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CONTEMPO
The human tragedy and the economic toll of Hurricane Katrina—how ever difficult to fathom—have painfully hit home all across America.

For many in the music business the impact of the storm fell on a most personal level. With communication systems in chaos, it has been impossible to con tact loved ones and colleagues throughout the New Orleans and Gulf Coast region. Retail chains scramble to learn the whereabouts of their employees. Labels, managers and the public at large anxiously await news about some of music’s greatest names.

The region slammed by Katrina has long been crucial to the music world. New Orleans is, of course, a great hotbed of jazz, blues, soul and the region’s indigenous Creole and Cajun musics. The city that has the most stature in the Gulf Coast are packed with performance venues, large and small. This has made the region a magnet for music creators and music fans alike.

Historic venues, beloved retail outlets and treasure troves of recorded music have no doubt been destroyed by Katrina. But a greater tragedy could await. How long will it take for the local industry to get back on its feet and employ the thousands of music and touring professionals who long ago flocked to this fertile ground? How long will it be before tourists and music lovers can resume their pilgrimages to New Orleans, the ultimate musical mecca?

To their great credit, musicians with and without ties to the affected area have already come forward to participate in events that will support the immense relief effort needed. Even with such noble efforts, we fear we have only just begun to feel the full effect of Katrina’s ill wind.

The tools of music technology help to make this possible. With the support and advocacy work of the music industry, and the grassroots efforts made by music educators, we can begin to replace “The Sounds of Silence” in our schools with a “Joyful Noise.”

Debbie Cavelier is dean of continuing education for Berklee College of Music’s online extension school, berkleeonline.com.

Education In America: The Sound Of Silence

BY DEBBIE CAVELIER

Many of us who work in the music industry find ourselves thinking about the future of music programs as the spark that ignited our passion for music, many years ago. Well-funded programs provided an array of experiences that fueled our passion and fed our souls.

Studies have shown that the benefits students enjoy from participating in school music programs go far beyond the intrinsic value. Scientific research has documented the importance of music education and its ability to improve overall school performance, see SAT scores, increase spatial I.Q., and decrease disciplinary problems.

Knowing this, it would only make sense that music would be at the core of America’s public school systems; but this is not the case. Many schools have continued to reduce or eliminate music education programs, particularly in major urban school districts. And, with the current emphasis on “basics,” too often challenged students do not have time in their schedules to take music classes. This most often occurs in schools where parents are less likely to be advocates for music instruction because of language difficulties or a social or emotional disconnect with schools in general.

The No Child Left Behind Act, signed into law in 2002, names the arts as a core subject. However, even this specific language does not help when it comes to the reality of programming school music. Budget cuts, high-stakes testing and scheduling issues all take their toll on music programs in this country.

Public school budget cutbacks in the arts have created the need for strategic efforts to make the case at all levels of education and government regarding the important role of music and arts in education and society.

It is so important for all those that care about music and the arts in our schools can do to be vocally supportive of music programs to decision makers, to speak about how music is a factor in everyday life regarding decision making, quality of life and cultural connectedness,” states June Hinckley, music and fine arts curriculum specialist for the Florida Department of Education. “They need to show that music is not a frill, but at the core of what makes us human and binds us as a nation.

To help champion these efforts, music education advocacy resources containing research and support information are available through the efforts of such organizations as the National Arts, for Music Education, the International Music Products Association, American Music Conference and the Music for All Foundation.

Those of us who make a living in the industry should champion advocacy efforts by supporting music education in our schools. Whether you work as a writer, producer, artist or manager, or occupy some other part of the music industry, you know how music can change a life.

In addition to the advocacy and support of the music industry, music educators must take matters into their own hands and become grass-roots, proactive PR and marketing machines for their own school music programs.

Music educators must also continue their own education and learn new skills, including the tools of technology. These skills will help them develop portfolios of their students’ work, including MP3s and music notation files of student performances, compositions and arrangements.

Imagine the impact of students walking in the door at the end of the school day proudly showing “Look at what I made in music class today!” Tangible outcomes can make a difference in the perception of a program’s importance.

CAVALIER
After The Storm, An Industry Struggles

Katrina Disrupts All Sectors Of Entertainment

As flood waters rose in the days following Hurricane Katrina’s Aug. 29 rampage through New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, so too did concern for the myriad musicians, business associates, friends and family in the region.

The scope of the loss and tragedy Katrina caused is clear: It will be years before a locale renowned for its entertainment industry is back to business as usual—if it ever is again.

For the music industry, the top priority became tracking down the missing. On Thursday, three days after the hurricane hit, with much of the region still under water and communication spotty, at best, reports began to surface that Antoine “Fats” Domino, songwriter Allen Toussaint (who penned Patti LaBelle’s hit “Lady Marmalade”) and others had not been heard from since Katrina touched down. The Neville Brothers, long associated with New Orleans, were fine, but Charles Neville could not locate his three daughters.

Domino, the 76-year-old Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member, had not been heard from since Aug. 28, when he told his manager he was going to ride out the storm in his New Orleans home. Local press reports say Domino and his family were spotted on the balcony of their home Aug. 31, but they had not been rescued at press time.

It was not just well-known musicians who were missing or displaced. The Gulf Coast, and in particular the New Orleans region, was also home to a thriving community of local musicians who make a living playing jazz, zydeco and Cajun music, especially for tourists.

