal Media Disc, a format that is exclusive to Sony’s PlayStation Portable.

Echoing a number of others, Mike Carden, Eagle Rock’s North America president of operations and executive VP of Eagle Rock Entertainment, questioned where HD is going, given that HD DVD product is expected this fall and Blu-ray titles are coming in first-quarter 2006.

“We’ll test the waters,” Carden said, without revealing whether his company will release titles on one or both formats. Most companies are taking a wait-and-see approach.

Lions Gate Entertainment VP of marketing Anne Parducci said the first quarter may be the ideal time to exploit the UMD format because the PSP is likely to be a popular holiday item.

The company has five titles available on UMD, and is preparing at least five more including “Crash,” a day-and-date release with DVD on Sept. 6.

The Indies

TODD MARTENS tmartens@billboard.com

After Payola Settlement, Airplay Still Meager For Indie Acts

The independent acts—Black Dahlia Murder, Darkest Hour, Sufjan Stevens, the Arcade Fire, Armor for Sleep and Throwdown—have two things in common: Each has spent at least two weeks on the Billboard Top Heatseekers chart. That is their first commonality. The second is that none of them has appeared on Billboard’s radio charts.

From the baroque folk of Stevens to the death metal of the Black Dahlia Murder, these acts have proved to be consistent sellers, have build up fan bases and could easily catapult into The Billboard 200 with a little boost like radio play.

Of course, some airplay or an appearance on The Billboard 200 does not guarantee anything. Even an indie artist who has graduated from the Heatseekers chart can still be searching for a radio hit. Such is the case with Victory Records band Hawthorne Heights, which has sold more than 426,000 copies of its debut, “The Silence in Black and White,” according to Nielsen SoundScan.

“Now, here is another list of names scattered among the Heatseekers tally: Rise Against, Dark New Days and Funeral for a Friend. These acts all play hard rock or punk and have major-label connections—and they have found their way onto the Billboard radio charts.

After comparing these two lists, it should come as no surprise that many in the indie community greeted Sony BMG’s July 25 payola settlement with a shrug. Don Rose, acting president of the American Assn. of Independent Music, hopes the settlement will lead to long-term changes but recognizes that most indies are not holding their breath.

“There’s a lot of skepticism about how Indies will be treated at big radio,” Rose says. “That’s endemic.”

Sub Pop A&R rep Tony Kiewel, who helped the Postal Service become a sleeper hit on a number of West Coast modern-rock stations, says, “Even if the payola system isn’t in place, I don’t think we’ll get butted at No. 25 on The Billboard 200 and spent only one week on Billboard’s radio charts.

“Every band on this label has two or three songs better than similar songs on the radio at any given time,” Egan says. “That used to be frustrating.”

“If it takes [payola] to get Celine Dion on the radio, we’re still screwed.”

—SUB POP A&R REP TONY KIEWEL

In the meantime, the payola probe will feed into public perception of a corrupt music industry, Kiewel says. “If the majors can spend millions to bribe radio, then they’re clearly not hurting and people won’t feel bad about downloading for free,” he says. “You can just say, ‘you’re not a dick. You have to actually stop being a dick.’ ”
Even as year-to-date album sales continue to lag about 8% behind those of 2004, there is one growth sector that is a bright spot. Sales of digital albums in the United States have multiplied nearly fourfold, from 2 million units to 7.6 million units for the week ending July 31, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

While it is a relatively small overall percentage—about 2.3% of album sales are digital downloads—the segment is growing enough to start catching the attention of traditional retailers. Indie retailers—with sales off 25% this year—may be the first to feel the pinch of the digital download business.

"It’s a significant number," says Duncan Browne, COO of Boston-based Newbury Comics. "I’m sure it’s all nibbling away at the pie that specialty music retail would eat from. We certainly view it as a threat."

During the past couple of years, much has been made of services like iTunes, MSN Music and Napster replacing the singles market. Yet there are now statistics to show that online customers are warming up to purchasing full-length albums online, which generally retail for about $9.99.

For instance, the No. 2 selling digital album of the year—behind Coldplay’s "X&Y"—is by indie-friendly artist Jack Johnson. His "In Between Dreams" has sold 92,000 copies via download. That is more than 7% of his 1.24 million sales to date. An even more indie-centric act, Spoon, has seen its latest Merge set, "Gimme Fiction," sell more than 8,000 copies via download, about 12% of the group’s 67,000 overall.

"I always just thought downloads had taken the place of singles," says Matt Vaughan, owner of Seattle-based Easy Street Records. "I had no idea the number was as high as 7 million [albums]...I’m in a tech-savy city, and these companies have changed the face of music retail."

But how much they have altered the business is open to debate. A number of indie retailers believe that album downloads have yet to cut into their profits.

Brett Wickard, president of Brunswick, Maine-based Bull Moose Music, is not convinced that the Johnson and Spoon sales would have gone to traditional retailers, anyway. He, like many others, sees downloadable albums as providing an overall benefit:

A small percentage of downloads will be sales retail missed out on," Wickard says. "But that would have been our failure. The downloadable album is something we have to cooperate with and compete with. Overall, I think it brings in more customers. There’s a lot of people into the disposable digital lifestyle who download everything. That’s who’s buying, and it’s our job to convert those folks."

Steve Wiley co-manages Hoodlums Music on the campus of Arizona State University in Tempe. He says his student shoppers are more aware of what is out today, thanks to the Internet. He admits that some business may have been lost to digital downloads, "but there’s a huge part of us that feel like if it weren’t for the Internet, who knows where this business would be? Like with Spoon, I don’t know if they would have gotten as much attention as they did without the Internet. Their overall sales are probably a lot bigger than they would have been without the Web."

Percentage of overall album sales that are digital downloads

Karen Pearson, who co-manages Amoeba Records in Los Angeles, says she has her eye on downloadable album sales, but is not worried yet. "I would be really naive not to look at the whole spectrum," Pearson says. "I’m watching to see where it goes, but I don’t know if it’s our competition right now. The experience we provide is completely different. My take is the hype about downloading and the iPod is getting people into records who weren’t buying records, but that being said, I don’t know where it will take us in five years."

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield in Los Angeles.
Petty & The Heartbreakers Fly High
Rockers Approach Their 30th Anniversary With Career-High Attendance, Ticket Sales

Nearly 30 years into a Hall of Fame career, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers are putting up their highest numbers on the road. "We've always had incredibly great audiences, but they are absolutely frenzied and manic now," Petty tells Billboard in a rare interview. "Which is good for us, because our show has always really been about the audience. It's as much fun as you can possibly have, I think."

More than halfway through their summer tour, Petty & the Heartbreakers are averaging slightly less than $600,000 per night at the box office and 15,500 per night in ticket sales, according to Billboard Boxscore.

"This tour is smoking," says Barbara Skydel, the band's agent for close to 30 years, the past few with the William Morris Agency. Such a blistering pace is leading the band to a total attendance of close to 730,000 and a gross of well over $25 million. Ticket prices, generally between $25 and $60, are relatively low compared with those of other tours.

The magnitude of the dollars and tickets does not seem a primary concern to Petty. "I'm not really involved in the business," he admits. "I'm fortunate— I've been with the same manager since I started out 30 years ago, and he has always been very good at looking after our tours and things. But I'm hearing more and more about this [tour]; every day, someone from the business world is telling me how great it's doing. Who would've dreamed that 30 years later we'd still be doing these kind of numbers? So we're very happy about it."

Tony Dimitriades, Petty's longtime manager, says even he is impressed by the tour's success, given the marketplace. "I assume, with shows as good as these have been over the years, that more and more people will come," he says. "But the way the business is going and the way other people are selling tickets, I guess it does surprise me that we're actually drawing as many people as we are."

Skydel says the band's performance is the culmination of years of delivering the goods on stage. "This is what it means to be a career artist," she says.

Petty & The Heartbreakers have proved remarkably consistent in a touring business known for inconsistency. For 2002's Last DJ tour, the band's most recent trek with a like number of large venue dates, the averages were $468,767 at the box office and 13,470 in tickets sold, for a total attendance of 681,592 for 44 shows.

Petty agrees his band has been a solid draw on the road for a while now. "Things are always pretty good, but then you look up and this is happening and everyone's excited, and we sort of feel like, 'Well, we do this all the time,'" he says. "We're always there, if people want to notice."

And while his audience has been loyal, Petty says he has noticed a new generation of fans. "We've seen this over the years, the torch being passed down and younger people coming in," he says. "But we still maintain a core audience. A lot of them were even there in the '70s."

The current tour, with the reunited Black Crows in the opening slot, has netted doubles in several markets. Tea Party, the Boston operation of Clear Channel Music Group, nailed down June 18 and July 29 dates, and both sold out the market's Tweeter Center.

"Boston loves Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers," Tea Party senior VP Dave Marsden says, calling this tour the "outstanding bill of the year."

"The June 18 show remains the talk of the town," he adds. "With a long history of great performances for their fans in New England, it took quite a night to set a new standard, but that is exactly what Tom and the Heartbreakers accomplished."

PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS

Though Dimitriades has gone with a national tour promoter in the past, this time out he worked with a mixed bag that includes national promoters Clear Channel Entertainment and House of Blues along with such independents as Jam Productions, Another Planet and IMP.

"We were going to do a certain number of dates, and we wanted to make sure every stop was exactly the way we wanted it." Dimitriades explains. "Tom hadn't done a national tour in three years, so we felt we would hand-pick every single show."

Meanwhile, Petty says he is having as much fun performing as he ever has. "And the band is really on fire," he adds. "Right now, we all feel like we're the best rock 'n' roll band there is, and I think that's a good attitude to have."

Petty's tour ends with a two-night stand Sept. 2-3 at the Gorge Amphitheatre in George, Wash. with no plans to extend the outing. But it is clear that Team Petty has big plans for 2005, including a new album. The band's first album was released in 1976.

"Look out for next year—that's the 30th anniversary," Petty says. "We're gonna party."

16.5K

Average number of people attending Tom Petty's summer concerts

TOM PETTY says he has noticed a new generation of fans at his shows.

The audiences are absolutely manic now."

—TOM PETTY

Bass' graphics for such films as "Vertigo," "Psycho" and "West Side Story" are all about weird angles and bizarre shapes. "It's a unique way of presenting the show," Petty says. "I got a little tired of seeing rock shows that are just cones of light. They seem very similar to me, so I tried to do something a little different this time."

As always, the focus is on the music. "We've never had anything that exploded or anything," he says. "But production can be fun. In the type places we're playing, these big outdoor shows, it's good to have something for the people a mile away watching the thing. And we've also incorporated the video in an unusual way into the act, so everybody has a good seat in a sense [and] can see everything in detail."

While the band's production may vary, the backstage rider keeps getting smaller. "Somebody showed me one that was supposed to be ours printed on a Web site—it's not ours. It's completely amusing. I don't recognize it at all," he says with a laugh. "We've cut it down as much. There's not any drinkers in the band. All we ask is a hot meal, really, and in my room I think I have a couple of Cokes and some protein bars, and that's about it. No deli trays; we don't like that. I think mores of a family thing."

That is not to say the Heartbreakers cut corners in getting from point A to point B. "We've got our own jet—that's pretty ostentatious," Petty says. "I'd say the biggest change is we travel in a lot more comfort than we used to."

It is all about familiar faces on the road, not just within the band but also among the crew. The Heartbreakers roadie roster has been stable through the years. Backline crew chief Alan "Bugs" Weide (50 years), tour manager Richard Fernandez (26 years), assistant tour manager Mark Carpenter (15 years) and lighting director Jim Lenahan (30 years) are seasoned vets, and house sound man Robert Scovill, monitor engineer Brian Hendry and tour accountant Spencer Churchill all have more than a decade with the band.

"We keep a happy bunch," Petty says. "It's a family thing. We've done a lot of work over the years, we keep the same people around and they really look after us on the stage."

Petty places a lot of faith and responsibility in his crew. "You... "

continued on >

TOURING BY RAY WADDELL

Veteran Petty Production Team Keeps Focus On Music

Production for a Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers concert varies greatly from tour to tour, ranging from splashy psychedelics to lean and mean. Given that the act's outings are not necessarily related to a new album, any theme is fair game.

"Depends on the mood we're in," Petty says. "The production we've got out right now is a really nice one, based on a guy named Saul Bass who did movie titles in the '50s and '60s."

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www.americanradiohistory.com
Agents, Managers Seek An Audience—With Each Other

Agents to managers: Just call me.

That was the primary message from agents who attended the "Fill Your Book... And Still Sleep at Night" panel at the International Assn. of Managers Conference July 18 in Washington, D.C.

Moderated by Paul Beard, managing director of Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth, Texas, the panel included Paradigm Artists agent Jim Linn, Creative Artists Agency managing partner Rob Light, Artists Group International agent Adam Korfeld, Zach Radowski and Kenny DiCamilo, agents with the William Morris Agency; and Alan Wasserman Associates agent Steve Schmehl.

Beard inquired about the fastest way to find out about impending tours: "The challenges are to get there first before (dates) are snapped up by someone buying 40 cities at a time."

"If you buy on your own, we should be talking to you," Light said. "But if you want information to induce someone else to buy, I need to know that upfront."

Light was quick to acknowledge that often venues know more about what will work in a given market or building than the agent. A recent Seal tour of performing arts centers.

"In these days of consolidation, venues are the only local promoters that really exist," Light said. "So adding that in-house arena marketing powers were considerable. "You need to be a little more aggressive in letting us know that. For years, I didn't know that Fleet Center had been doing all of that.""
Brett Wickard founded the Bull Moose chain in Brunswick, Maine, with money he made writing a software program for the trucking industry. That was 1989, and Wickard was still a junior in college.

Today, Bull Moose has 10 stores and 100 employees throughout New England. A member of the Music Monitor Network, Bull Moose has the distinction of holding its own against rival indie chain Newbury Comics.

Wickard not only wrote the software for Bull Moose's point-of-sales system, he started a separate company, Crickery Wood, to sell inventory-management systems and services to other small chains like Zia, Dimple and Graywhale.

Bull Moose has always been known for its irreverent style. In 1991, the Portland, Maine-based chain ran its first radio ads, promising high prices and bad service. "Why pay less?" one spot asked. Another declared, "If your CD doesn't play, that's your problem, as long as we've got your money."

Although Wickard declines to specify the chain's annual sales volume—which Billboard estimates at $15 million—he says Bull Moose has grown in sales and profits every year, including this one. He cites a number of reasons, including an incentive-based salary system, under which store managers share in the profits.

Q: Do your stores specialize in any genre?
A: When we open a store, we let each store adapt to each marketplace, which happens because of our point-of-sale system. One of the things about being in a relatively rural area is you have to be pragmatic and appeal to the largest range of people as possible. Also, we have a philosophy of music tolerance. Musical attitude is just bullshit. We show employees who have music attitude the door very quickly. All that being said, we do well with a lot of independent product.

Q: How would you characterize the current environment for music sales? Are the majors doing their share to make things happen?
A: The challenges that the industry has faced up till now have had some beneficial results. Before, a lot of people used to have their fielded to protect, but now people have become a lot more flexible and pragmatic, trying to make it work for the music fan. When first got in the industry, there were all these rules by the labels and by the retailers that only mattered to people's ego, not to the music fan. So the more time we spend on what the music fan wants and the less time we spend focusing on our egos, the better off we are.

Q: Why do you think U.S. album sales are down?
A: Theatrical DVD pricing is just becoming so low that music can seem expensive. It's interesting that people buying music are the oldest fogeys in our stores, which is different than it used to be, and the young people are buying the DVDs. When we were growing up, music defined who you were. Music as a special defining factor of identity is under attack right now from videogames and DVD. As the social relevance of music slips, that has become a big challenge.

Q: What kind of music do you have in your stores these days?
A: We have all these brand-new customers in the stores, only they are buying movies and not music. We need to cross them over, and I think the DualDisc will do that. We did an analysis, which we will bring to NARM; there is a much bigger crossover between the movie buyer and the DualDisc buyer than there is between the movie buyer and CD buyer.

Q: How is the DualDisc working for you?
A: I would say that it is being launched about as well as it could be for a format that doesn't have every major on-board, and considering at least 99 out of 100 customers don't fully understand it.

Q: Are you a fan of in-store media sampling?
A: No, I don't care about it. I care a lot about in-store sampling. Right now, people can go into our stores and, from a TouchStand kiosk, get a Flyleaf song put on their iPod. I see a great opportunity in using MP3 for sampling. It is efficient, inexpensive and a very convenient listening experience; you can have a song timed out. I think MP3 is a missed opportunity for the promotional vehicle that it could offer. It's like a podcast or TiVo—people want things on their own terms, and listening posts have to go the same way. I don't see the logistical barriers, although there would be contractual issues to overcome.

Q: Do you believe music will go totally digital? Do you have any plans for a digital offering?
A: We haven't done enough for selling CDs for what they are. It is the highest-quality, best [mass-market] form of getting music. There is no comparison between it and the sound of a 128k iTunes sample, which is compressed. We should be aiming for a better quality sound like the DualDisc, rather than going down in sound quality to the download level. The iPod and MP3s should be the cassette of our generation: a second-tier, lower-quality, cheaper, disposable format. The CD and the DualDisc are the higher-quality, library formats.

Q: Where do you see Bull Moose 10 years from now?
A: I definitely see us in this business 10 years out, but at a significantly bigger size. I would love to open three or four more [stores] now, but the landlords are charging rents beyond the long-term viability of their real estate. Our computer system could handle 100 stores without skipping a beat, and I look forward to being able to prove that. The right technology can give you the power of a massive chain with the freedom of an indie store all wrapped into one.

Q: What do you think the majors gave exclusives to Starbucks, Target, Best Buy and Wal-Mart?
A: I don't know the pressures the labels are under, and I don't understand the intricacies of how they run their business. If they are choosing that way to sell music, I am concerned with how does it affect our customer and let's do the best we can for our customer. I am not going to walk around with a chip on my shoulder and be pissy about the way the labels are doing things and not carry some of their product because of that.
Rhino Entertainment co-founder Richard Foos remembers working on one of the company’s first boxed sets. It was a 1981 package dubbed “The History of Ritchie Valens,” compiling three LPs from the “La Bamba” singer.

The set was ready for release, but something seemed to be missing. Foos wanted some sort of unique detail that would make the package stand out. So he looked up Valens’ former junior-high-school principal in the Los Angeles community of Pacoima.

“This wasn’t of the [same] quality of things we did later on,” Foos says, “but we were establishing that mentality of great packaging and great liner notes. I drove out to Pacoima and was able to get his yearbook picture. I don’t know if other labels would go to that extent, but that’s the kind of thing we did from day one.”

Twenty-seven years ago Rhino the record label was born from Rhino the record store, a retail outlet that Foos opened in 1973 near the campus of the University of California, Los Angeles.

Those who worked and shopped at the store in its early days compare it to the kind of snooty, hipper-than-thou shop immortalized in Nick Hornby’s novel “High Fidelity.” The personality of the label is decidedly less snobbish.