“I just can’t get ahold of anyone,” said Jonno Frishberg, a 45-year-old fiddler who earned his livelihood playing Cajun music gigs. “You’re talking about a whole community of musicians like me, with no unemployment insurance and no way to make a living,” Frishberg and his wife and two children are all safe. “If I didn’t have kids, I’d be looking to head far away from here,” he says. “I’ll still have to go on the road to make a living. I’m just looking for a way to feed my family.”

**GRIM PROSPECTS**

On Wednesday evening retail chains were still scrambling to learn of their employees’ well-being, while wholesalers said they had not been able to get through to check on their independent accounts.

“We are in contact with our management team there, but we are still trying to track down our employees,” Tower Records senior VP of operations Bill Duffy said. “We have heard from about half of them.”

Phone calls to independent stores in New Orleans, Biloxi, Miss., and Mobile, Ala., either went unanswered or offered only a busy signal.

“We have been unable to get through to any stores in New Orleans,” Super D indie sales manager Mark Grindel reported. “We don’t know how they are.”

As for the retail locations themselves, executives that Billboard contacted were assuming the worst: that the stores were flooded, with massive damage to merchandise.

The shape of live entertainment in the region will be impacted for months, if not permanently.

Among the large venues in the region affected by Katrina are the Superdome, New Orleans Arena and Keifer Uno Lakefront Arena in New Orleans; the Cajundome in Lafayette, La.; the RiverCenter in Baton Rouge, La.; the Mississippi Coliseum in Biloxi; the Mitchell Center and Mobile Civic Center in Mobile, Ala.; the Pensacola (Fla.) Civic Center; and the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast casino market.

Philadelphia-based venue management firm SMG is active in the Gulf Coast, managing the Superdome and New Orleans Arena, the buildings in Pensacola and Baton Rouge, and the Mobile Civic Center. Of the SMG buildings, the...
Embezzlement Scandal Hits SGA

NEW YORK—A federal criminal investigation is under way after $12.5 million in songwriter royalties were allegedly embezzled from the Songwriters Guild of America by its longtime royalty manager, Marsha Aiken and family members.

The SGA's special counsel, Charles Sanders, tells Billboard that the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service and the U.S. Postal Service are working with the guild to determine the full extent of any criminal activities. The SGA represents about 5,000 songwriter members and their estates. Members may elect to have the guild collect royalties for them from publishers, collecting societies and others. Nearly $16 million in royalties are collected annually, and the SGA holds about 2% of that amount when current addresses for writers cannot be located.

According to a federal civil lawsuit the SGA filed in July, Aiken became the guild’s royalty manager in 2002 and created a fraudulent membership account under the name Anthony Ray, who the IRS later identified as her cousin. She began writing unauthorized royalty checks to Ray from the SGA's general account—where the unknown writers' funds are held—and mailing them to him in Rhode Island.

A Rhode Island bank complied with federal banking regulations by notifying the IRS when someone attempted to cash an SGA check for more than $10,000, Sanders says. The IRS then contacted the SGA, with Aiken taking charge of the inquiry as royalty and office manager. She stalled the IRS with various evasions, Sanders says. In June the IRS contacted an SGA executive and pointed out that Aiken and the recipient of the check were cousins. The guild immediately launched an investigation and discharged Aiken. Several specialists are working to implement security improvements and to file insurance claims, Sanders says.

The District Court in Brooklyn, N.Y., issued an injunction Aug. 17 prohibiting Aiken, Ray, Aiken Adams and anyone "in active concert" with any of them from selling property in St. Albans, N.Y., that the SGA claims was acquired with the funds.

Aiken declined to comment. Ray, Levy and Adams could not be reached.

Katrina (cont.)

from >>p5

Superdome was the most high-profile in Katrina’s path, serving as a shelter for thousands of hurricane refugees and taking a beating from the storm.

Executives at Biloxi’s Mississippi Coast Coliseum could not be reached. A busy building that hosts numerous concerts and two festivals, the MCC sat directly in Katrina’s path.

Home to dozens of thriving music venues, New Orleans is also home to promoters Beaver Productions and Superfly Presents, as well as the site of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and the flagship House of Blues club. “We believe everyone is safe,” HOB’s Kevin Morrow said, as of Wednesday, his club was still dry. “We are looking to relocate some people until we can figure out how long it will be till we can start operations again,” Morrow said.

Producers Rehage Entertainment of the Voodoo Music Experience, scheduled for Oct. 29-30 in New Orleans, were awaiting word from city and state officials as to whether they would go forward with the event.

“It’s going to be a long road,” said Don Fox, president of Beaver Productions. “There won’t be any concerts in New Orleans for a while, at least three to six months.”

Katrina made a substantial impact on the radio business in and around the Gulf Coast as well. Entercom closed two of its four stations in the area and received assistance from competitor Clear Channel, which used a helicopter to help evacuate Entercom employees from downtown New Orleans.

Christian radio stations located throughout the coastal areas are finding it difficult to determine when and if they will be able to be back on the air. The American Family Radio network said 13 of its stations in the Gulf Coast region were off the air and without power.

In some places we’ve lost contact with personnel at these locations,” AFN chief engineer Joey Momyer said. “And at some locations we’ve lost contact with the equipment we use to monitor the stations.”

Broadcasters Clear Channel, Entercom, Citadel, Apex, and the Louisiana State Network have partnered to form the United Radio Broadcasters of New Orleans. Clear Channel VP of news/talk programming Gale Hobbs and Entercom VP news/talk program director Ken Beck combined their staffs to produce news that will be broadcast over nine surviving radio stations in the stricken city.