Rhino is probably best-known for its elaborate boxed sets, including the four-CD package “Nuggets: Original Artyfacts From the First Psychodelic Era 1965-1968” and the Grammy Award-nominated “No Thanks! The 70s Punk Rebellion.”

Whether working with the catalog of Gram Parsons or compiling collections from Los Lobos, Joy Division or Ray Charles, Rhino brought a record collector’s zeal to its work.

Rhino’s founders—Foos and one-time store manager Harold Bronson—weren’t interested in boundaries and genres, and Rhino put together packages that celebrated an artist’s best work rather than archiving an assortment of unneeded odds, ends and outtakes.

“People didn’t buy these records because they wanted a history lesson,” says Gary Stewart, who oversaw much of Rhino’s A&R work for 25 years and now works at Apple Computer as chief music officer of iTunes. “One of the best experiences I ever had was buying Del Shannon’s greatest hits. I had only heard the song ‘Runaway’ because of the ‘American Graffiti’ soundtrack. I thought he was just a one-hit guy. Then I found 20 other songs that excited me and blew me away. That habit of discovery is what Rhino is about.”

Having been associated with the Warner Music Group since 1992, with the company absorbing full control of Rhino in 1998, Rhino’s trappings of an independent are, at least superficially, long gone.

Instead of working out of a small and cramped West Los Angeles office overflowing with CDs, pinball machines and enough pop-culture paraphernalia to set up a booth at a comic convention, Rhino has moved to the swankier, loft-like offices of Warner’s Burbank headquarters.

Today, Rhino Entertainment is essentially the catalog department for WMG, but the company’s commitment to elaborately detailed and researched compilations has continued on >>p20
RHINO CULTURE

Although for the past few years Rhino has been a branch of the Warner Strategic Marketing division, that has changed during the company's 27th year. The division was recently rebranded Rhino Entertainment.

When speaking with past and present Rhino employees, a phrase that is routinely heard is the "Rhino culture."

Those who are no longer with the company become a bit nostalgic at the phrase, and the current regime at Warner Bros., led by Rhino Entertainment president Scott Pascucci, speaks endlessly of preserving said culture.

According to Pascucci, once absorbed into WSM, Rhino began encompassing such other functions as licensing and creating soundtracks.

During that time, though, Pascucci says, "we found a couple things; retailers and consumers still responded to the Rhino brand. WSM as a brand was not effective. We also found that people who work here always said they worked at Rhino rather than WSM, even though Rhino was just part of the group."

"We needed to put the name back out there because it represents values and who we are as a company," he adds, "and we've kept a lot of those values and culture in spite of all the changes."

To Foos, who left Rhino in 2002 to open Shout Factory, the Rhino culture was an attempt to bring the spirit of his youth into a corporate setting. "I was heavily influenced by the ethos of the '60s, which was inclusion, a sense of fun and a sense of people coming together to do something meaningful and important," he says. "What we tried to bring into the business was that tribal experience of the '60s."

Indeed, within the industry, Rhino is known for its longstanding commitment to community service projects and charities.

Employees were given a week off between Christmas and New Year's in exchange for 16 hours of volunteer work, and could receive additional time off for putting in more hours. Pascucci says he is maintaining these policies.

Meanwhile, outside the industry, the Rhino brand signifies a sort of proud stamp of music geekdom.

The company's first release was a 1976 novelty single by Larry "Wild Man" Fischer, "Go to Rhino Records." It was intended as a holiday giveaway to customers. It became a minor cult hit after receiving play on John Peel's BBC radio show. Ever since, it has been a pet peeve of those associated with Rhino to see the words "irreverent" or "quirky" used when describing the company.

"We were just trying to capture ourselves in the middle of our own bullshit," Stewart says. "When we expressed something we really cared about, there would be sincerity to it; we could laugh at ourselves when there was something about the record industry we didn't love so much."

There are endless examples of records and events that built the Rhino brand, but one of the defining moments came in the early '90s with the Rhino Musical Aptitude Test.

Started by Dorn, the pop-culture quiz poked fun at the seriousness of music collectors and the industry at large.

"We did it for five years, and it was our biggest partner sale" with Tower Records, Dorn says. "The only reason I stopped doing it was because it took up so much of my time it became another job."

When it comes to compilations and boxed sets, consumers and retailers have generally responded to Rhino going the extra mile.

In the days of vinyl, the company released a Turtles retrospective packaged in the shape of a turtle. Now, during the CD era, Rhino has become known for such clever marketing tactics as including fuzzy dice with its "Hot Rods & Custom Classics: Cruisin' Songs & Highway Hits" set, or a box of tissues with the "Teenage Tragedy" compilation.

Today, Rhino is looking for ways to define catalog packaging in the online and mobile worlds. The company recently launched the digital-only Rhino Hi-Five, which bundles five selected tracks from acts in the Warner catalog. Each bundle sells for $3.61. Rhino is looking into mobile bundles, with packages that could include games, wallpaper and ringtones. (An upcoming set dedicated to the Ramones will come with a ringtones offer.)

Pascucci believes Rhino's model for success for the last two-plus decades will translate well to the online world.

"If we're missing key tracks, we won't put out a compilation or a boxed set," Pascucci says. "And if we start to second-guess the packaging because of economics we have to stop and ask, 'Would we be proud of this if we skimped?' The key is that we try to put something out that is wonderful. It's an obsession. You won't find people in our offices who say, 'Wait, we should release this as three discs with 10 pages of liner notes to make more money.'"

"In the long run, that will damage the brand and you won't make more money," he notes. "The best releases feed into the brand and the pride of what we do and the culture, which in the long run feeds into our ability to make money."
A Q&A WITH

SCOTT PASCUCCI

BY TODD MARTENS

W hen Scott Pascucci arrived at the Warner Music Group in 2002 to take on the company’s sprawling catalog division, including Rhino Records, he knew that Rhino employees would greet him with arms crossed.

“People knew I wasn’t being asked to expand the company,” says Pascucci, who is now president of Rhino Entertainment.

Formerly an independent company, Rhino proudly carried its lengthy history and idiosyncratic attitude. Defined by its heavily detailed boxed sets and odd approach to marketing—such as the fuzzy dice included in a boxed set designed as a soundtrack for hot rod—Rhino is perhaps the United States’ best known catalog label. It has long been the standard-bearer in artist compilations and reissues.

Although it has been part of WMG since 1998, Rhino moved from its own space into Warner’s Burbank offices once Pascucci came aboard. For a label that flaunted its idiosyncrasies, the move into a formal corporate structure has not been easy.

Since Pascucci joined, Rhino founder Richard Foos left to establish the Shout Factory label, as did longtime Rhino executives Garson Foos and Bob Emmor. A number of other key Rhino personal have also left, and those who stayed were given an assortment of new duties when Rhino was consolidated into other Warner departments.

Yet the brand remains strong. Rhino releases continue to garner Grammy Award nominations and the company has not lost its commitment to marketing. (For example, the Aug. 16 release of a Ramones boxed set comes complete with a comic book.)

Pascucci, who notes Warner’s commitment to the catalog department has never wavered, recently sat down with Billboard to discuss these changes and what lies ahead.

With the catalog department now being branded as “Rhino Entertainment,” is there a situation when a catalog release would not carry the Rhino name?

That is a topic that we debate internally. My view is that Rhino stands for excellence, caring about the artist and serving the consumer. If you’ve done all those things, I don’t think it’s for us to say who’s cool and who’s not cool. Like who’s Rhino and who isn’t. I don’t know the answer to that. Occasionally people will have a different view, but if we’re working with an artist who has a body of work that justifies putting out a record or a video, and we do the kind of jobs we should be doing on that record or video, I don’t view Rhino as a club in which an artist should be excluded.

Yet when you are putting out up to 20 releases per month in various formats, how do you keep the Rhino name special?

There can be a point when you go too far and dilute, but I don’t think that’s a line you can clearly or justifiably draw around a certain number of our artists and not the others. Where you suffer the greatest risk of dilution is when you do things outside your expertise. We do things with outside companies, and those are not always branded.

You have often talked about maintaining the Rhino culture—from Rhino’s pop-culture obsession to its commitment to social work to its sometimes over-the-top marketing efforts. How do you maintain that sensibility and simultaneously work more closely with the parent company?

I view my role as being able to set goals and make sure we’ve hired... 

continued on >>p23
AT A CLOSER GLANCE, JANE REALIZES IT’S RHINO WHO’S BEEN MAKING HER LOOK BEAUTIFUL ALL THESE YEARS.

Ivy Hill and Cinram thank RHINO for 27 years of making us all look good.
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The best, most team-oriented people. After that, I like to get out of the way.

This is a very open culture, where it's not about rampant control and discipline. The challenge for me has been the same as it's been for everyone in the business. More and more is expected out of an area like ours from the parent company. There's nothing wrong with that; that's the economic reality we work in. So I try to strike a balance between making sure people understand the challenges and the goals, but I also try not to grind it into them so it becomes an obsession. You can't totally insulate people, and you can't make it all about budgets and margins without losing track of what made you successful in the first place.

You have a Ramones boxed set coming out this year, following on the heels of a number of Ramones reissues. Is there ever a point when you are done with a catalog?

In theory there is a point at which you are done. The Warner catalog is so vast that that point is nowhere on our horizon, and you do have all those outside projects and productions to focus on. All of your work on a catalog could be done at a certain point, but if past experience is an indicator, before that point happens, the formats will change enough and a new generation of consumers will come along so you can do it again.

As the industry looks ahead to new formats, such as DualDisc, and opportunities in the online and mobile world, what have you outlined as the challenges facing Rhino?

I view us as having three core focuses over the next few years. One is continuing to work with the Warner Music Group catalog.

The second is to expand the base of what we release so it's not just compilations and boxed sets. We want to develop new content, particularly in the video area. A number of the big successes over the past few years have been such videos as "Concert for George," and "The Eagles: [Farewell] I Tour - Live From Melbourne" that just came out.

We don't just want to develop new content, but want to strike new deals with outside production entities and artists who control portions of their entire catalog. We don't want to just be the Warner Music Group catalog company.

Our third focus is figuring out how in the digital and wireless space we can create the same tactile response and emotional satisfaction as picking up a boxed set. That's a real challenge. We have to find a way to create product that people are happy with a year from now, as opposed to just giving someone a bunch of digital files. You need more than a strong brand to make that connection. You need bells and whistles. We need to find a way to give consumers the corollary of the things that drive our releases in the physical world. ---
TO HAROLD BRONSON,
RICHARD FOOS, SCOTT PASCUCCI
AND ALL OF OUR FRIENDS AT RHINO NOW AND OVER THE YEARS.

CONGRATULATIONS ON RHINO'S 27TH ANNIVERSARY!

WE'RE HAPPY AND PROUD TO HAVE WORKED WITH YOU SINCE RHINO'S EARLY DAYS ON PICO BOULEVARD.
HERE'S TO KEEPING GREAT MUSIC ALIVE.

ALL YOUR FRIENDS AT MANATT, PHELPS & PHILLIPS, LLP
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CATALOG FINDS NEW LIFE ONLINE

BY CRAIG ROSEN

Rhino Records has been aggressively striving to give its catalog new life in new media. It is an effort that began in 1996 when the label launched rhino.com, and it continues today in deals with cell phone carriers, digital music stores and various other outlets.

Since its inception, rhino.com has served as a marketing tool and an online store. It is a move that has proved to be fortuitous, given the current environment at brick-and-mortar retail outlets.

"With catalog music becoming harder and harder to find in retail stores, rhino.com is a great place for people to go not only to find out about what we have, but also to actually buy it," Rhino senior VP of new-media strategy David Dorn says. "There are a lot of boxed sets that we have that retailers just don't [carry], so it's a great destination."

Not only is the complete Rhino catalog available through the Web site, but it also offers selected releases by competitors. That started in 2003 as part of a venture with Rolling Stone promoting the magazine's list of the 500 greatest albums ever made.

"We have no intention of competing with the Amazons of the world," Dorn says. "We're not looking to build a site like that, but there are occasions when we say, 'Here's a new release that we think is cool.' Or 'Here are some reissues that came out from Columbia that you should know about.'"

Aside from rhino.com, the label also operates rhinohandmade.com, which is devoted to its limited-edition reissues on its Hand Made imprint, and onlyhitmusic.com, which serves as a hub for Warner Music Group titles spotlighted in TV ad campaigns.

Rhino has also used its main Web site to showcase and sell ringtones from WMG artists. "We work closely with all four of the major carriers," Dorn says. "Rhino really is the only catalog company that is pushing mobile content, and the carriers are realizing that it can't just be a hip-hop world."

Rhino has also overseen an exclusive site for American Express Blue cardholders since 2003. According to Dorn, the site provides access to contests, exclusive listening parties and opportunities to buy albums and boxed sets at deep discounts.

"What we get out of that is a pretty good marketing push to the people who [American Express Blue] has e-mail addresses for," he adds, noting that that database contains well over 1 million subscribers.

The label has also found creative ways to work with digital music stores. In conjunction with Rhino's 27th anniversary, Rhino will offer 27 out-of-print titles—by acts ranging from Iggy Pop and Alice Cooper to Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, Sam & Dave and the Meters—for sale via Apple Computer's iTunes Music Store.

Available online are out-of-print titles by Iggy Pop and Alice Cooper.
In its 20-year history, Rhino Home Video has stayed true to its oddball mentality.

With a catalog ranging from "Attack of the Killer Tomatoes" to "Laugh-In" and "H.R. Pufnstuf," the company has released DVDs that are representative of pop culture and feature extensive extras and packaging.

"Our brand is nostalgic," says Paul DeGooyer, VP of home video for Rhino Entertainment. "Releases are put together in a very caring way. We look for stuff that is super creative and really captures the spirit of its time."

The company, which formed in 1985 to accompany Rhino Entertainment's eclectic audio business, releases titles in a number of genres, including music, TV, kids' programming, comedy, documentaries, lifestyle, cult horror and science fiction.

Led by the renowned Arny Schorr during most of its existence, the company crafted a product line that includes such brands as Transformers, Gumby and G.I. Joe. DeGooyer claims that Schorr pioneered the TV side of the video business, which is now one of the largest growth categories in DVD.

Even after Rhino became part of the Warner Music Group in 1998, the division has stayed its course while taking advantage of the WEA reach.

"Because we have WEA and all their systems, we're really not in the shipping-and-forgetting-about-it business," DeGooyer says. "If there's a hot market, we're going to leap and can sustain things due to our structure."

DeGooyer estimates that Rhino video products generate less than one-quarter of Rhino Entertainment's total revenue, but he says that the division is "poised for exceptional growth."

Some of its top sales successes are music titles. In June, "The Eagles: Farewell I Tour—Live From Melbourne" sold 114,000 copies in its first week, nearing the 120,000-unit first-week music DVD sales record set by another of the company's titles, "Led Zeppelin," in 2003, according to DeGooyer.

Other big sellers include "Concert for George" (2003) and Eric Clapton's "Crossroads Guitar Festival" (2004). Though many of its sales successes in music appeal to fans of classic rock artists, the company is looking to the future. "The next big challenge on the music side of the business is how continued on >> p27

Top-selling DVDs include 'Concert for George,' 'Led Zeppelin' and 'The Eagles: Farewell I Tour'
By the time Rhino turned 27, we grabbed 55 Gold and Platinum Records, 25 Gold and Platinum videos, 50 Grammy® Nominations, 9 Grammy® Awards, and 973,566,822 Impassioned pleas to raid our promo closets...

...and the chance to work with the artists and recordings that changed our lives.

For more information visit www.rhino.com/27
Memo
To: Scott Pascucci
From: Tom Hoitsma
CC: Rhino Marketing
Date: August 13, 2005
Re: Gladly relenting

Here’s to another 27 years of keeping the music in the music business.

continued from >>p26

to use DVD to develop and break acts,” DeGooyer says.

UPCOMING RELEASES
Rhino’s fall music DVD releases may be its strongest quarterly slate yet.
Titles include a new Ramones DVD set featuring material “rumored to exist but
never seen,” according to DeGooyer.
Other releases include “Concert for Bangladesh,” the Cream reunion show
(“Cream Live”) and the first in a series of Barbra Streisand projects focusing
on her classic TV appearances.
While its music titles include many Rhino staples, such as standout pack-
aging and extras, the TV category takes these concepts to the next level.
A current example, the just released 10-DVD set “Candid Camera: Five
Decades of Smiles,” has a suggested retail price of $99.95 and includes a
cover with its own hidden camera and such features as a two-hour greatest-
moments disc.
The company has a particular affinity for the works of Sid and Marty
Krofft, having put out three seasons of “Land of the Lost,” “Lidsville: The
Complete Series” and “Sigmund and the Sea Monsters” in addition to “H.R.
Pufnstuf” titles.
“These shows weren’t trying to sell you toys or teach a life lesson, but they
were so creative,” DeGooyer notes.
Many of Rhino’s TV releases also fall

Popular pop-cultural pleasures include “Candid Camera” and “H.R. Pufnstuf.”

“Rhino has always had the feel of a label that is really run
by fans.”
—BOB BELL,
VIRGIN MEGASTORES

into the kids’ category, such as prod-
ucts from the Transformers brand, but
are developed with an adult fan in mind.
“There’s a number of ways to get TV
titles into the marketplace: single sticks
and very expensive sets,” DeGooyer
says. “We land in the middle. We have
maintained a high price point.”
For its other categories, the key is
releasing titles that consumers will
not find anywhere else.
In the horror genre, for example,
Rhino has released several “Horrible
Horrors” collections, which are
literally horrible horror movies.
“By picking what we do, we give
people a reason to own it,” DeGooyer
explains.
The company tends to own the
rights to all of its titles but does cur-
rently have a joint venture with
Destroy Entertainment to seek out
lifestyle/sports titles.
Rhino believes in developing strong
marketing campaigns and working
closely with retailers.
Most of its campaigns are centered
on more grass-roots elements instead
of large media buys. According to
DeGooyer, “Customers are jaded.
They are sick of seeing billboards
and TV ads for big titles.”
The company will do TV promotions
for many of its classic titles on TV
Land and Nick at Nite where appro-
priate, but tends to go after viral
and word-of-mouth marketing more often.
Rhino also works closely with such
specialty retailers as Virgin Megastores.
“Rhino has always had the feel of a
label that is really run by fans,” says Bob
Bell, DVD product manager for Virgin.
Bell notes that while many Rhino
releases present shelf-space chal-
lenges, the chain will do what it can to
carry the titles and “wants them to
keep doing innovative products.”
DeGooyer says that Rhino is actively
determining how it will involve itself
in video-on-demand and other means
of digital distribution. He says Rhino
will embrace these channels because
they will offer an easier way for customers
to seek out its specialty content.

www.americanradiohistory.com
27 years. Always a cut above.

Congratulations to Rhino for their unique style of success.
With a Little Help From My Friends”—a song Rhino Entertainment has released versions of by Ringo Starr, George Burns and Bugs Bunny—could serve as a theme of sorts for Rhino's business. The company has continued to thrive during its 27-year run, thanks in part to relationships it has forged with a number of key companies.

"We work well together because [these long-term partners] understand the business that we're in and our commitment to delivering great products to consumers at a price that works," Rhino executive VP of marketing and sales Kevin Gore says. "Our partners understand that we're a phenomenal filter. The people that work at Rhino are music enthusiasts of the highest degree, and our passion for what we do and the products we put out in the marketplace really come from the heart."

Since 1992, one of those partners has been WEA, which distributes Rhino products. It is a relationship that has been mutually beneficial.

"Rhino not only produces a consistent flow of great products that regularly connect with and excite music fans, but they also keep retail in mind by elevating the sell-through viability of the CD, DVD and digital download," WEA president/CEO continued on >>p31
HAPPY 27TH ANNIVERSARY!

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT RHINO

WE WOULDN'T BE HERE WITHOUT YOU
(AND VICE VERSA)!
continued from >>p 30

John Esposito says, "We can always count on Rhino to keep the pipeline filled with a wide range of quality material and to support their products with comprehensive marketing plans that drive sales. They make our job at WEA that much easier."

Rhino has also had a long-term relationship with packaging company Ivy Hill. "From my point of view, Rhino is the package guru of the record business," Ivy Hill president Arthur Kern says. "They understand that in order to stand out in record stores, they have to be a little different. They have been more of a creative marketing company than a record company."

That expertise has also been appreciated by the 86-store Tower Records chain, which has a long-standing relationship with the label. "Even back in the days when they were distributed by CEMA [now EMI Music Marketing], they had their fingers on the pulse," says Terrell Benton, national audio buyer for West Sacramento, Calif.-based Tower. "They do the most comprehensive and loving job."

That care has also drawn such nontraditional music retailers as Starbucks. The coffee chain formed an alliance with Rhino nearly 10 years ago. In fact, in 1996, Starbucks and Rhino compiled the chain's second and third CD releases, the R&B compilations Smooth & Soulful and Shimmy Shake.

Recent exclusives compiled for Starbucks' Hear Music imprint include Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon" and two Joni Mitchell-themed compilations, "Songs Chosen by Her Friends & Fellow Musicians" and "Artist's Choice: Music That Matters to Her."

"The great thing about working with Starbucks is that first and foremost they are dedicated to the music and the artist, and that dovetails perfectly with Rhino's attitude, which is all about the music and the artist coming first," says Mark Pinkus, Rhino senior VP of strategic marketing, custom products, and synch licensing.

Timothy Jones, a product development executive for Hear Music, says the feeling is mutual. "They understand how important content is," he says. "They work as hard for you when you're doing another project and you need a couple of their tracks as they do when they have the entire package and you are licensing all the tracks from Rhino."
"LET THE DIGGING COMMENCE AND HOLLER LOUD WHEN YOU FIND SOME TREASURE"
- DOC RHINO

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RHINO
ENTERTAINMENT

CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS

BY CRAIG ROSEN

During its 27-year existence, Rhino Records has earned a reputation not only for its releases and compilations but also for its dedication to social causes.

The company's commitment is so strong that its social mission to "make a difference wherever it can" is posted on its Web site, along with links to such charitable organizations as Doctors Without Borders, Common Cause, and the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy.

This commitment began with the label's co-founders, Richard Foos and Harold Bronson, and was spearheaded by longtime senior VP of A&R Gary Stewart. Although the trio has since left the label, that tradition lives on.

Rhino director of development and administration Terri Mouton carries the torch. "It's such an important part of the Rhino brand," Mouton says. "[Rhino president] Scott Pascucci has just been great, so that every year we're able to continue the work."

That work is led by Rhino's Social Environmental Responsibility Team, whose mission is to raise awareness, ignite activism, encourage responsible volunteerism and support environmental, economic, and social justice efforts. The Los Angeles-based Liberty Hill Foundation guides the label's charitable giving, and together they follow the motto "change, not charity."

Rhino encourages its employees to participate in community service programs by offering them six days off per year in exchange for time volunteering for a nonprofit, nonpolitical, nonpartisan organization.

In 2004, 90 employees—roughly 64% of the label's work force—took advantage of the program.

Mouton notes that Rhino also offers quarterly grants. "The company devotes $3,000 a quarter that we distribute among employees that are actively volunteering at nonprofit organizations," she says.

There is also the Bucks-a-Week program, which encourages employees to donate to various charities through automatic payroll deduction. Recipients include the Woolen Center, an education/recreation facility in South Central Los Angeles founded by the mother of a security guard who was killed in a drive-by shooting.

The label also has mentoring programs to assist at-risk youths, and quarterly speaker lunches to raise awareness about social issues.

Rhino frequently takes these messages to its CDs, encouraging artists to put public service announcements on their packages. Those who have taken advantage of the label include filmmaker Michael Moore, whose "Fahrenheit 9/11" soundtrack included a Rock the Vote PSA, and James Taylor, whose best-of set included a spot for the Natural Resources Defense Council.
Congratulations on 27 Years in the Spotlight.

What do these great artists have in common?

Black Sabbath • X • The Ramones • Ray Charles • Elvis Costello • 10,000 Maniacs
Aretha Franklin • Fleetwood Mac • Faces • YES • The Cars • Natalie Merchant
Velvet Underground • Cher • Echo & the Bunnymen • Otis Redding • Foreigner
Rickie Lee Jones • Los Lobos
Paul Simon • The Stooges
T.Rex • Richard Pryor
Television • The Smiths
Blasters • Warren Zevon
Randy Newman • Tom Waits
Joy Division • James Taylor
De La Soul • Sam & Dave
Booker T. & MG's • DEVO
Crazy Horse • The Spinners
Hoobie & the Blowfish

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Hot TITLES ON TAP

Retailers Await New Hits To Drive Sales Through Year’s End

The rest of 2005 is looking hot hot hot with major albums coming from such superstars as Madonna, Paul McCartney, 50 Cent and Kanye West. When the annual convention and marketplace of the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers convenes Aug. 11-14 in San Diego, retailers will be buzzing about these titles. Compiled by Ed Christman and Todd Martens from a survey of major distributors, key indie distributors and retailers, this alphabetized list reflects information available from those sources at press time.

India.Arie / Motown
India.Arie has struck platinum with her first two albums, "Acoustic Soul" in 2001 and "Voyage to India" in 2002, so there's every expectation she'll do it again with her third release, due Sept. 27. The as-yet-untitled album marks her first use of outside producers, which could allow her sound to evolve. But a possible drawback for some merchants: Her last album included exclusive tracks for Target, which featured her in its Christmas commercials. It is not known whether a similar tactic will be part of Motown's marketing strategy this time around.

Big Star / Rykodisc
Big Star's long-awaited new album—the group's first in more than two decades—should finally hit retail shelves in September on Rykodisc. The album finds Big Star originals Alex Chilton and Jody Stephens joining longtime touring companions the Posies' Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow. Early reports on the album pin the sound close to that of the group's 1972 debut, "#1 Record," a cult favorite.

Blackalicious / Anti-
The underground hip-hop duo Blackalicious will follow its 2002 major-label debut, "Blazing Arrow" (MCA), which scanned 231,030 units, with a return to the independent world via Epitaph's Anti-imprint, distributed through Alternative Distribution Alliance. "The Craft" is due Sept. 27 and features such guests as George Clinton, Lyrics Born and Floetry, as well as an even more expansive sound that has been tipped to incorporate some rock touches.

Blink-182 / Geffen/Interscope
After nine studio albums, including four that struck platinum, Blink-182 will release a greatest-hits package on Geffen this November. The pop-punk band's most recent release, a self-titled album from 2003, scanned 2.1 million units.

Bloodhound Gang / Geffen
Bloodhound Gang's long-awaited follow-up to the platinum-selling "Hoorey for Boobies" is due in September on Geffen. But the label has yet to announce a title for the latest from the act it calls a "chain-smoking, binge-drinking, girl-swapping" rap/rock band.

Bon Jovi / Island
Bon Jovi wants us all to "Have a Nice Day," and to help ensure that we do, its album of that title will hit stores Sept. 19. The band always has platinum potential, although its most recent albums "Bounce" and "This Left Feels Right" scanned 712,971 and 424,489, respectively. The new album originally was expected from Island in the spring.

Jon Bon Jovi described it to Billboard last October as a "loud guitar, big rock record."

Eric Clapton / Duck/Reprise
Eric Clapton is one veteran artist who has flirted reliably with gold and sometimes platinum since releasing his debut album, "461 Ocean Blvd," in 1973. He came to his solo career after work in seminal bands including the Yardbirds, Cream, Blind Faith and Derek & the Dominos.

His new album, "Back Home," is due Aug. 30 on Duck/Reprise. It follows 2001's "Reptile," his last studio album of original recordings, which scanned 560,351, and 2004's "Me & Mr. Johnson," which scanned 614,475.

Sheryl Crow / A&M/Interscope
Sheryl Crow will release her fifth studio album, "Cmon, Cmon" Sept. 27 on A&M. Her previous album, "The Very Best of Sheryl Crow," scanned almost 3.4 million, and expectations are high for the new effort, with lead single "Good Is Good" slated to hit radio in August. The 10-track album will benefit from a splashy setup, sources say, but Interscope executives are playing their cards close to the vest. Crow will support the album with a tour, according to her Web site, but the dates are not yet confirmed.

Dashboard Confessional / Vagrant/Interscope
The most recent album from Dashboard Confessional, "A Mark, a Mission, a Brand, a Scar," was its most successful yet, scanning 805,981 units. A new Vagrant/Interscope release from the band, expected in the fourth quarter, is produced by Daniel Lanois and is being touted by the label as a career album.

Del the Funky Homosapien / Hieroglyphics
Oakland, Calif.-based rapper Del the Funky Homosapien has thrived just outside the mainstream, working with Oakland's respected hip-hop collective the Hieroglyphics, distributed by RED, and collaborating with the likes of Gorillaz and Handsome Boy Modeling School. This fall, the freestyle specialist will issue his first proper solo album since 2000's "Both Sides of the Brain," which scanned 125,104 units.

Neil Diamond / Columbia Records
Neil Diamond's next album, due Sept. 6 from Columbia, gets producer Rick Rubin's treatment, with a stripped-down sound that brings Diamond back to his singer/songwriter roots. With Rubin using the formula that helped revive Johnny Cash's career, the new album could appeal to a diverse audience, including veteran fans and indie rock kids. With a broader fan base, and a major tour planned, Diamond could surpass sales of his previous album, "Three Chord Opera," which has scanned 426,776.
Elephant Man / VP

Dancehall success story Elephant Man returns with a new album slated for October release, the follow-up to his 2003 album, "Good 2 Go," which scanned 187,616 units. As reggae continues to influence popular R&B genres, Elephant Man's forthcoming set will easily be VP's biggest album of the fall. Observers are eager to see if it can repeat the success of his hit single "Pon Di River, Pon Di Bank."

50 Cent / Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/G-Unit

A film soundtrack and a videogame are on tap this holiday season from 50 Cent, and both are expected to be a bonanza for retailers, given the sales of the artist's first two albums, "Get Rich or Die Tryin'" and "The Massacre." The latter has scanned 4.15 million units since its release earlier this year. In early November, Shady/Aftermath/Interscope/G-Unit will release the soundtrack to 50 Cent's movie "Get Rich or Die Trying." (It is unclear if the album will carry a different title to avoid confusion with his earlier release.) 50 Cent also moves into the videogame sector in November with "Bulletproof," featuring the rapper as well as his music.

While both projects could draw money out of the pockets of the record-buying public, they will only add to 50 Cent's visibility and likely will deliver multiplatinum sales.

Hooobastank / Island

Hooobastank is in the studio, gearing up for the release of its third album later this year. Because each of its two previous albums have scanned more than 1 million units, and rock music in general is currently selling well, the band is expected to help the genre continue its run at the top of the charts.

Madonna / Warner Bros. Records

Madonna, a perennial multiplatinum threat, reaches for the stratosphere again with her next album, "Confessions on a Dancefloor." As its title promises, the album returns the singer to the dance realm, the genre that has yielded her biggest sales. The album—due in late November, just in time for the holiday rush—comes two years after her double-platinum "American Life" album. The first single off the new disc will be "Hung Up," produced by Stuart Price, according to the artist's Web site.

Paul McCartney / Capitol

While it has been some time since he has hit platinum, Paul McCartney on Sept. 13 will release "Chaos and Creation in the Back Yard," his first album since 2001's "Driving Rain," which has scanned 135,763 units. Like the Rolling Stones, who are also releasing a new album (see below), McCartney will support the Capitol release with a tour. And like the Stones, he always delivers the goods live.

In fact, for the last 15 years, it seems tours by the two acts have coincided, sparking discussion about who delivered the better performance. And that word-of-mouth is a key factor in spurring ticket-and album sales.

Nickelback / Roadrunner

Nickelback is expected to release its fifth album in October. While little news is available on the Roadrunner album, the band's most recent album, "Long Road," has scanned 2.8 million units and merchants look to the band to deliver one of the hit rock titles of the holiday selling season.

Rev. Run / Russell Simmons Music Group

Rev. Run, who some might remember from a little rap band called Run-D.M.C., will release his first solo album Sept. 13. The set, titled "Distortion," will appear on his brother's new label, Def Jam, and is expected to be high at that time because Arista/Profile/Legacy will release the first four Run-D.M.C. albums a week earlier.

The Rolling Stones / Virgin

The Rolling Stones, long proclaimed the greatest rock'n'roll band in the world, are set to release their 24th studio album and their first since 1997's " Bridges to Babylon," which has scanned 1.16 million units. The as-yet-unitled set, due in September, will be heralded by the single "One No Not You Again," which the band debuted this May at a New York event announcing the band's first tour since 2002. The new album certainly will benefit from all the hoopla that accompanies a Stones tour, including this trek's high-profile sponsorship by Ameriquest.

Never the biggest-selling band, even in its heyday, the Stones nevertheless could go platinum once again as the old-school band of the moment. Retailers may recall that the Stones struck an exclusive deal with Best Buy for their "Four Flicks" DVD, but their distributor, EMI, is the major least likely to employ the "exclusive" strategy nowadays.

Richard Thompson / Cooking Vinyl

Richard Thompson's live show, billed as "1000 Years of Popular Music," has led to multiple-nightstands in a number of major markets. The performances, which include everything from medieval Italian ballads to the songs of Hank Williams and Prince, were recorded for a live DVD/CD, to be issued Oct. 5 on Cooking Vinyl through Koch. The project follows on the heels of Thompson's "Front Parlour Ballads" CD, released Aug. 9.

Kanye West / Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam

Some merchants say the scheduling of Kanye West's sophomore effort, "Late Registration," is a good example of what's wrong with the U.S. music business this year. The Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam album, initially slated to hit stores July 16, has been pushed back twice—to Aug. 15, then Aug. 30—which is why some worry that it could slip to even later in the year. But such concern is a tribute to West's firepower: His debut album, "The College Dropout," scanned 2.7 million.

Gretchen Wilson / Sony Nashville

The follow-up to Gretchen Wilson's quadruple-platinum debut album is "All Jacked Up," set for a Sept. 27 release. The album, produced by Wilson, Mark Wright and John Rich, will be issued in the CD and DualDisc format. Wilson, who played the NARM convention last year just as her hit album "Here for the Party" was exploding, wrote or co-wrote seven of the tracks on the new set, including the title track, "Skool Ring," "California Girls" and "Politically Uncorrect." Merle Haggard contributes guest vocals.

Stevie Wonder / Motown

Stevie Wonder has been threatening to release "A Time 2 Love" for months. The most recent due date, June 14, came and went. Now the 18-track Motown album is on the release schedule for the third quarter. When it does arrive, it will be Wonder's first studio album since 1995's "Conversation Peace," which has scanned 360,835 units. Wonder is another veteran artist who could break back into the platinum ranks with the right release.

In May, Motown began its setup for the new disc with the release of the single "So What's the Fuss." Some merchants who learned of the album's delay too late to pull ads think the track should be called "So Where's the Album?"
Retailers Convene Amid Growing Challenges

Last year, music retailers were on a high when they pulled into San Diego for the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers annual convention, and that gathering turned out to be the organization's most successful of the new century.

After all, U.S. album sales for first-half 2004 were up 7.1%, the first increase since 2000. Also, retailers were enjoying a psychological pickup because the majors and Internet analysts—who had inflicted so much damage on brick-and-mortar retail stocks with incorrect projections about digital sales trends—were finally acknowledging that for the next five years at least, the CD format would be driving the industry's fortunes.

But this year's NARM convention, Aug. 11-14 in San Diego, could take on a different tone, as first-half 2005 album sales were down 7.6%, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Once again, the press "digerati" are having a field day, predicting that record stores will soon be wiped off the face of the earth.

Some day they might be proved right, but the sad fact is that with revisionist history, it won't matter how many times they were wrong along the way.

"The retail music industry looks to be in a state of long-term decline," Goldman Sachs retail analyst Matt Fassler says, expressing a view shared by many of his peers. "The biggest culprit is digital downloading, legal and otherwise. As much as the retailers seem to want to believe that consumers are going to buy a CD, upload it and burn it onto their iPod, the reality is, that is a much less convenient way to get music than the other options that are easily available for the same cost and far less hassle."

Let's wait before tackling that prediction of long-term decline and consider first Fassler's assertion that downloading is the main cause of the current slump.

While it is likely true that downloading—authorized and unauthorized—will play a growing role going forward, most music merchandisers privately cite CD burning as the biggest reason sales have been down since 2000. But they haven't been too public with that opinion, because they don't want to undercut the Recording Industry Assn. of America's stance as it fights unauthorized downloading in the courts and before Congress and the media.

And what do retailers get for backing the record companies and...continued on >>p40
Your Life...Your Music...Your VIBE

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RETAILERS CONVENE (cont.)

continued from >>p38

their trade group?

So far, the labels appear to be working under the assumption that digital distribution will soon be fueling music industry growth.

In fact, some are banking on the long tail that virtual shelf space will provide. In other words, not everyone at the majors is worried about the current market and the transition to the digital world, and that sometimes shows in a cavalier attitude toward music retail.

But believers in the digital paradise face some problems. As my Billboard colleague Brian Garrity points out, the industry is not even treading water. The growth for digital track and album sales is not outpacing the sales decline for physical goods.

This observation is based on my math in a July 23 article showing the 23 million-unit deficit in album sales for first-half 2005 reduced to 10 million units when digital tracks and subscription revenue are converted into album sales.

So, while digital revenue may one day be the industry's savior, that isn't the case now. And that's frightening.

After all, whenever the industry has introduced a format in the past, the new format has stimulated growth. And if you don't think digital is a format and you want to call it a distribution channel instead, the argument still holds: New distribution channels generally result in incremental new sales.