GOODWILL ABOUNDS

Many in the music industry not directly affected by the hurricane set about to assist the victims. Some of the higher-profile efforts included a Sept. 12 Dave Matthews benefit concert at Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Denver; a Sept. 10 special on MTV, VH1 and CMT; and “A Concert for Hurricane Relief,” an hour-long TV special to air Sept. 2 on NBC, MSNBC and CNBC, co-headlined by Tim McGraw and also featuring Harry Connick Jr., Wynon Maarsalis and others. “Our city will come back, but it will take the entire country,” Marsalis said. “When you take New Orleans from America, our soul equation goes down.”

Marsalis and special guests also will highlight the Higher Ground Hurricane Relief Concert, to take place Sept. 17 at Rose Theater in New York. The event will be recorded by Jazz at Lincoln Center. A CD from the event will be released by Blue Note Records with all profits going to relief funds.

Putumayo World Music is also donating proceeds from the sale of two records, “New Orleans,” and “Mississippi Blues,” to relief efforts, through year’s end.

In the digital realm, Napster began selling a “Download to Donate” compilation Sept. 1, with profits going to the American Red Cross. CD Baby, where thousands of independent artists sell their music online, set up a special page to sell CDs from those who wanted their profits to go to the Red Cross.

And at radio, Clear Channel stations are airing PSAs directing listeners to stormaid.com, where they can make donations to the American Red Cross. In addition, Clear Channel Entertainment is organizing benefit concerts and collection drives.

In New York, the rapper Juvenile broke down at a Sept. 1 press conference announcing a Sept. 9 telethon on BET. Juvenile lost his house in New Orleans and had yet to locate certain family members. The clothes he wore had to be purchased by his publicist, and his label, Atlantic, had been wiring money to his family, who lost everything in the floods. “Like the effort we put towards war and the tsunami,” a red-eyed Juvenile said, “We need to put forth the same effort to saving our own country.”

Master P, rapper and head of the label No Limit, was also at the press conference, and also lost a home. Master P launched the organization Team Rescue (teamrescue.com) to get supplies to those left in New Orleans.

And while the various factions of the robust New Orleans hip-hop scene had been competitive in the past, Master P said he plans to do an album and tour with members of the Cash Money label and Juvenile.

“It ain’t about No Limit or Cash Money,” Master P said. “It’s about New Orleans. We’ll do whatever we have to do for our people.”

Reporting for this article by Ray Waddell, Deborah Evans Price and Phyllis Stank in Nashville; Melissa Newman, Gail Mitchell and Todd Martens in Los Angeles; Ivory M. Jones, Ed Christman and Chris M. Walsh in New York; Leila Cobo in Miami; and Bill Holland in Washington, D.C.
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DreamWorks Is Over

UMG Folds Label After Flagship Star Toby Keith Departs

NASHVILLE—On the heels of losing its only superstar, DreamWorks Records Nashville is being shuttered by its parent company, Universal Music Group. As Billboard reported last week, Toby Keith has left the label where he scored his greatest successes to launch his own company, Show Dog Records.

Most of DreamWorks’ staff and artists will be absorbed into sister labels MCA Nashville, Mercury and Lost Highway Records. Three staffers are being let go. A source says they are all at the assistant level.

Another factor in the closure is the looming termination of UMG’s right to use DreamWorks’ name, according to a source. As a condition of the deal when UMG purchased DreamWorks SKG for $100 million in 2003—separating the latter from its film division—UMG had to give up use of the DreamWorks name by the end of this year.

With the exception of a dedicated promotion team, most of the DreamWorks staff had already assumed duties at the sister labels ever since DreamWorks merged with Universal Music Group Nashville in May 2004. VP of promotion Bruce Shindler and VP of field promotion George Briner will be reassigned to similar positions.

The remaining UMG labels are expected to expand their promotion staffs in the coming months, absorbing some of the former DreamWorks team.

Two members of that team, regional promoters Lisa Owen and Suzanne Durham, have joined the Show Dog staff (see Nashville Scene, page 67); DreamWorks artist Scotty Emerick also moved to the label.

With Keith and Emerick gone, the label’s roster comprises just six acts: Darryl Worley, Tracy Lawrence, Jessica Andrews, Jimmy Wayne, Hot Apple Pie and newcomer Tori Baleey. None have came close to equaling Keith’s multi-platinum sales.

Lawrence’s most recent album, 2004’s “Strong,” sold 371,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Wayne’s self-titled 2003 debut sold 422,000, Andrews’ last album, 2003’s “Now,” has sold 197,000. Worley’s fourth album, last year’s self-titled effort, has sold 134,000. And the July debut of new group Hot Apple Pie has scanned 73,000 copies to date.

DreamWorks’ Nashville division opened in 1999 under the direction of producer James Stroud, who is now chairman of UMG with Luke Lewis. It had early success with Randy Travis and “The Prince of Egypt” soundtrack, and later successfully launched Andrews, Worley, Wayne and Emerson Drive.

At its peak as a stand-alone label, DreamWorks had nearly 25 employees. Its staff won Billboard’s promotion team of the year award in 2002.

That all changed when UMG bought DreamWorks. At first, Stroud pledged that the Nashville division would remain a stand-alone operation as the rest of the Stone Group became an imprint of Interscope Geffen A&M. But he reversed that position just five months later and the merger happened quickly after that, resulting in about eight layoffs last year.

“We went from being an independent to one of the biggest, best and best labels in town, and in the merger we lost all identity,” Keith says of DreamWorks. “We were the little dog that barked loud and (now) grew up to be a big dog, and when we merged we were powerless.”