So, why isn't that happening now? Could it be because the majors did not pay enough attention to my previous warnings about managing the transition to the digital world to yield the maximum amount of revenue?

In addition to unauthorized file-sharing and CD-burning, retail consolidation and the downsizing of music titles available in those stores still standing are contributing to the decline of album sales. And it seems to me that the majors are trying to be ignorant of the role they play in these dynamics.

Everyone knows that music consumers have been flocking to big-box merchants and home electronics chains from conventional record stores. Those customers are being lured by price and the far superior marketing skills and muscle the big boxes deploy.

In their wake, thousands of record stores have been shuttered, while thousands more are reducing their music SKUs and diversifying into other product lines.

The big-box strategies surely have caused consolidation and even devestation at the account level, but it would be wrong to hold big boxes accountable for what comes natural to them: kicking competitive butt.

It wouldn't be wrong, however, to blame the labels for underwriting the price wars, which serve to hasten the overconsolidation of the music retail sector.

To make matters worse, the labels aren't just funding the transfer of customers to big boxes, they are helping ensure that big boxes become the destination of choice by giving them exclusive music and availability windows.

I can understand the short-term benefit of such windows: explosive sales fueled by million-dollar advertising campaigns on somebody else's dime.

Now, it's true that the labels' latest infatuation, Starbucks Coffee, is not a big box, and the chain's move into music promises impressive sales for certain titles, including its exclusives from Alanis Morissette and Bob Dylan.

But while the labels may see this as good news, I wonder if the end result is bad for the music industry.

After all, what has happened since labels have outright embraced billion-dollar retail accounts like Wal-Mart, Target, Best Buy and now Starbucks?

Well, for one thing, music sales have plummeted. Am I the only one who thinks there is a correlation between the two occurrences?

Sure, the music specialty accounts are as much to blame for their predicament as anybody else. Many chains, even before the financial picture became more challenging, were lax about upgrading their stores. Most now look shabby and behind the times.

Also, instead of embracing the labels' digital initiative when they had the chance, music specialty accounts chose to fight them on profit splits and the control of customer information.

The result is obvious: Record store chains have been left in the dust and likely will not become major players in the digital world.

All of which brings us back to Fassler's assertion that "the retail music industry looks to be in a state of long-term decline."

That may be true. But in the short term, the majors are dependent on physical goods for revenue and profits, so they might want to consider making an effort to ensure that the old model can still run smoothly, instead of throwing a wrench in the works with exclusives.

In other words, now is the time for labels to re-examine how they are managing the transition from physical goods to digital distribution. And I can't think of a better place to do that than in San Diego at NARM.

I know some label and distribution executives hate NARM because they are tired of hearing retail whining. Likewise, some music merchandisers dislike NARM because, in the words of one wholesaler, "not one thing we brought up last year, not one issue, was dealt with. The majors will continue to do what they always do, which is whatever they want, regardless of our concerns."

But considering the stakes, can both sides of the industry afford to maintain such low expectations of each other?

Issues like exclusives, copy protection, DualDiscs, release schedules and media-burning kiosks may seem like repeats from the last few NARMS, but now is the time to really do something about them, to shape the strongest possible marketplace going forward.
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THE MEN BEHIND THE BOARDS
TOP PRODUCERS SOUND OFF ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS
BY SUSAN BUTLER
not so long ago, producers and engineers at the top of their game showed up to work at grand studios, spending most of their time behind massive soundboards recording, editing and mixing music. They devoted their attention to finding the right combination of sounds to help artists strike an emotional chord with listeners.

But that all changed Sept. 11, 2001, when the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and elsewhere reshaped their business.

“The economy spiraled out of control after 9-11,” Grammy Award-winning producer/engineer Elliot Scheiner says. “A lot of New York work was canceled, but so was work in L.A. A lot of people didn’t go into the studios, [unauthorized] file sharing started to pick up enormously, and huge layoffs in the industry followed.”

In the ensuing years, a new reality set in for producers and engineers. It has been particularly apparent to those like Scheiner, who wears both hats.

Recording budgets were cut, and a significant amount of the work shifted from professional rooms to home studios, where engineers are expected to furnish their own pro-quality gear.

Moreover, the business terms for many producers and engineers changed, sometimes reducing their income. This often means they work longer hours and juggle more projects.

At the same time, producers are facing a new pressure to bring more to the table.

“When you produce an album now, a lot of labels, artists and managers expect that you’re able to write a hit,” says Ed Cherney, another Grammy-winning producer/engineer, known for his work with such acts as Bonnie Raitt, Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones and Dave Matthews Band.

“John Shanks is a classic example. He can write the album, play on it, produce it and arrange it,” Cherney says. “Before, all those things were split up between people. Now the business model seems to be that you need to do all those things to be really successful.”

Rose Mann-Cherney, president of the Record Plant in Los Angeles, has been a friend to many producers and engineers for more than 25 years. She estimates that 60% of the producers who currently record at the Record Plant are songwriters.

When their recording budgets permit, she says, they book multiple rooms at the studio—one for writing and one for recording.

But today’s recording budgets generally do not provide such a luxury. The producers interviewed for this story estimate that budgets have been reduced by 25%-35% in recent years.

Scheiner says labels are cutting budgets largely by saving on studio time. This means producer/engineers must record in home studios—and provide all of their own technical support.

“If you’re just paying me and not paying $2,000/$2,500 per day for a studio, that absolutely cuts down on the price,” Cherney says. “Now you basically have to show up with all the tools. If you don’t, you’re a dinosaur.”

Cherney says there is a positive side to working from home, such as the availability of the studio when the engineer wants to use it and being able to call up the recording where it was left the day before since others are not using the room.

“Your pay in quality a little, but you find new tools. It’s the nut behind the wheel—the guy that’s driving—that’s important.”

Even with a home studio, Scheiner says budget cuts also mean longer hours. “There is no way you can go into a studio and work at the normal pace—a song a day,” he says. “Now you work longer hours, 12-14 per day. You have to work that much more so you can still make money.”

Mann-Cherney says that at the Record Plant, she has seen producers working on multiple projects at the same time.

These working conditions eventually take their toll, says Zoe Thrall, director of the new studio at the Palms Hotel in Las Vegas and formerly GM of the Hit Factory and producer/GM of Power Station and Avatar Studios.

Unlike rookie producer/engineers, she notes, veterans like Scheiner, who has worked with hit acts ranging from the Eagles to the Foo Fighters, and Cherney have years of experience and know what they need to do to create a special sound. “They can work in a garage under battle conditions,” she says.

“But now they have no tech, no assistant engineer to do back-ups or to do whatever it takes to give them a break when they’re in a recording studio. Who is patching and setting up the outboard equipment?”

There are some producer/engineers who have managed to thrive without home studios. Al Schmitt, who has 17 Grammys adorning his shelves, does not have one because he specializes in acoustic, big-band sounds.

“With the kind of work I do—big bands, horn sections or big string sections—I need rooms that have great sound in them, like those at Capitol, Avatar and Right Track. I just need that kind of air and openness, because the better the room sounds, the better the recording is going to sound,” Schmitt says.

Yet Schmitt admits that he has lost work by not having a home studio. “When you go in to make your deal, they want you to make a deal similar to the one made by someone who has his own studio—someone who can do vocal overdubs, guitar overdubs, keyboards, mixing and all—for practically nothing.”

For those who engineer and produce, the deal structures have also changed in the past few years.

Typically, deals have been set up so that a producer receives a fee and a royalty (a given percentage—or “points”—for each record sold). How much of that fee becomes recoupable from future producer royalties depends on the producer’s clout and negotiating prowess. The royalties are generally not paid, however, until the label recoups at least all recording costs from the artist, and sometimes other costs.

Engineers generally receive a nonrecoupable fee. Schmitt says that producers/engineers are seeing a shift in the split in their fees. “Say you were getting $20,000 for engineering and $10,000 for production,” he says. “They try to make the deal the other way around—$10,000 for engineering and $20,000 for producing so they can recoup more for production.”

But with the general downturn in sales, it has become harder than ever for artists to recoup, which means that producers/engineers are not receiving royalties.

“I think we’re living in a time now when a point is basically worthless. I know a lot of people that work on CDs and never see royalties because the artists just don’t recoup,” Cherney says.

Thrall adds, “I can’t think of any producer that’s made anything on the back end. It almost makes sense to just ask for larger front-end and then call it a day. Maybe have the points there, but not expect much for it.”

Aside from the deals, these veterans and others express concern over the way many labels treat recording professionals today.

They say most labels rarely pay in a timely fashion and do not consistently send royalty statements to producers.

Scheiner adds that he knows engineers who were hired by majors to work on, for example, 10 tracks. “After turning in the mixes, the A&R guy says he only likes five tracks and refuses to pay for the rest. It’s not like we’re doing demos,” Scheiner says.

Thrall gapes when she hears about this. “The unfortunate thing is that the record companies don’t understand what these guys do anymore,” she says.

“All the classic A&R guys—Gary Gersh, John Kalodner—would come to the studio at least a couple times per week checking in, asking about the process. That dropped off in the mid-’90s. Now it’s very rare when an A&R guy comes to the studio.”

Some producers complain that labels are not developing artists for long-term careers anymore. Scheiner agrees, saying that this can seriously affect producers, too.

Scheiner says that he still receives royalties for producing albums by such acts as Jimmy Buffett, the Eagles, Steely Dan, Bruce Hornsby and Fleetwood Mac.

“Maybe only 30%-40% of [current] artists will have a catalog 20 years from now,” Scheiner says. “Many companies are in trouble since they won’t have a catalog.”

That also means trouble for producers, who will not be able to count on catalog royalties in years to come.

To assist in their business deals and fee collections, many producers and engineers have personal managers.

But professional representation is not always an ideal solution.

“I had one personal manager in my life and that was not a good experience for me, so I stay away from it,” producer/engineer Al Schmitt says. “I am so busy I don’t need anyone at this point. But sometimes I wish I had somebody to negotiate some of the deals for me, because I’m the worst negotiator in the world. It’s difficult for me to blow my own horn.”

Producer/engineer Elliot Scheiner is happy with his manager, but cautions that some managers who represent a stable of engineers and producers may not always go to bat for each client. A&R reps have told him of instances where a manager who is approached for a particular engineer does not push for the client when the label does not want to pay that person’s price. Instead, the manager simply offers another client to do the job.

Even if a manager or lawyer handles a contract, the producers urge their fellow recording professionals to read them. Scheiner says he recently saw a contract that required him to personally pay for all costs that exceeded a budget for mixing, which he would not agree to do.

Schmitt suggests that everyone make sure that they get all the deal points in writing. “I can’t tell you how many handshakes that I’ve made that have cost me hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of my career.”

He also notes that negotiations often drag on after recording has begun. This can weaken the producer/engineer’s bargaining power.

“Years ago, when I was independently producing Jefferson Airplane and I was negotiating right in the middle of the record, boy,” he says. “The deal was changing daily, and I was getting less and less every time I turned around!”

...
LOS ANGELES—Young couples on dates, baby boomers with their kids, teen girls with moms in tow. They stand in line at the movie theater, waiting to buy tickets. Deciding to have nachos or popcorn. Large or medium soda. But they are not there to see the summer blockbuster film or the latest indie buzz movie. No, they are there to check out their favorite band.

Increasingly, record labels, promoters and artist managers are teaming with National CineMedia to create in-theater screening events touting new music DVDs or concert tours. It is becoming a key new promotion tool for the music industry.

These one-night-only events typically involve beaming programming to theaters in as many as 75 markets across the country. The program could feature a full-length music DVD prior to the title’s street date or a live performance from a stop on an artist’s tour.

Though the concept is not new—in-theater music events trace back to about 2002—the music industry and National CineMedia, a Regal Entertainment Group and AMC Theatres company, are expanding use of the events because of their all-around benefits.

Twelve in-theater music programs took place in 2004, and National CineMedia’s goal is to host two to four per month going forward, according to Dan Diamond, the company’s VP of digital programming.

Some individual music events have been attended by 40,000 patrons nationwide. By 2006, Diamond expects that number to grow to more than 100,000 nationwide for a single event.

Additionally, in a partnership between National CineMedia and Buena Vista Music Group, the first in-theater branded concert series is debuting this summer and may become an annual event.

All events take place at Regal-owned theaters (including seven chains such as United Artists Theatres and Edwards Theatres). It is expected that AMC locations will become involved as early as next year.

“Everybody needs help with marketing” Kiss manager Doc McGhee says. McGhee helped produce the June 27 screening of “Rockin’ the Corps,” a concert filmed at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in San Diego featuring such acts as Destiny’s Child, Godsmack and Ted Nugent, that was broadcast at 132 Regal theaters in 74 markets. He says “the retention span of an audience is 80-something percent versus television.” Image Entertainment is releasing a “Rockin’ the Corps” DVD and CD Sept. 6.

For the theaters, these events help fill auditoriums on Mondays and Tuesdays, which are slower movie traffic nights. “We look at this as an opportunity to drive additional concession revenues,” says Ray Nut, senior VP of business relations for Regal Entertainment Group. “The reason why music made a lot of sense is we could premiere a DVD on a Monday night before it was released on Tuesday. A Monday night in a theater is pretty quiet.”

National CineMedia’s $75 million in-theater digital network makes these events possible. For live events, an uplink located at the concert facility sends the data to a satellite at each individual movie theater. For prerecorded events, content is coded to National CineMedia’s digital network specifications at the company’s Denver headquarters, and is sent to individual satellite receivers at the specific movie theaters. Nut says the content is more than 99% reliable. The theaters are making money from concessions, but the financial impact on the music industry is less clear. Music executives say it is difficult to pinpoint how many music videos or concert ticket sales are a direct result of the events. It is also unclear how the theaters and music industries share in ticket revenue; admission prices range from $10 to $20. Both sides are also shelling out their own marketing dollars for each event.

Neither party would comment on specific financial details of these deals, though Diamond says that “from a revenue prospective, it’s deal-by-deal dependent. In all cases, everybody wins.”

John Meglen, co-president of Concerts West, a subsidiary of promoter AEG Live, adds, “it’s a misconception that these are giant revenue generators.”

Meglen notes the broadcast of the opening of Prince’s Musicology tour live from Los Angeles’ Staples Center played in 30 cities nationwide. Attendees at the in-theater event also received the same free Prince CD that concert patrons were given.

Mike Carden, Eagle Rock’s North American president of operations and executive VP of Eagle Rock Entertainment, says that sales of its DVD “The Who—Live at the Isle of Wight Festival 1970” most likely increased because of a pre-street date screening event in more than 10 major cities.

“I wouldn’t swear that the numbers would have been the same without it, but this worked,” Carden says. The DVD has sold 39,000 copies, according to Nielsen VideoScan. The key to the success of these events is linked to the strength of the joint marketing efforts between National CineMedia and the specific music industry partners.

For the new “Summer Break 2K5” concert series venture between National CineMedia and Buena Vista Music Group, extensive marketing efforts are expected to lead to demand for an annual series, says Rob Souriall, VP of strategic marketing and promotions for Hollywood Records. Each event in the series costs $20.

The series features three 90-minute shows broadcast to 86 Regal theaters in 66 markets across the country throughout the month of August. They feature Hollywood acts Jesse McCartney and Aly & AJ and Jive Records’ Bowling for Soup. Souriall says that each event is timed to draw attention to key milestones in each act’s career.

Hollywood and Regal share in the promotion. The series is being advertised on Regal’s pre-screen programmer, “The 20th Century,” from July 19 through Aug. 30, landing an estimated 150 million impressions, according to Regal. The promo spots, created by Hollywood, will air in those markets that will screen the series.

Regal is also handing out the best office folders and will promote the series through TV monitors in its theater lobbies. Members of the chain’s loyalty program, the Regal Crown Club, will also receive notification by e-mail or direct mail. Additionally, Hollywood is promoting the series on Radio Disney and the Internet, at Tras’ World and FYE stores and directly to summer campers and YMCA locations.

Official sponsors are even getting involved, a breakthrough that Meglen believes indicates the in-theater model has more “critical mass.” OfficeMax, for example, is offering a “Summer Break 2005” downloadable card featuring a track from each screening event and e-ticket digital content.

Souriall says he expects the Aly & AJ album to “clearly get a bump” and that the McCartney event will “magnify the fact that he has six weeks of tour dates in August and September and will sell fuel of his hottest album into the holiday season.”

He adds that the changes in the industry during the past 10 years have made it more important to find innovative ways to make an impression. “Imagine how powerful this could be for the teen/tween audience who are avid music enthusiasts and are out of school in the summertime,” he says.

Diamond adds that in-theater events are a way to expand an artist’s audience beyond its core.

“Because theaters are family-friendly, in certain examples we’ve seen a much broader demographic at a single event than what might be at a concert," Diamond explains.

When it comes to an event linked to a concert, a theater screening enhances a tour’s routing and appeals to fans who cannot afford concert tickets.

In the best cases, “an artist is playing Seattle, but not Spokane and Boise, this would be a way to extend a tour to reach more fans," Meglen says. “Also, the concert ticket might be $75, but it’s only $15 to see it in the theater.”

In select cases, products tied to the music event are sold in the theater lobby after the screening, though Regal’s Nut says that the chain has to “make sure we’re not cannibalizing the core business at the concession stand.”

McGhee jokes that maybe in the future “people will want to see a show in a theater instead of sitting in the mud.”

BY JILL KIPNIS

IN-THEATER MUSIC EVENTS A GROWTH INDUSTRY

DESTINY’S CHILD performed at the ‘Rockin’ the Corps’ concert June 27. The show, also featuring Ted Nugent and Godsmack, was sold out in 74 markets.
RIHANNA MAKES ‘PLAY’ FOR STARDOM

Having never even seen a celebrity in person, much less been in a room with one, several months ago this summer’s breakout star Rihanna found herself auditioning for Def Jam Recordings president/CEO Jay-Z.

But it turns out it was Jay-Z who was star-struck. “The minute he saw me, he knew I was a star,” Rihanna says. In fact, that same day she was offered a recording contract.

Now the confident 17-year-old is riding the success of first single “Pon De Replay,” and awaiting the release of “Music of the Sun,” her full-length debut that drops Aug. 30.

Jay-Z’s instant belief in Rihanna looks well-placed. Catchy, Caribbean-infused “Pon De Replay” has been picking up steam at radio since early April. The momentum started at top 40 but has rapidly spread to R&B/hip-hop. It is No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100 Airplay chart this issue.

The song is also No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100. And with 207,000 downloads to date, it ranks at No. 1 on Hot Digital Songs for the third week.

“It’s just a good summer song,” says Mark Medina, PD at top 40 radio station KZ2P in Phoenix. “It’s fun, it’s kind of mindless, you don’t have to think about it. You kind of get into the rhythm of it and it jumps off the dial.”

The Barbados-born artist began singing at an early age and eventually attracted the ears of producers and “Replay” co-writers Evan Rogers and Carl Sturken, who refined her skills and brought her to Jay-Z’s Roc-a-Fella imprint.