Keith also says that even before the shutdown, UMG had already “tired just about anybody who was worth a shit” at DreamWorks. Stroud and Keith declined to comment.

Exec David Fine Dead At 76

LONDON—Longtime music industry figure David Fine died Aug. 30 at the age of 76 of cancer.

“He was a gentleman and a great family man,” says John Kennedy, chairman/CEO of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. Fine was an IFPI board member from 1987-1998, serving as chairman from 1991-1998.

Fine’s diplomatic skills were tested in the mid-1990s, when as IFPI chief he was charged with negotiating a new standard contract for mechanical rights with BIEM, the collecting societies group.

The talks were deadlocked when Fine approached his BIEM counterpart, SACEM president Jean-Loup Tournier. The two men started face-to-face talks and in January 1998 forged what became known as the “Cannes Accord.”

“When there’s lots and lots of people around a table, there’s simply no way of easily communicating,” Fine told Billboard at the time. “These things are far better discussed between a couple of people with the best interests of their respective sides at heart.”

Fine’s career in the industry spanned four decades. After working in his native South Africa, mainly for leading indie label Gallo, Fine joined PolyGram in London in 1979, eventually becoming chairman/chief executive of PolyGram U.K.

In 1983, he was appointed executive VP of the PolyGram Group, with responsibility for its subsidiaries throughout the world. In 1987, Fine was promoted to president/CEO of PolyGram worldwide and oversaw a period of expansion through internal growth and the landmark acquisitions of Epic/PolyGram and A&M.

Fine was also at the helm when parent company Philips floated 20% of PolyGram’s shares on the Amsterdam and New York Stock Exchanges.


“David Fine was a great man,” Levy said through a representative. “He was generous and gentle with people, and he will be sorely missed.”

Fine is survived by wife Bernice, son Mark and daughters Amanda and Pamela. His funeral was held Aug. 31. A memorial service is planned for Sept. 4 in London.

Digital

MySpace to Launch Label

MySpace wants to be more than just a social networking site. It is talking with Interscope Records to serve as an A&R center too.

This late entry into the label business will allow the social networking site to talk with artists that are illuminating sources close to the matter say. The deal is likely to be an upstream arrangement in which Interscope will provide marketing and distribution for records from breakout, unsigned acts that use MySpace to spread their music.

The 2-year-old MySpace has rapidly transformed itself from an also-ran social networking rival to Friendster to one of the most heavily trafficked destinations on the Web (see Billboard, July 2), attracting more than 17 million unique users per month in the United States, according to ComScore Media Metrix. More than 500,000 bands from the biggest of stars to unsigned unknowns, host music and touring info on the site.

The move comes a month after Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp. announced plans to acquire the popular social networking site and its parent company, Los Angeles-based Intermix Media, for $580 million. The Intermix/New Corp. deal is now the subject of a class action lawsuit from a group of Intermix shareholders, who charge that management didn’t receive fair value for the company.

Interscope has emerged as a leading MySpace partner. The two companies this year have teamed on online premieres for upcoming releases from the Black Eyed Peas, Nine Inch Nails, Weezer and Audioslave. MySpace and Interscope declined comment. CEO Chris DeWolfe recently told the New York Times that the company is in talks with an unnamed major about a label deal.

Interscope is no stranger to using Web sites catering to unsigned artists as an A&R tool. The company in 1999 introduced Farmclub.com, a now-defunct and failed attempt to develop unsigned acts online, and with a USA Networks TV show of the same.
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No Progress In Online Licensing Negotiations

Time may be running out for music publishers and digital music services to agree on a deal for online music licenses before legislators do it for them. Negotiations between six music publisher and songwriter groups and the Digital Media Assn. broke down after an Aug. 16 meeting. A deal appears unlikely before Congress reconvenes Sept. 6.

Since publishers see no resolution in sight, the Harry Fox Agency is sending letters reminding those companies that agreed in 2001 to pay advance mechanical royalties for uncentralized streaming rates, but have fallen behind in payments, of their contractual obligations.

The National Music Publishers' Assn., the Harry Fox Agency, the Songwriters Guild of America, the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International, ASCAP and BMI have since swapped letters with DiMA. On Aug. 25, the music groups wrote to DiMA, criticizing its "preposterous proposal for a minimum rate." The royalty rate offered for subscription services—6.9% of revenue—as well as the broadened scope of the proposed license, the music groups' letter said, "demonstrated to us that DiMA is not serious about achieving a compromise."

The publishers want 16.7% of gross revenue for a unit-license that includes performance and mechanical rights, issued by a single licensing organization. DiMA responded the following day, charging that publishers "belligerently mistate and mischaracterize existing and historical music industry economics" and are asking Congress to establish royalty rates that far exceed those that have been paid in the past under compulsory license regulations and negotiated deals.

DiMA said that the current licensing infrastructure is the online companies' "most significant roadblock to success." While DiMA wants changes in the historical license structure, it does not want to change historical license rates that are based on several decades of voluntary agreements with labels and broadcasters. In 2001 most labels and digital music companies negotiated advances for streaming reproduction rights. The money was not to be paid out until rates were set.

They were based on the position of many publishers and their collecting societies—ASCAP, BMI and SESAC—for performances and the Harry Fox Agency for mechanicals, which is a temporary download is primarily a mechanical reproduction, but may also involve a public performance. They claim a stream is primarily a public performance, but it also requires a mechanical reproduction to create the stream.

DiMA executive director Jonathan Potter argues that radio broadcasters only pay a performance royalty, and CD manufacturers only pay a mechanical royalty. Digital services should not have to pay for two licenses for each similar online activity, but they do as a result of pressure from ASCAP, BMI and the Harry Fox Agency, Potter says.

DiMA's refusal to pay for what it sees as two licenses for one activity appears to be one reason behind its rate offer. The group says that currently digital performance royalties are 5.2% of revenue while digital downloads are 8.5%. The 6.9% figure blends those rates. ---

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

VMAs Lift Sales

Despite Ratings Decline, Albums Get Boost After Telecast

MIAMI—The 2005 MTV Video Music Awards scaled the heights of celebrity Aug. 28 with a star-studded lineup at American Airlines Arena here. Sadly, the ratings fell off a cliff.

According to Nielsen Media Research, the average number of viewers for the show, hosted by Diddy, fell by about 20%, from 10 million in 2004 to about 8 million this year. National ratings averaged 5%, down from 6.3% in 2004.

Despite the ratings drop, sales increases are expected for winners and performers, thanks to multiple re-airs and exposure on mtv.com and MTV Overdrive, the network's new broadband Internet video channel.

Green Day was the big winner, earning six Moon Men, including one for video of the year. Kelly Clarkson, Missy Elliott and Gorillaz each won two awards.

Retail executives saw an immediate uptick for such VMAs featuring artists: Handlerman senior VP of marketing Scott Wilson says he saw fans of artists who won awards or performed on the show were off to a better Monday: Monday the week following the VMAs than the one prior.

At Newbury Comics, buyer Brian Mello notes that sales "heated up" for Green Day after the show.

Kelly Clarkson, who won two awards, likely see her album sales increase.
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Apple Appears Poised For iPod Phone Launch

LOS ANGELES—The Apple rumor mill swung into overdrive this week when the company reported it would make a big digital music announcement Sept. 7. Most expect Apple Computer will finally unveil the iTunes-compatible mobile phone that has been in development with Motorola for more than a year. Several industry sources have identified Cingular as the wireless operator making the long-anticipated device available to subscribers.

But Apple may have more in store. One analyst says Apple also will introduce a wireless interface to the iTunes Music Store, customized for Cingular so, Cingular would be the first U.S. wireless operator to announce a full-song download music service.

Verizon and Sprint have each discussed launching their own wireless, full-song download services before the end of the year. Should Cingular beat them to market, it would do so with the most popular music service on the Internet today.

"Cingular, with Apple and iTunes, has just spoiled that party," says Roger Entner, analyst with research firm Ovum. "It makes it very, very difficult for them."

But Cingular has not yet upgraded its network to the same broadband speeds that Verizon and Sprint boast, meaning that downloading songs will be quite slow. A more likely scenario, at least at first, is that the Motorola iTunes phone will be able to sync with computer-based iTunes the same way an iPod does now.

Enthusiasts recently discovered an interface in the latest version of iTunes that lets users choose to sync with either an iPod or a mobile phone. The iTunes phone is not the only rumored advancement of Apple’s digital music strategy that could be addressed Sept. 7. Other potential announcements include an iPod that supports video playback, a line of flash-based iPod Mini devices or iTunes support of a portable subscription service.

The video iPod and the flash-based Minis are considered inevitable. Apple recently changed the language in its iPod patent to include video as one of the files it can display, and iTunes already sells some music video content.

Although initially critical of flash-based digital music players, Apple has since embraced the technology for its iPod Shuffle. Many expect the company to introduce a flash-based version of the popular iPod Mini in time for the holiday sales season. (Research firm iSuppli reported that Apple has bought as much as 40% of Samsung’s flash-chip inventory for the second half of this year.)

A music subscription service is considered a long shot for Apple at this time, even though CEO Steve Jobs has recently relaxed his criticism of such services. Analysts generally agree that Apple will wait until there is more interest in portable subscriptions before releasing such an upgrade.

Kirby Delivers TKO

NASHVILLE—Veteran agent Dave Kirby has left his position as senior VP/head of the Los Angeles office for the Agency Group to form his own agency, the Kirby Organization.

With funding from a Wall Street investment banking firm, TKO opens immediately as a full-service booking agency with offices in Los Angeles and New York (billboard.biz, Aug. 29).

The initial client list of mostly hard rock acts includes Drowning Pool, Bloodsimple, (Red)pe, Ill Nino, Motorhead, Lit, Mudvayne, DevilDriver, Hatebreed, Team Sleep, Sepultura, Life of Agony, Riders on the Storm and Anthrax.

Kirby was with the Agency Group for 11 years. Joining him at TKO are agents Mike Montero and Andrew Goodfriend, and GM Rika O’Connor. "All of the clients represented by the individual [agents] are joining those agents at TKO," Kirby says.

An agent since 1979, Kirby is looking forward to steering his own ship. "Most of the agencies that exist were set up during the 1970s and 80s, and as a result their systems are old and stodgy," he says. "TKO is going to be very high on technology, and we plan on redesigning, to a certain degree, the way agency business is done."

Montero will head the New York office, which will open in a few weeks, and agents will be added to that location.

Effective immediately, Kirby and his agents are booking and routing tours under the TKO banner. "The Agency Group is an excellent company. I enjoyed my 11 years there," Kirby says. "But you get to a point in your life where you really don’t want to be working for anyone else."

Drowning Pool manager Paul Bassman says moving his band to TKO was an easy decision. "Dave is the guy I work with. He’s got a great team in Andrew Goodfriend and Mike Montero, so when they go somewhere else, I go where they go," he says. "He’s a fantastic agent, one of the smartest guys I know in the business."