Despite the island feel of “Replay,” Rihanna says, “Vocally, I’m more influenced by Beyoncé. My style is more straight-up R&B. [With “Pon De Replay”], the Caribbean flavor mostly comes in the beats.”

Rihanna is staying true to her Caribbean roots while promoting the song through appearances at Toronto’s Caribana Festival and the West Indian Day Parade in New York. She will also take part in Teen People’s Listening Lounge showcases.

The marketing effort continues with an Internet campaign, “This Is Rihanna.” The promotion will feature digitized messages and e-greetings from the artist. Roc-a-Fella senior VP of marketing Tracey Waples says, “The idea is that they’ve heard her song and know her name, but don’t really know who she is.” Waples hopes that the campaign will “finally connect the dots between her name and the name of the song and what she looks like.”

The second single off “Music of the Sun” will be “If It’s Lovin’ That You Want,” produced by the TrackMasters. “We put a heartbeat on it,” Rihanna says, “and added some Caribbean flavor.”

The singer is already looking within reggae’s ranks to find her place: “I have to say that the reggae genre has really been male-dominated, and I feel honored to be among the first females.”
Stryper Rocks Again
Christian Metal Act Stages Comeback With New Album

NASHVILLE—Long before there was Switchfoot, Relient K or P.O.D., there was Stryper. In the '80s, its blend of potent metal music and shocking antics changed the way audiences perceived Christian rock. With the Aug. 16 release of "Reborn" on Big 3 Records, the band hopes to stage a comeback—and it may stir things up again in the process.

Lead vocalist Michael Sweet says the seeds for Stryper’s first new studio album since 1991 were planted during the band’s 2004 performance at Walt Disney World’s Night of Joy event. “It felt great on the 2003 tour and that was fun, but it still didn’t feel like it was the right time to unite officially,” he says. “Then we did this show, and it felt like this could be it. We had a new bass player. It feels like a new band. Everyone was real excited.”

New bassist Tracy Ferrie joins Sweet; his brother, drummer Robert Sweet; and lead guitarist Oz Fox. Michael had been writing songs for a new solo album, which became the foundation of “Reborn.”

“There are certain things that Stryper is known for—guitar, vocal harmonies, a lot of melody going on, and we really stuck to that on this record,” Michael says. “Something that tends to date a record these days is if you overproduce it. We really tried to make it with a more in-your-face sound with less overdubs and less effects. It’s almost like you are right there in the room with the band.”

One aspect of the record that is reminiscent of the band’s ‘80s heyday is the shocking cover of “Reborn” features images of the four band members emerging from primordial goo. “It’s a powerful statement,” Michael says. “Through Christ, through God’s love, we can be reborn.”

Michael says the images are supposed to symbolize the rebirth and transformation that happens when one accepts Christ and leaves sin behind. “It’s ugly,” he says. “Sin, muck and slime isn’t pretty. It’s not supposed to be. The only thing that can set us free is the power of God, and that’s what we wanted to convey with that artwork.”

Stryper has never believed in playing it safe. The cover for 1986’s “To Hell With the Devil,” featuring a pentagram-wearing Satan being cast into the pit, was boycotted by Christian retailers, yet became the group’s best-selling album.

Nevertheless, Big 3 and the label’s Christian distributor, EM1 Christian Music Group Distribution, are not taking any chances. “Reborn” CDs will be covered with VeeShrink wrapping to obscure the cover.

“We didn’t want to alienate anyone in this process,” Big 3 GM David Leach says. “But it was important also to let the band be artistically heard and be able to put forth the kind of creativity that they wanted to... The shrink will not alienate a single customer, and yet...”

We give them a ridiculously high royalty rate right off the bat, double or maybe even more what major record deals are now.”

Art of Dying’s first single, “Get Through This,” is at radio now, with a digital commercial single available Aug. 22. The band has already been booked for its first radio show: Sept. 17 at modern rock station KGXR Boise, Idaho. Another track, “Completely,” will be on Electronic Arts’ first arena football videogame, out in January. The album will come out this fall.

Reddick says the Decibel team is eyeing a number of other acts, but that the partners must agree unanimously on all signings. There are also plans to expand into publishing and merchandising.

PETTY PLANS: Is Tom Petty headed to Sanctuary Records after a long stint on Warner Bros.? The word is that his next album, due first-quarter 2006, will come out on Sanctuary. Warner Bros. declined to comment, as did Sanctuary and Petty’s management. However, sources say a few details are all that need to be worked out. Petty has recorded for WB since 1994. (For more on Petty, see page 16.)

POWER PLAY: Manager Asif Ahmed, who was named one of Billboard’s Top 30 Under 30 Power Players earlier this year, has joined Ride Management. He brings with him a number of acts including Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Whitney, Ride, helmed by John Loken and John Perenchio, also represents the Thrills, Spymob, Unwritten Law, Moving Units and Cornellus.

SAVE CBGB: A number of artists have come together for a monthlong campaign to save New York landmark CBGB. The historic 31-year-old nightclub is in the midst of a dispute with its landlord over back rent and is on the last month of its current lease. A coalition including Debbie Harry, “Little Steven” Van Zandt, Tommy Ramone and Lenny Kaye, as well as several historical preservationists, will spend August urging the club’s landlord, the Bowery Residents Committee, to offer CBGB a fair renewal.

The campaign will include a number of benefits at the club as well as an eBay auction. Money raised will go to the BRC if a new lease is negotiated. The campaign concludes with an Aug. 31 rally featuring a free concert.

BATTER UP: Crunk Squad (Jacksonville, Fla.), Fireflight (Orlando, Fla.), Gretchen (Bristol, Tenn.), Lil Balla (Nashville), Plain Jane Auto-mobile (Orlando, Fla.) and Wayne Robbins & the Hell-
the album cover will be there for people to admire and to discuss once they do buy it."

Greg Bays, VP of sales for EMI CMG Distribution, says the "intensity of the imaging plays perfectly to the strong statement the band is wanting to make and plays perfectly into what their audience expects of them."

Has the cover generated any outcry thus far? "I haven't heard a thing," Gospel Music Assn. president John Styll says. "And that may not bode well for Stryper. It may be that nobody cares."

Bays also admits that EMI's decision was a pre-emptive strike and was not based on complaints from retailers. "It's not an issue for us with our retailers. This cover works extremely well for retailers. The VeeShrink adds some value and mystery to the package."

Can Stryper make a comeback? It depends upon whom you ask. Derek Stipe of Monday Morning admits his band was skeptical when it got the call to open for Stryper during its 2003 tour.

"They were always awesome, but they had been out of it for so long," he says. "Then to see how many fans they still draw and to see how excited the crowds were to see them was pretty amazing. I'd say their chances are pretty good."

The band drew attention in the '80s for such antics as throwing Bibles into the audience from the stage, which Michael says it still does. "Nonetheless, they won the day because of their songs," Styll says. "They had this very melodic style of rock, and people like it. 'Always Here for You' was a huge hit."

Styll says Stryper will face a lot of competition in today's marketplace. "They'll get a foot in the door because of who they are, but whether the door opens depends on the music."

The title cut is being serviced to mainstream and Christian rock formats, and the band will support "Reborn" with a fall tour.

Regardless of what happens with Stryper's future, its role in Christian music history is secure, Stipe says. "They took their music where no Christian bands would go at the time and where few still go today."

Additional reporting by Barry A. Jeckell in New York.
Keeping Up With Dr. Jones

Some creative individuals are never content to rest on their laurels. Dr. Bobby Jones is one of those people. He is celebrating his 25th anniversary on BET as host of the cable network's top-rated gospel show, touring extensively and preparing for an upcoming summit he's organizing.

"The more I do them, the better it gets, the more fun I have and I treasure it," he says of taping "Bobby Jones Gospel," which was the first regular show on BET and has been on the network since its inception. "It's not work."

Jones earned his doctorate from Nashville's Vanderbilt University. He taught at Tennessee State University for 17 years, and says he still enjoys educating others through such events as his Industry Retreat, which is in its 17th year. He is also partnering with Stamford, Conn.-based attorney James Walker to present the Urban IMPACT Summit.

Slated for Aug. 7-10, the event will be held at the Foxwoods Resort on the historic Mashanunket Pequot Tribal Nation reservation in southern Connecticut. The forum will include sessions on a variety of topics, from music to health and finance.

Jones says one goal is to create "a greater dialogue" between the traditional gospel and rap/hip-hop factions of the music industry. He is also anxious for members of the gospel community to learn more about the Pequot tribe.

"I was blown away when I went there," he says of the reservation. "There's a museum that traces their ancestry. They were totally poor, and they were able to get their land back and build this museum, and now they are very wealthy. The leader of the tribe asked me if I would come and do something there so they could give back to God."

John P. Kee, Tramaine Hawkins, Olympic silver medalist Anna Hatch, Twinkie Clark, the Las Vegas Mass Choir, Maurette Brown Clark, Cross Movement's D.A. Truth and Bishop Larry Trotter are among the summit participants. A Legends of Gospel event will honor Clark, Shirley Caesar, Candi Staton, Bryan Wilson, the Hawkins Family (Tramaine, Edwin and Walter) and Daryl Coley.

Jones also hosts "Let's Talk Church" on the Word Network and plans to tape that show during the summit.

In addition, Jones recently performed at the Umbria Jazz Festival in Italy and in Australia. He also plans to perform in a play in December in Orlando, Fla., titled "Dirty Laundry."

"I've done just about everything I've ever wanted to do," says Jones, who will maintain a residence in his hometown of Nashville but is planning a move to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "I've done movies, I've written two books, and I write for television shows. I've been in plays. I've traveled worldwide."

But before he moves Jones wants to hold a special event in Music City so that Nashville could recognize what wonderful talent they have in this city.

**NOW HEAR THIS**

Edited by Todd Martens tmartens@billboard.com

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**THE SEXY MAGAZINES**

Formed in 2002 while still in high school, New York-based garage rockers the Sexy Magazines have already graduated to buzz status. The group has opened for Kelly Osbourne, Courtney Love and the Mooney Suzuki, among others, and performed key gigs at South By Southwest and Southern California's Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival. Its self-released EP, "Sex-Murder-Music," has sold more than 1,000 copies, according to vocalist Franco V., and song "Take Some Time" appeared on the 2004 NEMO music festival compilation, which was sold at Starbucks locations nationwide. "I'd love to be on a major label and still have creative control and all that really nice stuff," Franco V. says, "but who knows if that's still possible? Right now an indie might be better for us, but ever since I was a kid I wanted to be on a major, so it's an internal struggle."

Contact: Marsha Vlasic, manager, mvolt@earthlink.net

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**KATHRYN WILLIAMS**

Kathryn Williams visited America once, following the nomination of her self-released second album, "Little Black Numbers," for the 2000 Mercury Prize. After five albums and wide acclaim in Europe, however, the U.K. native has yet to play a show in the United States, and no American label has either signed her or licensed her work. With her newest effort, "Over Fly Over," the singer/songwriter hopes to break from the pack and find a U.S. home. After all, she has seen former tour mates Damien Rice and Turin Brakes get U.S. deals. Her recent release continues her legacy of quiet gems, with her gentle strumming, quixotic voice and lovably bright lyrics. "I'm just used to people buying the record and liking it and buying more," Williams says.

Contact: Stephen King at 212-763-9138

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**Singer's Story On AOL**

Shannon Brown Promotes New Disc With Web Video Series

Warner Bros. artist Shannon Brown will set up her forthcoming album with a unique video series airing on admusic.com. The series, "This Is Shannon Brown," was directed by her husband, music video director Shaun Silva, and gives a behind-the-scenes look at the making of her first album for the label. It begins with the day Brown signed her deal with WB and continues through the making of her album with producer John Rich of Big & Rich, presenting the finished CD to WB chief creative officer Paul Worley and filming her first music video for "Corn Fed." The series debuted July 29. New episodes will be shown about every three weeks.

Brown previously recorded for Arista Nashville and sister label BNA Records. She charted three singles on the country airplay chart between 1998 and 2002.

**SOUND & SPEED: NASCAR drivers and country stars team up to begin January for a new festi-**

**val with the impressively long name Nestle Sound and Speed Presented By SunTrust, a Motor-**

**sports and Music Celebration. Participants will include divers Kyle Petty, Richard Petty, Tony Stewart, Michael Waltrip and Sterling Marlin and country stars Vince Gill, Trisha Yearwood, Trace Adkins, Chely Wright, Jo Dee Messina, Diamond Rio and Kenny Rogers. Gill and Kyle Petty are the event's honorary co-chairs. The festival, set for Jan. 13-14, 2006, in Nashville, will raise funds for the Victory Junction Gang Camp and the Country Music Hall of Fame and Mu-**

**seum charities. Victory Junction is a free camp in Randleman, N.C., for children with chronic or life-threatening illnesses. Tickets cost $20 and $30 and come with a complimentary subscrip-**

**tion to Country Weekly.**

**ON THE AIR: The Atlanta-**

**based Americana Radio Network will launch Sept. 1, claiming to be the first to offer this format full time. Programming will be available to prospective affiliates and other listeners beginning Aug. 15 as a streaming link on the Web site americana radio.com. On Sept. 1, the network will be available via satellite to terrestrial radio stations in the United States, but the Web streaming will remain active. No affiliates have been announced.**


**fer Nettles duets with Jon Bon Jovi on "Who Says You Can't Go Home" on the new Jon Bon Jovi album, due Sept. 19 from Island Records. The two bands will tape an episode of the TV series "CMT Crossroads" Aug. 9 at New York's Hammerstein Ball-**

**room, which will air Sept. 16. Brad Paisley will embark on his CMT-sponsored Time Well Wasted tour Sept. 23 in Port-**

**land, Ore. Comfort Inn and laundry detergent Gain are add-**

**tional title sponsors. The 30-**

**market tour will also feature Sara Evans and Sugarland. Mercury Records artist Steve Azar has finalized a sponsor-**

**ship deal with Exxon-Mobil that will support his 2006 tour. As part of the deal, the On The Run convenience stores at Exxon and Mobil locations will cover his transportation costs.**

Additional reporting by Ken Tucker in Nashville.
LATIN NOTES

LEILA COBO l cbozo@billboard.com

SONY ATV SIGNS FONSI

Latin music publishing continues to be on an exceptionally active run. Most recently, Sony ATV Music Publishing Latin America signed Puerto Rican crooner Luis Fonsi to a co-publishing deal. This marks Fonsi’s first major publishing deal despite his steady recording and writing career, which includes credits on his own albums as well as on recordings by such acts as Olga Tañón, Ednita Nazario and the Kumbia Kings. The Sony deal covers Fonsi’s entire catalog. He was formerly self-administered through his own publishing company, Fonsi Music Publishing.

Fonsi was signed by Sony ATV VP for the Latin region Eddie Fernández, who, as it turns out, signed Fonsi to his recording deal with Universal Music Latino (back then, Fernández was Universal VP of A&R).

Fonsi’s recently released Universal album, “Paso a Paso,” debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart last month. First single “Nada Es Para Siempre” is No. 2 on the Billboard Hot Latin Songs chart. The track was penned by Amaury Gutiérrez, whose publishing is also with Sony ATV.

Talent at the Beach: New label Talent Beach - Records held its first artist showcase, featuring Marujia, an Aruba-born singer who will release a tribute to Celia Cruz. “Azucar,” due Aug. 30, will be Talent Beach’s first U.S. release. The label, distributed via Universal Music & Video Distribution, is a partnership between songwriter/producer Rodolfo Castillo and Curacao-based record executive Gregory Elias.

Although Marujia’s album was conceived as a tribute to Cruz, Castillo says Talent Beach will focus on artists who write their own material. Upcoming projects include “Copa Y Habana,” an album by songwriter/producer Cesar Lemos and B&W, a rap/reggaeton duo made up of Frankie Biggs and Guajiro.

Talent Beach’s second release will be an album by fusion band Immorales.

Although Talent Beach is based in Miami, the company works with sister label Red Bullet in Holland, which has already released “Azucar” in Europe.

Dance to Your Phone: On July 28, Puerto Rican salsa star Victor Manuelle performed at Bongo’s nightclub in Miami for the series of concerts sponsored by Nextel and aimed at the Hispanic consumer.

Nextel’s Conexion Musical tour featured performances by Mexican pop artists Reylí and Kamila on the West Coast and Manuelle on the East Coast. All three artists were heavily featured and promoted on Nextel’s bilingual Web site and in stores nationwide.

The concert series is Nextel’s first music-centric promotion and serves as part of its broader outreach to the Hispanic community.

Nextel says it is still examining the results of the promotion but is pleased so far.

“We are in the process of evaluating options for next year,” says Beatriz Helguero, senior manager of Hispanic marketing at Nextel. “But music, as we know, is central to Hispanics, so we might be doing something related to music, whether it be a concerts or sponsorships or something else. I definitely don’t see it slowing down.”

Reylí, Kamila and Manuelle are all signed to Sony BMG.

In conjunction with Conexión Musical, the label issued a promotional three-track CD that was given to customers who registered with Nextel for tickets to the concerts as well as such phone items as wallpaper and ringtones.

Manuelle, who released a live album, “Victor Manuelle Desde el Carnegie Hall,” in the spring, is selecting tracks for his upcoming album, due next year.

Victor Manuelle was among the acts on Nextel’s Conexion Musical tour.

Music Download Kiosks Becoming Reality

Exciting New Options for Retailers

What’s In Store for the Music Retailer

The music industry has been fundamentally altered by the advent of digital music technologies. The current state of the industry has music retailers, artists, labels and consumers rethinking the digital download (legitimate and not) and how they can redefine the consumer experience. Developing revenue streams, copyrights, quality, and availability in a state of competition. A new technology, SyncCast, is being marketed by SyncCast, a leading Digital Media & Technology Company, along with industry partners such as Mix & Burn, may be able to change all that.

For the Record

According to RIAA, CD sales had hit all time lows on the same time. Jupiter Research reports a slowing of digital music sales. Radio digital music sales increased $1.7 billion from 2004. As a result, digital music players will reach critical mass this year with portable device sales increasing 35%. This demand for digital music download, seamless integration, including support for SyncCast’s technology, is needed nationwide.

Content for Portable Players

Retailers are looking for ways to provide the best customer experience for music acquired in both the physical and online worlds,” said Jonathan David, President of Mix & Burn. “Retailers will be able to sell and deliver digital music directly to portable music players such as the popular MP3 player players. Digital Download Kiosks are a game changer.

Digital Download Kiosks

The most significant challenge in the digital music industry has always been to provide music, easily, to the consumer. The availability of digital media content has created the opportunity for consumers to have access to digital music content. The result is consumer satisfaction.

SyncCast technology, built on Microsoft’s Windows Media Player (WMP), provides the necessary capability that allows digital kiosks to pass the scrutiny of major music labels. As a result, more and more artists are looking to digital music content.