Vagrant’s Game Plan

Label Provides Music For Activision’s New ‘Tony Hawk’ Game

When interactive entertainment software company Vagrant was searching for punk sounds for the latest game (the seventh) in its massively popular “Tony Hawk” series, Vagrant Records CEO Rich Egan was struck with inspiration.

“We thought, Why not have contemporary bands do covers of ‘70s and ‘80s California sounds? he recalls.

It made sense to Activision. So earlier this summer, Egan compiled a list of bands and songs. The 14 titles are exclusive to the videogame, “Tony Hawk’s American Wasteland,” which is scheduled for a fall release to coincide with the Oct. 18 Vagrant soundtrack.

According to Tim Riley, Activision worldwide executive of music, the music and video concept both hand in hand. “American Wasteland” pays homage to the roots of skateboarding while the music honors punk history.

Highlights include My Chemical Romance’s version of “Astro Zombies” (originally recorded by the Misfits), Fall Out Boy’s “Start Today” (Gorilla Biscuits), Taking Back Sunday’s “Suburban Home” (Descendents), Saves the Day’s “Sonic Reducer” (Dead Boys) and Senses Fail’s “Insti
tionalized” (Suicidal Tendencies). (A video is being shot for “Institutionalized.”)

The videogame will spotlight 65 songs, including two exclusive tracks: a remix of Bloc Party’s “Like Eating Glass” and “Image,” the first single from Thrice’s forthcoming album. Also figuring into the game’s musical melting pot are Green Day, The Dead Kennedys, Circle Jerks, the Doors and others. Each track is identified by band and song title.

The exposure for the bands is quite promising—considering that Riley says the “Hawk” franchise has racked up more than $1 billion worldwide. And the exposure will likely expand beyond the game and Vagrant soundtrack. Activision shot a lot of video footage of the artists—both in the studio and on the road with the Vans Warped tour.

“This footage will be unlockable assets in the game, or we may use it on MTV or in an enhanced CD,” Riley says.

Surrounding the game and CD releases will be promotional tie-ins between Activision and Vagrant, encompassing the Web and traditional retailers. In October, Thrice will headline a show in Athens, Ga., to mark the game’s release. If all goes according to plan, an “American Wasteland” tour will follow.

“Videogames are essential for our genre,” Egan says. “The kids playing these games are not zombies. They’re very much aware and paying attention to the music. Today’s kids discover music more through games than radio. In the process of breaking new ground, the games are also breaking artists."

Kirby Delivers TKO

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Aussies Take To The Road

Live Performances Are A Weapon For Cracking North American Market

SYDNEY—Australia has a rich history of well-recognized live performers, from AC/DC to Jet. With this in mind, local label executives and artist managers are leveraging their strength in live performance as a primary way of breaking acts in North America.

Catherine Haridy, A&R manager at leading Aussie independent Festival Mushroom Records, believes Australian bands have a doggedness created from crossing the country’s vast space.

“It’s integral for a band’s success here to get on the road,” she says. “That’s why live they are generally outstanding . . . All they need is to get the notice of someone in the U.S. who will believe them.”

To underpin their case, Australian executives who attended the seventh AustralAsian Music Business Conference Aug. 11-13 here pointed to the recent popularity in North American festivals and college circuits of such acts as John Butler Trio, the Waifs, the Cat’s Empire and Xavier Rudd.

They are also buoyed by the worldwide success in the past few years of such bands as Jet and the Vines, which have each sold more than 2 million units globally, according to their respective labels, Warner and EMIA.

Four FMR bands—Eskimo Joe, After the Fall, 67 Special (signed to Albert Productions) and Gyroscope—are seen to tour North America in 2006.

Labels are also confident in the creation by the Australian Government of an export music office in Los Angeles through its trade export body Austrade. Unveiled at the AMBC, the office will be run by Tony George, a former BMI, Interscope, Geffen and Mitch Schneider Organization executive. It will provide contacts and resources for labels, publishers, booking agents and festivals.

“I anticipate a flood of great Aussie acts heading towards the U.S. and Canada in the next few years, so it’s good to have someone on the ground over there,” says Marshall Cullen, managing director of Sydney-based indie Foghorn Records, who is also a music publisher and manager.

Seymour Stein, New York-based chairman of Warner Music label Sire Records, regards Australia as a strong source of A&R and rare live performances as a key factor for his choices.

He recently signed Oz rock trio Evermore and twin sisters the Veronica's.

“Australia is a healthy A&R source,” Stein says. “Given its track record for a country of just 20 million, people would be fools not to pay attention.”

But Australia’s “tyranny of distance” creates problems. Often, U.S.-based A&R executives are reluctant to sign an act based thousands of miles away. The finances of touring or relocating are daunting. Breaking North America is an expensive, time-consuming process with no shortcuts.

“Many artists try to build a career just by doing some touring and hoping for the best,” says John Watson, co-managing director of Sydney-based John Watson Management, which counts singer/songwriter Missy Higgins among its acts.

“But if that activity happens in a complete vacuum, it’s less likely to accomplish the desired results. You need online promotion or some action at radio or television.”

During the AMBC trade show, many of the 700-plus delegates expressed interest in finding ways to achieve a greater presence at North American festivals and European trade fairs.

Roland Swenson, founder and CEO of Austin-based trade show South by Southwest, and Neil Dixon, CEO of Toronto’s Canadian Music Week, confirmed that Australian acts are an important part of the music mix of their respective shows. “There is an Australian brand at SXSW, and it’s recognized as a quality brand,” Swenson notes.