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SyncCast and Mix & Burn will demonstrate this new technology at the 2005 National Association of Record Merchandisers (NARM) Event to be held in San Diego. Ca., August 12th though 15th, visit booth 401 to be the first to experience this revolution.
Watson’s Voice Soars Again On ‘Musica’

Since his debut album, “The Voice,” was released 4½ years ago, tenor Russell Watson has experienced an amazing ride to the top of the Billboard Top Classical Crossover chart. His voice, however, nearly betrayed him along the way. Not so long ago, the singer was diagnosed with a growth on his vocal cords that required surgery—a situation that Watson says could well have ended his career.

Luckily, the surgery was successful. To celebrate his recovery, Watson is releasing “Amore Musica” Sept. 13 on Decca. Like the tenor’s previous chart-toppers, his newest CD blends a quasi-opera sound with a pop sensibility in a range of soaring songs, from the title track to “II Gladiator” (inspired by the film “The Gladiator”) to “I’ll Walk With God,” a song popularized by another generation’s “cross-over” star, tenor Mario Lanza.

Watson admits that before his diagnosis, he took his abilities for granted, and did not guard his voice nearly carefully enough.

“Three years ago,” he recalls, “I sang at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II. I performed for 50 cardinals and 3,000 invited guests, with 140 musicians behind me. It was absolutely one of the most incredible experiences I’ve ever had. But I just walked onstage and sang with no warm-up at all, no vocal preparation!” He chuckles disbeliefingly at the memory.

Since his surgery, Watson has learned to be a bit more vigilant. “These days, I work with a more purely focused mind-set and with more thought about what I’m doing,” the singer says. “That’s not to say that I live my life in a box now by any means. I just try to get on with my life, get on with my job, and just go with the flow. Life’s a risk anyway, isn’t it?”

ALSO’S NEW HOME: After some very public dissatisfaction voiced by its musicians regarding the search process, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra is settling in with the announcement that 48-year-old conductor Marin Alsop will be music director of the 2007-2008 season. Alsop is the first woman to be appointed music director of a major American orchestra. She is also a native New Yorker, a notable fact in an era in which many American orchestras look to Europe and Asia to fill their spots on the podium.

In May, the Grammy Award-nominated Alsop was named female artist of the year at the Classical Brit Awards. She is currently recording a cycle of the complete Brahms symphonies with the London Philharmonic Orchestra for Naxos, to be followed by a disc of Brahms choral works with the Bournemouth Symphony and Symphony Chorus.

According to the terms of her BSO agreement, Alsop will be in residence with the orchestra 14 weeks per season. She will also record with the BSO and lead a European tour.
The Co-Stars Take Main Role In The Studio

As you read this, the sixth annual Billboard American Urban Radio Networks R&B/Hip-Hop Conference in Atlanta (Aug. 3-5) will be wrapping up. All of us in Billboard's R&B/hip-hop and special events departments would like to thank the conference attendees, artists, label executives, sponsors and various supporters. Every year, the refrain—thankfully—is the same: We could not do this without you.

It's pertinent, whether it's a ballad or a midtempo song. Fantasia's "Butta Mama" (co-Co-Stars collaboration) took a chance with what an artist is willing to talk about on a record. If it's something worth talking about, a song will stay pertinent.

The duo is also busy developing a young artist in the Jamaican vein, LeMarvin. From Inglewood, Calif., "he looks like a young rapper," Dinkins says. "But when he opens his mouth, a great R&B sound comes out."

ON THE EDGE: The momentum is picking up for songwriting/producers duo The Co-Stars. Vito Colapietro and Neely Dinkins have added some noteworthy credits to their resumes in the last few months: singers Fantasia and Javier (rapper Crooke I), reggaeton artist R. Luna and R&B newcomer Teairra Mari (on her current single, "Make Her Feel Good").

About Teairra Mari, Dinkins says, "The game needs more youth in it. As you can hear on her single, Teairra Mari brings the right vocal swagger—but not too much—to make it believable. It's time for new stars, and she's in that batch."

Currently, the Co-Stars are mixing two tracks, "I Ain't Never" and "Still," destined for Jaheim's third Warner Bros. album. "As long as there are people who can sing with soul, there will always be R&B music," Colapietro says. "R&B has its place. It just has to find that place a little more in a culture dominated by hip-hop."

The Co-Stars' approach, Dinkins says, is to make R&B that is a little more "edgy and harder, so it can stay competitive with hip-hop. We want to show this music still has a spot in the clubs in the same way a 50 Cent does. But you still leave room to do ballads."

It can come down to lyrical content, Colapietro adds. "Jaheim gets the utmost respect from the hip-hop community because his lyrical content is so close to what's going on in the streets."

Quickies: In celebration of Def Jam Records' 20th anniversary, GRP releases "Def Jazz" Aug. 9. As the name implies, the album offers smooth jazz interpretations of R&B, rap and hip-hop classics from the Def Jam catalog. Hubert Laws, Rick Braun, Roy Hargrove, Jeff Lorber and Gerald Albright are just a few of the participants under the direction of producer Tony Joseph (Hidden Beach's "Unwrapped" series) and GRP/Verve VP of A&R Bud Harner. Selections include Oran "Juice" Jones' "The Rain" (featuring Jones himself and singer Ledisi), Jay-Z's "Can I Get A..." LL Cool J's "Doin' It" and Method Man's "All I Need."

Lorenzo Owens, one of three finalists in Oprah Winfrey's PopStar Music Challenge last year, has signed a six-record deal with D-Town Records. Distributed by Ryko/WEA, D-Town is headed by producer/CFO Mike Powell. Owens' first album is slated for Sept. 13.

Dwele's sophomore set, "Some Kinda..." is due Oct. 4. The follow-up to his 2003 debut, "Subject," features production by Mike City, Jay Dilla and G-1.

The Co-Stars have done three songs so far in collaboration with writer/producer Harold Lilly. Another key writer on the LeMarvin project is Bawle Muhammad, who has written for Jaheim and Ciara.
Hootie Feels ‘Lucky’
Band Releases New Album Via Joint Deal With Vanguard

Darius Rucker's throat hurts, and he is tired after a long day of promoting Hootie & the Blowfish's Aug. 9 release, “Looking for Lucky,” but the lead singer is not about to complain.

As first single “One Love” climbs the Adult Contemporary and Adult Top 40 charts, Rucker is simply grateful. “We’re surprised because the last years at Atlantic, it wasn’t happening for us, so you’d expect that to be the climate” now, he says.

Happily, that is not the case. “One Love” marks the group’s 12th appearance on the Adult Top 40 chart, tying the quartet with Dave Matthews Band and Matchbox Twenty for the most charted singles at the format. This week it is No. 30 on the Adult Top 40 chart and No. 23 at AC. It receives the Most Airplay Adds on the AC chart and is the group’s biggest hit on that chart since “Old Man & Me (When I Get to Heaven)” in 1996.

“One Love,” with its soulful vocals and acoustic guitar bed, is vintage Hootie, which suits AC WLKN Charlotte, N.C., PD Neal Sharpe just fine.

“It’s a signature Hootie sound; it’s very hokey,” he says. “Their track record with this station has always been great, so I think it could be a real hit.”

It is also the first single from Sneaky Long Records, a multi-album joint venture between the band and Vanguard Records. Hootie & the Blowfish own the label, and Santa Monica, Calif.-based Vanguard provides distribution, marketing and publicity.

The band was on Atlantic when it experienced such successes as 1994’s “Cracked Rear View,” which sold 10.1 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, making it one of the top-selling U.S. debuts ever.

However, as sales went south during the next several years (the last studio album for Atlantic, a 2003 self-titled set, sold 162,000), so did the band’s relationship with the label. Rucker says he and his bandmates were looking for something different when it came time to sign a new deal.

“We knew we didn’t want to go to another major,” he says. “There was no one else better for us than Vanguard. They don’t expect the records to come in at No. 1 and forget them. They promote records for a long time.”

Indeed, Kevin Welk, president/GO of Vanguard’s parent company, Welk Music Group, credits the growing success of “One Love” in part to a setup that started a year ago: “We had Hootie & the Blowfish at our suite at NARM last summer—a year before they [were] tracking.”

The promotion team began working with radio, including coordinating contests to send listeners to Hootie concerts.

In the meantime, for “Lucky,” Hootie & the Blowfish reunited with “Cracked Rear View” producer Don Gehman, who brought the band to Nashville to record. For the first time, Rucker and his bandmates—Mark Bryan, Dean Felber and Jim “Son!” Sonefeld—worked with outside writers, including top Music City tunemasters Matraca Berg and Radney Foster, as well as Trick Pony’s Keith Burns.

“A lot of it happened organically when we got to Nashville,” Rucker says. “You get in the room with them for an hour or two, and it brings something different into the mix. We’d been writing songs the same way for 20 years.”

And now the band is back on the road, touring and promoting the new release. The two weeks following street date, Hootie will be connecting with Walmart shoppers. The band will play concerts at eight Wal-Marts throughout the Southeast. Vanguard has tied in with Dr Pepper for the Wal-Mart promotion, with the soft-drink company kicking in advertising and promotion dollars for the shows.

Welk says Vanguard’s initial shipment for “Lucky” is 175,000, but he does not expect the album to end there. “They can sell gold, and potentially platinum, for sure. We’re taking advantage of every opportunity, and the band is willing to do whatever it takes.”

Welk says he has seen little sign of any kind of Hootie backlash, but when he does, he has simply asked people to “give the band the benefit of the doubt, and they’ve been receptive.”

As Rucker says, “We feel renewed. It feels like we’re doing it for our success, not for anyone else’s, and it’s great to see the people we haven’t seen in a few years. But you just hope at the end of the day, your song speaks for itself.”

Additional reporting by Michael Libby in Los Angeles.
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JOHNNY CASH
The Legend
Producers: Various
Column: Villages
Release Date: Aug. 2
Nearly two years after his death, Johnny Cash remains an imposing and fascinating figure. Covering Cash's career from 1955 through 2002, this four-CD, 107-track set includes most every significant Sun and Columbia recording, but woefully omits (due to licensing issues) his American Recordings series. Still, it's hard to quibble with such a lovingly assembled collection (or any set that includes "Big River"), offering all the hits and noteworthy obscurities and familiar, plus 12 unreleased tracks. Of the latter, a thumping "Doin' My Time" from 1981 (after covered by Marty Stuart), and a duet with Joe Shaver "You Can't Beat Jesus Christ" are the most striking. Cash was a songwriter with few peers, but what's exceptional here is how he could take songs from the pens of giants and make them his own. The consistent quality of Cash's recordings, along with plenty of rare photos and captivating notes from biographer Patricia Carr, make this set the best yet on the Man in Black.—RW

RICHARD THOMPSON
Front Parlour Ballads
Producer: Richard Thompson
Cooking Vinyl USA
Release Date: Aug. 9
One of pop music's great underappreciated troubadours and guitarists, Thompson again delivers on "Front Parlour Ballads." His first disc in 14 years rooted in the acoustic guitar is also his first-ever acoustic disc with all originals. Thompson is a rare storyteller who sketches real-life characters (both rogues and innocents) and sings songs of romance and wasted time with a keen ear. The CD title is actually a misnomer because, though there are several ballads, Thompson also turns up the tempo heat on such tunes as opener "Let It Blow," an indelible melody about an ill-fated, short-lived marriage, and the shout-out "A Solitary Life," a buoyant observation of "life with small horizons." While lyrically his songs are top-drawer, Thompson's guitar prowess is also noteworthy, with acoustic ornamentation prominent on "How Does Your Garden Grow?" and electric spark energizing "My Soul, My Soul."—DC

MARTIRES DEL COMPAS
No Papelos/No Papers
Producer: Julio Revilla
World Village
Release Date: Aug. 9
There is no shortage of Spanish groups that fuse flamenco with other musical styles. And yet the newest album by the decade-old Martires Del Combate (and only their second set to be released in the United States) jumps at you with a raw sound that connects with a visceral level while maintaining commercial viability. Laced with social and political lyrics, the set alternates between rootsier flamenco ("Petrubleria") and catchy rock flamenco ("Toca San") to variations like the hillbilly flamenco sound of "Estoy Tapi." The material is less produced and more effective than many of its counterparts. Augmented by Chico Ocaña's raspy voice, the music at times showcases riches of Gipsy Kings ("Chu la Lila La Lelló"). But this is a consistently distinctive and compelling album.—LC

DAVID GRAY The One I Love (3:27)
Producers: Marcus de Vries, David Gray, Craig McClure, Leslyn Minton
Writer: D. Gray
Publisher: Chrysalis, ASCAP

IHVATCO/RCA (CD promo)
Triple-A cum modern rock David Gray retums with his boldest, most admirable album at mainstream crossover yet. The One I Love," the first single from September release "Life in Slow Motion," boasts a spirited instrumental track that somehow conjures Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run" and a circus carnival. Vocally, "Love" is empowered with conviction, reassuring listeners that this man knew his initial success was no fluke. And like Springsteen, he can write a hit when he needs to, just to keep the ball rolling. This is the song that will thrust Gray into the mainstream vernacular. Congrats to a man who has worked hard for the acclaim.—CT

3 DOORS DOWN Here by Me (3:47)
Producer: Johnny K Writers: Arnold, Roberts, Harrell, Henderson
Publishers: Escapata/Universal Music/BMI

Republic/Universal (CD promo)
3 Doors Down is leading a seemingly unstoppable hit parade. Previous slow-grower "Let Me Go" is just finishing its roost in the top 10 at mainstream and adult top 40 radio, after more than a half year. Perhaps Universal is counting on it to take some promotional grooming for "Here by Me" to reach critical mass, because this melancholy ballad smells like a hit. The lyric is sad enough to bring a chill, even in the August heat, while Brad Arnold's lead vocal sounds dully register. A little more spice "Here by Me" is an ideal mood-shifter for summer romances begin their retreat. From the platinum album "Seventeen Days."—CT

STAND CHapter V
Producer: David Botul
Atlantic
Release Date: Aug. 9
Stain's transition from cut-up-and-combing metal band to mainstream superstar came via two songs: "Outside," and "It's Been Awhile," both from their third album, 2001's Break the Cycle. The two ballads have set the tone for Stain's career. Aaron Lewis is a good singer, and the rest of the band is solid, but what's woefully omits the boldest, most admirable bid the band has since made. The CD title is actually a misnomer because, though there are several ballads, Thompson also turns up the tempo heat on such tunes as opener "Let It Blow," an indelible melody about an ill-fated, short-lived marriage, and the shout-out "A Solitary Life," a buoyant observation of "life with small horizons." While lyrically his songs are top-drawer, Thompson's guitar prowess is also noteworthy, with acoustic ornamentation prominent on "How Does Your Garden Grow?" and electric spark energizing "My Soul, My Soul."—DC

JULIANA HATFIELD Made in China
Producer: Juliana Hatfield
Ye Olde Records
Release Date: Aug. 9
Juliana Hatfield's brushed and beautiful pop music always had appeal. Lovers of the Big Room "Right Here" has become a top 10 Modern Rock and top three Mainstream Rock track, so the band's formula appears to be working. Still, it's amazing how much edge Stain has lost.—BT

FOLK
ABIGAIL WASHBURN
Song of the Traveling Daughter
Producers: Abigail Washburn, Reid Scelza, Bella Fleck
Nettwerk
Release Date: Aug. 2
Washburn is a clawhammer banjo player, a singer/songwriter and an artist whose zest for traditional music seems to be matched by her enthusiasm for China. The title track was inspired by a medieval Chinese poem, while "The Lost Lamb" is sung in Chinese. The primary instruments are Washburn's cello, with a handful of fine players in support, including co-producer Bela Fleck. (Washburn had a hand in writing all but one) share an elemental feel, with minimal arrangements quietly supporting Washburn's unaffected vocals and an array of pensive, intelligent lyrics.—PV

GOSPEL
WALTER HAWKINS A Song in My Heart
Producer: Walter Hawkins
Code
Release Date: July 26
Waltre Hawkins returns with his first album in five years, and proves that the past master still can deliver the goods. Setting out to make an album that would constitute his deep traditional roots as well as his contemporary efforts, hesure-handedly succeeds. A Song in My Heart" features the Umbrella of his own considerable creativity: "A Prayer Away," a Gary Stone with a percolating R&B groove, while the powerful "Forgiving God" and "Ever Loving Father" are classic Hawkins gospel/pop ballads, showing the singer in the strongest and most mature style of his career. "A Song in My Heart" marks the welcome return of one of gospel's eminences.—GE

SOUNDS OF BLACKNESS Unity
Producer: LaSalle Gabriel
S.R
Release Date: Aug. 2
For more than three decades, Sounds of Blackness has been a significant commercial presence (produced throughout the '90s by studio royalty Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis) and a guardian of the centuries-old history and evolution of black music. Mixing high entertainment with its archival calling, the ensemble continues to show a deft touch with an ambitiously diverse roster of songs. Former group member Ann Nesby returns for solid vocals on the funk-flavored R&B of "Unity" and "Heaven." Elsewhere, group founder and singer Warren "Walter" Hawkins shows a master arranger's touch for down-home gospel ("They That Wait.") lightning-"My Heart"

www.americanradiohistory.com
OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN
Stronger Than Before
Producers: various
HIT VISTA
Release Date: Sept. 1
The timeless Olivia Newton-John indulges her many followers with a second album in as many years, following 2004’s import “Indigo,” in which she reinterpreted songs by 11 powerful female singers. “Stronger Than Before” also has a specific aim: presenting songs of inspiration, courage and hope during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (the 10-track disc will be sold only at Hallmark stores from Sept. 1 to Oct. 31). It is tough picking premium tracks, because they all offer a hand to those seeking strength, whether through the fragile “Under the Skin” or the empowering “Pass It On.” Newton-John, a 13-year breast cancer survivor, gives her all to this lovely project—but then that’s why she’s been loved for 35 years.—CT

LATIN
PONCHO SANCHEZ (4)
De Ut
Producer: none listed
Concord
Release Date: Aug. 9
For a long time, conguero Poncho Sánchez’s popularity was confined to his native California. But slowly and surely, Sánchez’s name has become synonymous worldwide with exciting, aggressive Latin jazz that melds a variety of influences. Here, we find Sanchez jamming with Tower of Power on the wonderfully funky “Squab Cakes” and with Hugh Masekela on the sultry, jazzy “Child of the Earth.” The contrast of thrashing congas and drums under Masekela’s soaring voice is as cool as the bluesy piano vamps of “Short Dog.” This is still Latin jazz, but with a universal feel that definitely steers away from the norm.—LC

JAZZ
JC HOPKINS BIGGISH BAND
Underneath a Brooklyn Moon
Producer: JC Hopkins
Tiger Lily Records
Release Date: Aug. 9
New York-based 14-member orchestra the JC Hopkins Biggish Band is a welcome addition to the scene, with its retro-swing and newfangled American songbook tunes. On this pleasant debut, the band delivers its love sworn to the boulevard, led by vocalist Queen Esther, the latest in a series of Biggish Band divas. Madeleine Peyroux co-wrote four numbers with Hopkins, including the album’s bookends: the charged “Here Comes Love” and lightweight “Settle Down.” Highlights include the sweetly lilting “Small Town” and the rousing “Sho Bizniz,” originally written for a San Francisco musical theater piece in which Hopkins co-starred. But, overall, the fare is middling. Esther’s voice soars or sinks in, and the leader should steer clear of crooning. Off-key always mars the swing.—DO

CHRISTIAN
SHAWN GROVES (5)
White Flag
Producer: Shawn Groves
Rocketown Records
Release Date: July 12
Groves is a cerebral singer/songwriter capable of great lyrical depth, and he tackles a potent subject: This concept-driven project focuses on the beatitudes.