Both events—next scheduled for March 2006—will hold Australian showcases, SXSW for the fourth time and CMW for the second.

CMW is marketing itself as a first destination for acts heading to Austin. Dixon says he also plans to include a panel about, and reception for, Aussie acts. “We’re going to make a concerted effort to get as much visibility as possible for them,” he says."

>> A ROCK SOLID DEAL

Universal Music Publishing Group has signed an exclusive licensing deal with Rock Music Publishing, the publishing affiliate of independent Taipei, Taiwan-based label Rock Records.

The deal, effective Sept. 1, grants UMPG licensing and royalty collection rights to more than 5,000 titles from all Rock catalog and forthcoming releases worldwide, excluding Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China.

The publishing deal follows a July 2003 agreement between Rock and Universal Music Southeast Asia which sees the label handle Rock Records product.

—Steve McClure

>>> LOFTUS EXITS PLAYGROUND

Former Playground Music Scandinavia marketing executive Kai Loftus has launched an integrated label/management/marketing firm. The new company’s working title is Mr. Loftus.

The company’s first independent venture is with Stockholm-based music video provider Musicbrigade, for which Loftus serves as content and programming manager for Norway.

Loftus exited the Oslo-based Norwegian affiliate of Sweden’s Playground last month amid a restructuring of the indie’s operations. Head of promotion Elin Rekdal also left.

Ian Krogd continues as Playground’s sole marketing and promotion executive at the Oslo unit. His work will be complemented by independent promoters.

Stockholm-based Playground is label home to Finnish rock act the Rasmus, Sweden’s CD ordained and Strip Music, and Norwegian acts Ricohets and Draumr.

—Lars Brandle

>>> CHANGES IN S.M. SHAREHOLDING

Tokyo-based cable-radio operator Usen Broad Networks has acquired a 4.4% stake in South Korean label/management company S.M. Entertainment. At the same time, leading Japanese independent label Avex—which biggest shareholder is Usen—with a 22.4% stake—is boosting its stake in S.M. from 5.8% to 6.5%.

Under the deal, Avex will buy 117,721 shares in S.M. while Usen will purchase 470,886 at 15,800 won ($15.32) per share. The deal takes effect Sept. 13.

Following the pact, Avex and Usen will have exclusive mobile rights to S.M. masters.

—Steve McClure

>>> CANADIANS FOCUS ON LONDON

Canadian acts Joel Plassett, Mad Violet and Leeroy Stagger will perform Sept. 7 at a free concert at the 100 Club in London under the Focus Canada banner. The showcase is part of the five-day City Showcase festival of events in Central London that begins Sept. 5.

U.K. trade group the Assn. of Independent Music, the Canadian High Commission and Drowned In Sound will host a reception during the event. City Showcase is a nonprofit organization launched in 2003 to expose emerging creative talent.

—Lars Brandle

>>> LEMAR GETS MOBO WORKING

English soul singer Lemar garnered five nominations for Britain’s 10th annual Music of Black Origin Awards. The Sony BMG artist is a finalist in the best album category for his sophomore set, “Time to Grow,” and his song “If There’s Any Justice” is up for best single and best video. Lemar, who reached the finals of the BBC talent show “Fame Academy,” is also up for best R&B act and U.K. act of the year.

U.S. singer John Legend is named in three categories, while Snoop Dogg and Mariah Carey got two nominations apiece.

The MOBO ceremony will be held Sept. 22 at London’s Royal Albert Hall. British national public TV channel BBC1 will broadcast the gala the following day. The public can vote on 12 of the 16 categories. A MOBO-appointed panel will decide three lifetime achievement awards. A new category, best African act, is open to votes cast only in Africa.

—Lars Brandle
TORONTO—Canada’s independent sector is nervously awaiting details of the Canadian government’s new funding program. Cautious particular unease is the potential impact on industry support from the likes of the Foundation to Assit Canadian Talent on Records.

The Department of Canadian Heritage will launch its Music Entrepreneurial Components program Sept. 6. MEC—with an annual budget of $8.5 million Canadian ($7.13 million)—will fund established Canadian companies engaged in developing and promoting Canadian creators and artists.

Chinese indie executives are hopeful about the new program—even if it is still short on details—but worried about FACTOR’s future role. They suspect that MEC will affiliate itself with the country’s larger labels, and that FACTOR—a traditional indie supporter—will be relegated to a secondary role.

It is estimated that roughly 80% of the domestic recordings released by indie labels licensed to majors have benefited from FACTOR’s funding.

“There are going to be some fundamental changes,” warns Bernie Finkelstein, president of True North Records in Toronto. “Anybody who tells you they know what’s going on is either lying or [they] are far better informed than I am.”

FACTOR is set to expire Dec. 31 under an agreement with Canadian Heritage. The Toronto-based organization distributes funding to Canadian-owned companies and to Canadian artists, songwriters and producers.

FACTOR is funded by Canadian Heritage and contributions from Canada’s radio broadcasters. The government’s current annual contribution is $7 million Canadian ($5.9 million). Sponsoring radio broadcasters have contributed $5 million Canadian ($4.2 million).

“There’s a lot of uncertainty because of [funding] roles being re-examined,” says Earl Rosen, president of Toronto-based Marquis Records.

It is understood that Canadian Heritage will almost certainly grant FACTOR a new agreement, but what will change is the way music industry funding in Canada is delivered.