GROVES taught a Bible study on the Sermon on the Mount, which inspired this well-crafted collection. Though one might expect such an album to be more tedious than entertaining, that is not the case. Groves envelopes weighty themes in engaging melodies as evidenced by opener “What’s Wrong With This World?” “Sad Song” is just that: mournful and profound. “Heaven Hang On” is a soaring ballad with heartbroken characters that come vividly to life through Groves’ poignant narrative. “White Flag” is a standout album from an artist who has struck the perfect balance between art and commerce, delivering music that is meaningful and accessible.—DEP

VISUAL過來
VARIOUS ARTISTS
Northern Soul’s Classiest Rarities 2
Producers: various
Ace/Kent Records
Release Date: Aug. 16
Bill Bush? The Fashionettes? The Northern Soul scene of the 70s United Kingdom was always a mystery. Did the hard-partying club people ever get to enjoy the overlooked brilliance from U.S. indie 1960s R&B labels?  No way.—DO

GROVES

Paul McCartney’s
Fine Line
Producers: Nigel Godrich, Paul McCartney
Publisher: MPL
Capitol (CD promo)
As Paul McCartney pulls out his latest solo album “Chains and Creation in the Backyard,” first single “Fine Line” implies he might have a pleasant surprise in store. Nigel Godrich’s Rubenesque sonic touches are well-suited for this slice of piano-fuelled classic rock. Chords reverberate, cellos glow, and crisp violins are deployed for a joy of energy. There are a couple of fortune cookie-worthy lyrical turns, but there is also definite vitality here, and the last minute strikes a satisfying balance between minor chord changes and McCartney’s falsetto. “Fine Line” is above par for McCartney’s solo work, and will be fine entertainment for nostalgic baby boomers. —JHW

ROCK
MEMPHIS BLEEK. The One (4:00)
Producers: Birn, Maceo, R. Harrell, E. Rogers, C. Sturken, C. Jackson, M. Yancy
Publisher: not listed
Roc-A-Fella (CD promo)
As bleeker and fourth album, Memphis Bleek is still searching for the kind of hit that will make him a leading player in hip-hop. On this second single from current album “S34,” Roc-a-Fella is hoping that Bleek’s big break could come from his pairing with newcomer and labelmate Samantha Rah. Sanny’s: On “The One” is an unspiring ode to a loyal partner. The story of a hip-hop artist with R&B singers has proved to captivate listeners and top the charts, but this attempt fails. Rahna’s sugary hook is indeed catchy, but aren’t we expecting Bleek to use his rap attraction? The absence of convincing emotion for the love he clearly “hates the sun” coupled with weak lyrics confirms why Bleek may forever be one hit away. —JS

CHRIS BROWN FEATURING JUELZ SANTANA Run It! (3:48)
Producers: John F. Scott/Storchi
Writer: not listed
Published: not listed
Zomba (CD promo)
Scott Storch seems to be everywhere these days, including on the debut single for R&B newcomer Chris Brown. The track “Run It!” bears all the traces of a Storch production, from hard, synthesized keys to a dance-inducing beat. Brown does a laudable job of keeping pace with Storch’s hard work, crooning his 16-year-old heart out in this made-for-the-club song. Juelz Santana lends a verse to the single, further adding to its radio-friendly vibe. The heartthrob-in-training hasspawned hits and is a no-brainer with this refreshing, poppy hip-hop track. While B.O. fans can look forward to more of this, those seeking something new might want to opt for a surf video instead.—MS

ARCH ENEMY
Nemesis (4:11)
Producers: Richard Dargen
Writer: M. Amott, C. Amott, E. Arlandsson
Publisher: Copyright Control
Southern Music/Century Media Records (CD track)
This was a no-brainer for Arch Enemy’s camp to release the group’s new album, “Doomsday Machine,” so it dovetailed with its gig at Ozzfest—and just at the band’s CD sales at the festival indicate that it is on track to be the tour’s breakout star. “Nemesis” alternates between take-no-prisoners guitar shredding and more melodic pauses, the latter sounding like a pumping fists and affirmative shouts. With the chorus “One for all/All for one” We are strong/Wo are one and the drums figuring like a braille, expect lots of crowds and exploding pits when Arch Enemy rips this one up live.—CLT

JACK JOHNSON
Good People (3:28)
Producer: Mario Cordero Jr.
Writer: J. Johnson
Publishers: Universal/Video Group
Republic/Universal (CD promo)
There is no doubt that Jack Johnson has provided the world with many a great traveling tune. The man who made the crossover from laid-back surfer dude to laid-back surfer dude musician offers another attempt to woo the world’s backpackers with his recognizable acoustic riffs and calming vocals. “Good People,” the second single from his third album, “Between Dreams,” is a pleasant and catchy song with a refreshing, lo-fi, pop-piano crescendo. However, it is considerably “stick-to-the-man” lyrical and dull chorus result in an otherwise lazy track. It fails to show that Johnson has developed a career musically since his debut album, “Brushfire Fairytales.” While loyal fans can look forward to more of this, those looking for something new might want to opt for a surf video instead.—MS

www.americanradiohistory.com
Dipset Gets Busy

Group’s Third Album Sets The Scene For Upcoming Solo Sets

H

 Harlem, N.Y.’s Dipset clique is at it again with the release of “Dipset: More Than Music Vol. I.” This time, Cam’ron, Jim Jones and Juelz Santana are joined by new additions JR Writer, Hell Rell, 40.Cal and Jha Jha (the crew’s first female member).

The album, which dropped July 12 on Diplomat/Koch Records, features a guest appearance by Fabolous and production courtesy of the Heatmakerz, Scram Jones and Dame Grease. Executive producers are Cam’ron and Diplomat Records VP of A&R Duke Da God, a former rapper and a charter member of the clique.

The group’s debut album, “Diplomatic Immunity,” released by Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam, debuted at No. 1 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart in 2003 and has sold 523,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Its Diplomat/Koch follow-up, “Diplomatic Immunity II,” moved 205,000 units and peaked at No. 4 on Top Rap Albums.

Duke tells billboard the group’s third album, as the title suggests, is about more than music. “We’re a movement,” he says. “It’s more than just rap and words. People follow us, they watch us, and they want to be like us.”

“More Than Music” is the start of what will be a busy period for the Dipset members. Jim Jones’ sophomore album, “Harlem: Diary of a Summer,” drops Aug. 23, and fans can expect new projects from Santana in September and Cam’ron in November. The debut release by JR Writer is scheduled for December.

REMY RECOGNIZES: Director Hype Williams has teamed with cognac brand Rémy Martin 1738 to help recognize the 1,738 most influential songs in black music. Williams is on a 20-date tour sponsored by the liquor company to provide exposure for the titles on the “Toast to 1738” list. It is a new role for Williams, who is best-known for directing colorful videos for the likes of Puff Daddy, Jay-Z and Ja Rule, in addition to the feature film “Belly,” starring Nas, Method Man and DMX, among others.

The 1,738-song list was compiled by Williams, the Rhythm & Blues Foundation and the Jazz Alliance International. Its hip-hop section features acts from 2 Live Crew and Digable Planets to 50 Cent and Outkast. “We wanted to give people some songs that really helped to reflect history,” Williams says. “The tour is basically a collaboration between myself and Rémy the brand to give thanks to the cognac that myself and my friends have embraced over the years.”

For the complete list and tour dates, visit remy1738.com.

MIXED ‘BEAT: Miami’s self-proclaimed mix-tape king, DJ EFN (aka Eric Narciand), has another title to add to his list. He has been tapped as VP of marketing by the new Southbeat Records.

The Miami-based label was founded by Robert Garner and Ernesto Morales and features a mix of R&B, hip-hop and Latin pop acts. The roster includes Wekonize, the winner of MTV’s nationwide “MC Battle II”; J-Shin, whose 1999 Atlantic Records debut sold 200,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan; and Rayito, a songwriter who has collaborated with Ricky Martin.
NARM Might Feel Like Old Times; Jeezy Does It

OK, I have a confession to make, but it's sort of an obvious one, so don't look for it to make the cover of the tabloids at the grocery, or even the rumor mill in an industry tip sheet.

As one of this magazine's former retail editors, I'll be one of the first to admit that the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers convention is a lot more fun for journalists to cover when business is soft than it is when sales are brisk.

So, with album sales down by almost 8% (or 7%, depending on which comparative you're using), I figure my colleague Ed Christman will return from the Aug. 10-14 confab in San Diego with a plenty full notebook.

The 2004 meeting began on a much brighter note, when Nielsen SoundScan's report card had album sales 7.5% ahead of the prior year's pace on a streak that had seen comparative growth in 41 of the last 49 weeks—numbers that are polar opposites of where business now stands.

The mood last year reminded me of my second NARM, held in Miami in 1987. By then, music stores and labels had digested the four-year lull that was the post-disco crash of the early '80s and were starting to make some exciting gains. After several tension-filled years, executives from both sides of the aisle seemed surprised by how glad they were to see each other.

Now that it practically seems certain that 2005 will post the fourth decline of album sales in five years, the stage seems set for a convention that might resemble my first NARM.

CDs and MTV were helping stores see more traction than they had in recent years, but a tight fourth quarter in 1985 meant tensions were still high when the trade group gathered in Los Angeles in March 1986. Merchants and record company execs were skeptical of each other. An irritated Irving Azoff, then king of MCA (that era's name for what we now call Universal Music Group), delivered a blistering keynote that found fault with most industry sectors.

Azoff's fiery mood likely came from a series of reports about independent promotion practices that Brian Ross ran a few weeks earlier on "NBC Nightly News," a story similar to the one left by some media coverage of Sony BMG's recent settlement with New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

Although radio promotion was hardly a front-and-center topic at a gathering of retailers and salespeople, a national music convention proved an irresistible lure for news camera crews who invaded the Century Plaza Hotel, adding a hectic tone to that 1986 meeting.

If TV cameras come to NARM this year, they will likely be there to catch Rod Stewart or Bonnie Raitt than to conjure a story of independent promotion. And, I don't expect the keynote from Recording Industry Assn. of America chief Mitch Bainwoll to be the flamethrower that Azoff's was 19 years ago.

Still, history suggests that bad news at the cash register will paint the mood of this year's NARM. That kind of tension could be positive, because it has been in tough times when the music industry embraces constructive change. We'll see.

YOUNG AND RESTLESS: It seems there are instances when an individual part car outweighs the whole, according to the lesson taught by rapper Young Jeezy.

His solo album, "Let's Get It: Thug Motivation 131," scores Hot Shot Debut on The Billboard 200 (No. 2) and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, entering at No. 1. His opening of 172,000 copies is 70% larger than the sales of the self-titled set from Atlanta group Boyz II Men, which hit No. 1.

For the week ending July 3, 2005, Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail store and rack sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>Me and My Girl</td>
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### ADULT CONTEMPORARY

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<td>Candy Man</td>
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<td>How Deep Is Your Love</td>
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### MODERN ROCK

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Data for week of AUGUST 13, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
### Pop 100 Airplay

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*Note: The chart data is for the week ending August 13, 2005.*

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*Source: Billboard*
### TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

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<td>Goodies</td>
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<td>Classic Moments</td>
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<td>Omarion</td>
<td>All Or Nothing</td>
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<td>Be Exalted</td>
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<td>The Game</td>
<td>The Documentary</td>
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<td>38</td>
<td>AMARION</td>
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### TOP BLUES ALBUMS

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<th>Album Title</th>
<th>Sales (units)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GEORGE THOROGOOD &amp; THE DESTROYERS</td>
<td>Greatest Hits: 30 Years Of Rock</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B.B. King</td>
<td>The Ultimate Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>THE ROBERT CRAY BAND</td>
<td>Twenty</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CHICAGO BLUES REUNION</td>
<td>Buried Alive In The Blues</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>DISSIP</td>
<td>Live From Austin TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SUSAN TEDESCHI</td>
<td>Honk On BoBo</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>AEROSMITH</td>
<td>Painted On</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS</td>
<td>Me And My Johnson</td>
<td>7,000</td>
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<td>ERIC CLAPTON</td>
<td>Road Dogs</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO</td>
<td>Live/Highwayman</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>TRENSLY ELIIS</td>
<td>Grant Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>MARCIA BALL</td>
<td>Live/Down The Road</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SONNY LANDRETH</td>
<td>Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues</td>
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"GROWN": GROWN UP, BABYFACE RETURNS

‘GROWN’ UP, BABYFACE RETURNS

While Boyz N Da Hood’s Young Jeezy bows atop the chart (see Over The Counter, page 17), Babyface’s "Grown & Sexy" makes waves at No. 3, his biggest Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums rank since 1992. With $6,000 sold, the album also enters The Billboard 200 at No. 10.

The new set’s current single, "Sorry for the Stupid Things," moves 11-9 on Adult R&B—the producer/singer/songwriter’s 12th top 10 cut that format.

The album’s bow was aided by a July 19 performance on “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno” and sale-pricing at Target, Best Buy and Circuit City. Babyface has also been co-headlining a tour with Ariana Baker.

—Keith Caulfield
### HOT LATIN SONGS: 2005 AUG 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title (Artist)</th>
<th>Hot Latin Songs Hot 100 (No. 72, pos)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LA TORTURA (Shakira Featuring Alejandro Sanz)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>NADA ES PARA SIEMPRE (Luis Fonsi)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LO QUE PASO, PASO (Eli Escobar)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LAS MARIPOSAS (Yuri)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MI Y SI (La Banda)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>AMAR SIN SER AMADA (Luis Miguel)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RAKATA (Wisin &amp; Yandel)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ERES DIVINA (Sergio Vega)</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>ALGO MAS (La Santa Cecilia)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>LA LOCURA AUTOMATICA (La Secta)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>TIEMPO (La Flaca)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>HOY COMO AYER (Alejandro Fernández)</td>
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<td>ELLA Y YO (K-Paz de la Sierra)</td>
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<td>Y LAS MARIPOSAS (Yuri)</td>
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<td>MI Y SI (La Banda)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>OBSESION (NO ES AMOR)</td>
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### TOP LATIN ALBUMS

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Title (Artist)</th>
<th>Top Latin Albums (Week 8, 2005)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LA CORazon (Tonyummings)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>TITANIA (Don Omar &amp; R.Drigue)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>GRUPO MUNDIAL (Los Tigres del Norte)</td>
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<td>GRUPO REY (REY PLATINUM)</td>
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

Data for week of AUGUST 13, 2005

CHARTS LEGEND on Page 72

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www.americanradiohistory.com
**HITPREDICTOR**

**COUNTRY SINGLES SALES**

**COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE**


**WILSON'S FAST START SETS CHART RECORD**

With just five full days of airplay, the lead single from Gretchen Wilson's Sept. 27 album "All Jacked Up" inches the chart with history-making move.

The title track takes the Hot Shot Debut at No. 21 and Greatest Gainer applause for 11.2 million audience impressions, and is the highest debut for a female artist in the monitored era. Since Billboard adopted technology-based Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems airplay information in January 1990, Wilson's debut is second only to the No. 19 start that Garth Brooks' controversial single "The Thunder Rolls" logged in the May 19, 1991, issue.

With six or more first-time spins at 67 monitored stations, "All Jacked Up" handily captures the most new airplay during the tracking week.

A performance of the song on the CMA Music Festival's Aug. 2 ABC special should give "All Jacked Up" additional juice next week's chart.

—Wade Jessen
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<th>LATIN AIRPLAY</th>
<th>LATIN ALBUMS</th>
<th>TROPICAL</th>
<th>RHYTHM</th>
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<td><strong>AIRPLAY</strong></td>
<td><strong>DISTRICT / PROMOTION LABEL</strong></td>
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| **4**          |              | 6        | 3     |
| **5**          |              | 8        | 2     |
| **6**          |              | 10       | 15    |
| **7**          |              | 9        | 6     |
| **8**          |              | 13       | 4     |
| **9**          |              | 12       | 11    |
| **10**         |              | 14       | 9     |
| **11**         |              | 11       | 5     |
| **12**         |              | 6        | 3     |
| **13**         |              | 8        | 2     |
| **14**         |              | 10       | 15    |
| **15**         |              | 9        | 6     |
| **16**         |              | 13       | 4     |
| **17**         |              | 12       | 11    |
| **18**         |              | 14       | 9     |

| **TROPICAL**  |            |          |       |
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| **3**          |              | 11       | 5     |
| **4**          |              | 6        | 3     |
| **5**          |              | 8        | 2     |
| **6**          |              | 10       | 15    |
| **7**          |              | 9        | 6     |
| **8**          |              | 13       | 4     |
| **9**          |              | 12       | 11    |
| **10**         |              | 14       | 9     |
| **11**         |              | 11       | 5     |
| **12**         |              | 6        | 3     |
| **13**         |              | 8        | 2     |
| **14**         |              | 10       | 15    |
| **15**         |              | 9        | 6     |
| **16**         |              | 13       | 4     |
| **17**         |              | 12       | 11    |
| **18**         |              | 14       | 9     |

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| <strong>3</strong>          |              | 11       | 5     |
| <strong>4</strong>          |              | 6        | 3     |
| <strong>5</strong>          |              | 8        | 2     |
| <strong>6</strong>          |              | 10       | 15    |
| <strong>7</strong>          |              | 9        | 6     |
| <strong>8</strong>          |              | 13       | 4     |
| <strong>9</strong>          |              | 12       | 11    |
| <strong>10</strong>         |              | 14       | 9     |
| <strong>11</strong>         |              | 11       | 5     |
| <strong>12</strong>         |              | 6        | 3     |
| <strong>13</strong>         |              | 8        | 2     |
| <strong>14</strong>         |              | 10       | 15    |
| <strong>15</strong>         |              | 9        | 6     |
| <strong>16</strong>         |              | 13       | 4     |
| <strong>17</strong>         |              | 12       | 11    |
| <strong>18</strong>         |              | 14       | 9     |</p>
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**Top Heatseekers**

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<td>Universal Sundazed (12.98)</td>
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<td>Dmitri</td>
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<td>It's On Tight</td>
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**Top Heatseekers 8-13 Aug 2005**

**Top Heatseekers**

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<th>ARTIST</th>
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<th>RANK</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABLE / DISTRIBUTING LABEL / PRICE</th>
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**Breaking & Entering**

*She Waits For Light*, by Bluegrass quintet Uncle Earl, debuted last week at no. 7 on Top Bluegrass Album chart. For developing artists making their independent billboard chart run each week in Breaking & Entering on billboard.com.

The breaking albums by new and developing acts, defined as those who have never appeared in the top 100 of The Billboard 200, is a heatsheet-like title chart that levels the playing field for indie and the act's subsequent albums are immediately ineligible to appear on The Heatseekers chart. See Chart Legend for rules and explanations. © 2005, ULI Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All right reserved.
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Call: (307) 682-6916
weselhomes1@cox.com - www.harrykimbrough.com

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Located in one of the most picturesque high valleys in all the American West, Morningstar Ranch is buffered on three sides by National Forests with breathtaking views and multiple ski building tiers. A short drive takes you to the Telluride Ski Area, airport or historic town. A total of 79.41 acres, Morningstar Ranch offers ultimate privacy, solitude and compound-like seclusion.

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- Sussex, CT
- www.berkshirestrategies.com

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Professional gym, spa, media room & recording studio $999,500 or Best Reasonable Offer. Inspection August 20th thru 21st - 10 - 4pm.

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

Billboard, a VNU Publication, is currently seeking a Director of Integrated Marketing & Brand Development in our New York office. This position will direct the public relations, marketing, and promotional efforts for the Billboard Information Group portfolio of products. This individual will also be responsible for developing new business opportunities working in conjunction with Billboard’s eMedia and Licensing departments. Additionally, this individual will manage the Billboard brand message by utilizing both internal and external media as well as through the development of partnerships and event promotions. The qualified candidate will be responsible for developing sales tools for the Billboard worldwide sales team as well as assisting the development of new revenue generating ventures by the brand, eMedia and Licensing departments.

We are seeking someone who is adept at managing numerous projects simultaneously, able to manage a team of 3 reports, has strong knowledge of emerging and traditional media, able to maneuver in both creative and business environments, knows advertising and marketing industry operations, is a skilled copywriter and has a strong knowledge of media sales. Ideal candidate should have a minimum of 5-7 years experience.

If you possess the attributes we described, please send your resume and a cover letter including salary requirements to: entertainrecruit@vnubuspubs.com. Visit our website: www.vnubusinessmedia.com.

Only candidates selected for interviews will be contacted. No phone calls or agencies please: VNU Business Media offers a competitive salary with excellent benefits. VNU is an equal opportunity employer.

HELP WANTED

Urgently Needed
A person 100% fluent and with extensive experience in Counterpoint Record for im-
mmediate consulting and personal classes - would extend to PT accounting job. Please contact via email: jipub@aol.com. References required.

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New: National and magazine seeks aggressive individual to solicit advertising. Unlimited commision potential. Deal with top labels and vendors. Contact info@entertainmentmagazine.com.

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If you will be in the NYC area from September 19th-21st and would like to volunteer for the Billboard Dance Music Summit please contact: Rosa Jaquez roscassells@billboard.com 646.654.4660 for more information visit: www.billboardevents.com

Volunteers Needed
If you will be in the San Francisco, CA area from September 25th-28th and would like to volunteer for Billboard MECCA at CTIA please contact: Rosa Jaquez bболезн@billboard.com 646.654.4660 for more information visit: www.billboardevents.com

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ROCK BAND SEEKS LABEL & MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION: CONTACT: www.nuclearskull.com

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Death
Andrew J. Locandro, 74, of cancer, June 21 in Maretta, Ga. Locandro spent 30 years as a Capitol Records regional sales representative in his native New Jersey, retiring in 1989. His Capitol tenure included the wildly successful Beatles era, at which time the sales rep demonstrated some unusual initiative. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, when Locandro was suddenly faced with a store’s order for 200 or 300 Beatles records—a vastly more than the store would normally order on a popular album—he drove to the recording plant, grabbed a stack of “Meet the Beatles” albums in plain paper sleeves and promised store owners he would come back with the photo jackets later.

Survivors include his wife, son, three siblings and seven grandchildren.

Saffian is survived by two children. Memorial donations can be made in his name to Alive Hospice, 1718 Patterson St., Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

For the Record
In the “Christmas Showdown” article about high-definition DVD players (Billboard, July 30), the format’s disc capacity should have been stated as 45GB of data.
This luxurious private gated estate
on 1.27 acres with
approximately 5,600 sq. ft.

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Unbelievable views! Only vineyard facing coast.
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**BEL AIR MID CENTURY** $5,495,000
Bel Air. Jetliner views, 2.5 acres, mid-cent. villa. Dramatic view space, walls of glass and soaring ceilings.
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**10948 ALTA VIEW DRIVE** $4,953,000
Hawthorne. Prvate estate w/7bd 7ba, designer dwr w/ on appx 12 acres. Pool, spa, waterfalls, seasonal stream & park complete this retreat.
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**CUSTOM GEORGIAN MASTERPIECE** $3,395,000
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**PTY CAPE COD COMPOUND** $3,395,000
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**BEL AIR MID CENTURY** $4,455,000
Bel Air. Jetliner views, 2.5 acres, mid-cent. villa. Dramatic view space, walls of glass and soaring ceilings.
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**300 S MCCADDEN PLACE** $3,201,000
Hancock Park. Stately Tudor in Hpark. Dramatic step down living rm w/ beamed ceiling, awesome private retreat on 1/2+ acre, gated, pool, spa, ocean views.
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Bill MacMillan 760.713.3629

**STUNNING MESA HOME** $1,195,000
Palm Springs. Breathtaking view from this 2000sqft 3bd/3.5ba multi-level home in the Mesa. Hardwood flrs. 3-car garage, newer roof.
Jim Brady 310.454.0080

**5553 COLGATE** $1,175,000
Miracle Mile. French Normandy w/ tons detail. Liv w/ high beam ceiling, scac rm, updated kit, lg mstr w/ 18 ft. ba, lots of light, 2nd floor, newer roof.
Sonja Ott 310.388.3708

**TWIN PALMS HOME** $757,800
Palm Springs. 4bd/2.75ba, fee lan. mtn views, pool, spa, nearly 3000 sqft. Fireplace, full trees, wet bar, dual zone ac.
Jacqueline Fung 760.333.9445

**8117 WILLOUGHBY AVENUE** $1,350,000
Sheila Frampton Cooper 310.411.4337

**1743 FRANKLIN CANYON DRIVE** $1,695,000
Beverly Hills. Simply said Just a Great Property. 4600 sqft traditional or todays lifestyle. 3 bedrooms 2.5 baths, pool, courtyard.
Joanne & Carl Shogren 310.681.4305

**48 CASCADA WAY** $2,249,000
Bel Air. Large 1.35 acres family room plan, 4bd/3ba. Spacious kit, formal dining. Excellent loc. north of Sunset in accl. Warner Dist.
CarterEam 310.888.3765

**SEA VIEW ESTATES HOME** $2,190,000
Malibu. Beautifully remodelled approx 5000 sqft, 5bd/4.5ba. 3-car garage, pool, spa, outdoor bbq & fireplace. gated and fenced.
Melvi May 310.924.9555

**1745 ROYAL HILLS DRIVE** $1,795,000
Beverly Hills. Simply said Just a Great Property. 4600 sqft traditional or todays lifestyle. 3 bedrooms 2.5 baths, pool, courtyard.
Joanne & Carl Shogren 310.681.4305

**6553 COLGATE** $1,175,000
Miracle Mile. French Normandy w/ tons detail. Liv w/ high beam ceiling, scac rm, updated kit, lg mstr w/ 18 ft. ba, lots of light, 2nd floor, newer roof.
Sonja Ott 310.494.3053

**5457 CLINTON** $744,000
Hancock Park. Architectual 2bd/1ba top flr unit. hardwood flrs, Euro kit w/ sub Merill, Gaggeneau, glass tile ba, roof top deck.
JB Fung 310.881.3847
**INCREDIBLE 51 AC PROPERTY**
$15,000,000
Santa Ynez Valley. Prime rolling usable land w/ giant oaks & pasturage. Key location, close to Los Olivos. Redwood barns, ice & reclaimed farm houses, pot house.
Brady/Brady 805.391.0587

**256 ACRE RANCH**
$15,000,000
Santa Ynez Valley. Prime rolling usable land w/ giant oaks & pasturage. Key location, close to Los Olivos. Redwood barns, ice & reclaimed farm houses, pot house.
Brady/Brady 805.391.0587

**2020 MALIBU ROAD**
$12,000,000
Bel Air. The 4 bedroom villa has the best of everythng: luxury, privacy, & views. Transit to anywhere in the world.
Bosworth/Brady 310.980.644E

**VINEYARD MANOR ESTATE**
$10,000,000
Santa Ynez Valley. 64 acres w/12 acres of premium vines. $1,900,000 contemprary home. Dramatic nature pool/guest house.
Brady/Brady 805.391.0587

**2690 BARRYMORE DRIVE**
$8,900,000
Bel Air. Spectacular ocean views, over 18 acres of St. Moritz grounds. 6000 sqft, 10 bdrm, 10 bth, Elegantly landscaped, orchard gated & extremey private.
Ricciartini, Low, & Zaro 760.481.4305

**DESI ниER’S RANCH ESTATE**
$12,850,000
Santa Ynez Valley. European Style. Every design detail. Metal windows, stainless steel, custom pools & courtyards. 40 acres, 9 bdrms, 6 bths.
Brady/Emberg 831.631.3053

**CONTEMP MASTERPIECE**
$2,595,000
Rancho Mirage. 4bd/3ba & 10bd/1ba casita. Mid-century, shears closets & luxury baths. Manufactured wth custom design pooling patio, living & dining.
In Aumann 760.567.8651

**FANCIE MURAE’S FINEST**
$3,785,000
Pandoro Mirage. 4bd/3.5ba & 10bd/1ba casita. Luxury estates, over 1 acre. Close to everything yet secluded for the ultimate isolation. A must see! Aida Bone 760.832.1547

**WEST VILLA TWINSHS**
$3,250,000
New York. N.Y. landmark single-family townhouse. 4 bedrooms. Skyline on top floor. 3bd/2.5ba. Rustic dining, 0.5 acre w/robotic-termed ceilings & fireplace.
Valerie Sherman 212.666.7684

**MEDITERRANEAN W/YEWS**
$1,675,000
Bel Air. Views of Santa Ynez. Limestone & redwood. 3-story, 8 bdrms, 8 bths. Roof terraces & office down. Lots of trees & fruit trees, pools, etc.
Calestado Macriolo 310.317.4996

**EXQUISITELY REMODELED CONDO**
$1,495,000
Maehu. 4 bd/ba above Westward Beach. 2 bdr/ba rem of. Limestone & hwd flrs. Ocean views from mstr & liv. Complex offers tennis, pool, spa & clubhs.
Shirley Sherman 760.648.0834

**ESTANCIA**
$1,391,000
Bosworth/Brady 760.327.8882

**NEW MALIBU HOME**
$1,299,000
Malibu. 4 bdrms, 3 baths, 3,300 sq ft, 2-car garage, pool, spa, views. Newly remodeled, eat-in kitchen, garage, fully fenced, gated. See! Jim Halsey 714.587.1035

**2010 N DEBOER ROAD**
$425,000
Palm Springs. Affordable priced 3bd/2ba pool home, built in “98. All tiled roof, fireplace, 2-car garage. Desert Pa k Est 64 years many upgrades.
Greg Gray 760.833.5434

**DESSERT PARK ESTATES**
$309,900
Palm Springs. 3bd/2ba doll house in highly sought after Desert Park Estates. Custom paint, tiled flrs, lg 2-car garage, pool, spa, veranda, fruit trees.
Sabrina Layton 760.880.2108

**311 Doheny 6706**
$685,000
West Hollywood. Incredibl South facing unit on 7th FL. panel/redesigned So w terrace & style.
Joe Reichlin 714.888.3880

**FABULOUS MID-CENTURY**
$409,000
Palm Springs. 3bd/2ba Desert Park Estates incm, 1770 sqt, large lot, pool ves. 2 car garage, dual dwsp, pool, block walls.
Allan Sur 760.925.9202

**360 WESTWOOD DRIVE**
$6,900,000
Bel Air. Spectacular ocean views, over 18 acres of St. Moritz grounds. 6000 sqft, 10 bdrm, 10 bth, Elegantly landscaped, orchard gated & extremey private.
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New York. N.Y. landmark single-family townhouse. 4 bedrooms. Skyline on top floor. 3bd/2.5ba. Rustic dining, 0.5 acre w/robotic-termed ceilings & fireplace.
Valerie Sherman 212.666.7684

**ARCHITECTURALLY STUNNING**
$12,295,000
Malibu. Contemp. 3bd/3ba w/ 1/4 acre yard w/ 2 bdrms, 2 bths, 2 car garage, dual evap, 626.229.0909 F., 5.969.9993. Ocean, mountain & river vistas. Private pool, spa, w/fitness center.
Greg Gray 760.833.5434

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Doors Down celebrated the platinum certification of its latest release, "Seventeen Days," backstage at the band's July 6 show at Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, N.J. Pictured, from left, are Republic and Universal Records' Avery Lipman; Universal Records' Tom Mackay; Doors Down members Greg Upchurch, Matt Roberts, Chris Henderson and Todd Harrell; Universal Motown Records Group's Mel Lawin; band frontman Brad Arnold; and Universal Records' Monte Lipman.

The International Christian Retail Stow's presentation of upcoming projects related to the film version of C.S. Lewis' book "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" drew more than 700 people to the Denver Convention Center July 10 in Denver. Attendees get a sneak peek at the film and a fist listen to songs from the soundtrack, produced by EMI Music, Walt Disney Studios and Walden Media. Pictured, from left, are soundtrack producers Mark Johnson and Rebecca St. James (who appear on the soundtrack) and Walden Media's president/co-founder Michael Flaherty.

Country act the Karg Boys signed a worldwide publishing and artist development deal with Universal Music Publishing Group July 21 in Nashville. Pictured, from left, are brothers Richard and Andy Karg. Pictured in back, from left, are bassist Gary Barden, ASCAP's Don Kren and BMI's Nashville's Scott Gunter and Pat Hiltron.

Al Kooper celebrated the release of his first studio album in 30 years, "Black Coffee," with a July 12 performance at B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in New York. He performed such new songs as "My Hands Are Tied." Pictured, from left, are artist manager Paul McAndrews, BMI's Michael Green, BMI's John拂, ASCAP's Don Kren and BMI's Andy Karg.

Latin act Tres Divas get ready to go onstage and perform their newest hit "Cumbia Del Oeste" during the Academy of Tejano Artists and Musicians' show held July 13 at La Villita in San Antonio. Pictured, from left, are Eva, Elsa Brey, Stelfes Mendi and Shelly Laves. (Photo: Philip Hendron)
RECORD COMPANIES: MTV Networks Latin America in Miami promotes Jesse Tullian to senior VP of music and talent. He was VP MTV Networks Latin America also names Marc Zimet senior director of music and talent. He was VP of video promotion at Arista Records.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment in New York names Sofia Sondervan senior VP of feature films. She was head of East Coast production at ContentFilm.

PUBLISHING: BMG Music Publishing Worldwide in New York promotes Andrew Jenkins to president of BMG Music Publishing International. He was executive VP, BMG Music Publishing Worldwide also ups Gary Gross to president of BMG production music worldwide. He was president of BMG production music North America.

ASCAP in New York promotes Jennifer Knoopfe to pop/rock director of membership. She was associate director of membership.

DISTRIBUTION: Koch Entertainment Distribution in Port Washington, NY, names Eric Lemasters director of label relations and new media. He was head of new media at Bravado Merchandising.

HOME VIDEO: Paramount Worldwide Home Entertainment in Hollywood, Calif., ups Carla Stock to VP of business affairs administration. She was director.

RHYMEFEST

ON THE TOWN
Up-and-coming rapper Rhymefest got an otherwise meek industry crowd going at a private Records showcase Aug. 2 at Sony Studios in New York. The performance reached a fevered pitch when Kanye West made a guest appearance. On hand were J and BMG biggies Clive Davis and J Charles Goldstuck, as well as J Records senior VP of urban marketing Jeff Burroughs. The party then moved to Webster Hall, where ATO/RCM artist David Grey performed to sold-out crowd. RCA executive VP/C M. Richards Sanders and Vector Recordings co-founder Jack Rosen were among those grooving to Gray’s new tunes.

HEARD AT R&B CONFAB
If what Track heard at the Billboard-African American Urban Radio Networks R&B/hip-hop conference & Awards is true, Busta Rhymes is working on reggaetón tracks with Hector “El Bambino.” Hector, along with Yung King Pinz and Buckshot, performed during the conference’s well-coming reception.

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER
Jimmy Jam, Desmond Child, Randy Jackson and Dave Koz are the first artists confirmed to walk in halls of Congress Sept. 7 as part of the inaugural Recording Arts Day on the Hill. A couple dozen more recording artists, songwriters and producers are also expected to fly in and meet with legislators as part of the artist advocacy event.

GROWTH IN THE AMAZON
It seems amazon.com is moving closer to launching its long-anticipated digital music service. Track hears the company is looking for a content acquisition manager to “seek and license digital music content worldwide, including content from major recording labels and independent recording labels and artists.”

ONE-NIGHT STAND
Billboard Washington, D.C., bureau chief Bill Holland takes to the stage Aug. 10 at the New Strathmore Arts Center in Bethesda, Md. Yep, Bill Holland & the Rent’s Due Band—which has not played much since its 70s/80s heyday—is one of several acts scheduled to perform at what is billed as “A Tribute to the Band.”

ON THE MOVE
Feisty recording-artist activist Ann Chaitowitz, who has been with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists since 1995, is moving on. From what Track hears, she has accepted a job handling copyright issues for the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

SEGER PLAYS HOME TURF
Bob Seger, making a rare appearance, joined 3 Doors Down on stage Aug. 2 at the DTE Energy Music Theatre in Clarkston, Mich. The legendary artist performed on “Landing in London,” a song he recorded with 3DD for the band’s latest album, “Seventeen Days.” This marked Seger’s first public appearance since his induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame last year—and his first singing appearance in nearly a decade in the area of his hometown, Detroit.

FORMER LFO SINGER ORGANIZES CONCERT FOR LEUKEMIA & LYMPHOMA SOCIETY
Rich Cronin, former lead singer of boy band LFO—best known for the 1999 top five hit “Summer Girls”—is battling leukemia and lymphoma. The 29-year-old Bostonian says he has been overwhelmed by the incredible outpouring of support from LFO fans and his music friends, including members of ‘N Sync, Backstreet Boys and 98°. Aaron Carter and Joey Fatone are among the performers taking part in Aug. 21 concert in Orlando, Fla. Produced by the Rich Cronin Hope Foundation, the concert will raise money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Cronin, who is releasing his solo album for Hydrogen Records, says getting young people to donate bone marrow is his No. 1 priority.
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