MEC will replace the Music Entrepreneur Program that Heritage created in 2001 and which ended March 31, 2005. MEP was overseen by federal cultural agency Telefilm Canada and provided investment funding of $23 million Canadian ($19.3 million) to 13 companies.

Canadian Heritage will oversee MEC’s annual funding. Some 20-30 Canadian-owned companies are expected to meet Heritage’s eligibility criteria. Unlike with MEP, companies benefiting from MEC’s resources will not be allowed to draw on FACTOR funds.

The strategy is “to get a bigger bang for the government’s dollar,” says Pierre Lalonde, Canadian Heritage director of sound recording policy and programs.

“There will be more funding available for those remaining in FACTOR,” he adds. In March Heritage indicated its intent to provide the organization with a new five-year agreement, but FACTOR president Heather Ostergay says, “All we have is an agreement taking us to Dec. 31.”

She adds that the organization is in the midst of “retooling” itself.

Meanwhile, several of Canada’s private broadcasters, dissatisfied with their sponsorship of FACTOR, are also seeking changes at the organization. Some suggest merging it with Radio Star Maker Fund.


Several private broadcasters note that when the federal government became involved with FACTOR in 1986, the organization moved away from providing recordings that could be aired to ensuring that all segments of the music industry were being represented. “I wish we got more CDs we could put on the radio,” Sligo says.

Ostergay counters that such successful acts as Kathleen Edwards, Sam Roberts, and Sum 41 have benefited from FACTOR’s funding.

HMV Japan Perseveres
in Shrinking Market

TOKYO—After a 15-year presence in the Japanese market, HMV’s Nippon expansion shows no sign of slackening. The British-owned music and entertainment retailer operates 53 stores throughout the country and plans to open six more this year.

Industry executives believe HMV’s resilience in what is one of the most competitive retail environments stems from its capacity to localize its service and to offer Japanese consumers a specific experience.

“HMV succeeds because it is a foreign retailer that localizes to the Japanese audience,” says Giles Duke, international affairs manager at BMG Japan.

He praises HMV’s exciting shopping experience, which gives its Japanese customers the product they want by prominently featuring domestic releases. Duke contrasts that with other foreign retailers that opened shop in Japan trying to duplicate the store environment and product line that had succeeded in their home territory.

“We’re steadily chipping away to gain market share and steadily growing our business. We have a major focus on catalog—both Japanese and international product,” explains Paul Dezelsky, president of HMV Japan and Asia Pacific.

He notes that the big retailers, including HMV, are getting bigger, but characterizes Japan as a “fragmented market” that lacks a single dominant player.

According to SoundScan Japan, HMV is the country’s fourth-largest music retailer, with a 7% market share. Market leader Tsutaya has 12%, followed by Shinseido and Tower Records.

Smaller chains add to the diversity; one of the largest is Disc Union, with 15 stores in Tokyo and eastern Japan.

HMV is the only foreign-owned retailer left in the world’s second-largest music market. Until 2002, Tower Records Japan was a subsidiary of its California-based parent company, MTS. The chain was sold to Tokyo-based Nikko Principal Investments Japan, a wholly owned subsidiary of Japanese securities company Nikko Cordial.

Like its competitors, HMV Japan has to contend with a contracting market. Japan’s retail music market has been slipping since 1998. Total industry-wide revenue for the first six months of 2005 is down 7% from the same period last year, reports Takeshi Imazumia, GM of merchandising at Tower Records Japan.

Imazumia adds that consumers here tend to spend more of their disposable income on cell phones and have different ways to consume music, such as through portable devices or online.

HMV and Tower are countering by developing stronger online presences, beefing up their Web sites and moving into the download business.

“We’re always developing content for our Web site,” Dezelsky says. “We’re good competition for Amazon and the other general [e-commerce] sites. For customers, we’re a source of information and a place to purchase.”

HMV’s U.K. download service is set to launch in Japan this month. Dezelsky says HMV Japan will follow suit, but declined to announce a launch date or other specifics.

“Currently, download platforms come from Apple or other high-tech companies,” Imazumia says. “We want to get into it from the point of view of a music software retailer.”

Some labels execute Japan predict that downloading will ultimately complement, rather than replace, the traditional CD business.

“T. I. think we’ve got a commitment to the whole of Asia,” Duke says, “and are heavily committed to this country.”

www.americanradiohistory.com
SoundScan: Entertainment Spending Up

While some lament the soft year for music sales, the overall home entertainment universe that Nielsen Entertainment tracks is up 11.1% in the first seven months of this year, and paid digital downloading is a big part of that.

The tally comes from the data of Nielsen SoundScan, Nielsen BookScan and Nielsen VideoScan. Combined U.S. sales of those three streams during the first seven months of this year totaled 11 billion units of music, books and video. That compares with 990 million for the same period last year.

Within that, music is the largest category, with 525 million units, or 47% of transactions. In the same time frame in 2004, music units accounted for 433 million units. Rob Sisco, Nielsen Music president/Nielsen Entertainment East Coast operations COO; Mark Tindle, senior VP/GM of the West Coast for Nielsen Entertainment’s Music Division; and Chris Muratore, director of retail relations and research services for Nielsen Entertainment, presented the data at the National Ass’n of Record Merchants convention in San Diego last month.

The growing digital sales documented by Nielsen SoundScan gave the music industry the edge. Discounting digital sales, the book industry was the leader, as its unit count comprised 40% of transactions so far this year, while music was at 36% and video was at 24%. In the physical product tally for the corresponding period last year, music held the lead with 40%, versus the book segment’s 37% and video’s 23%.

Nielsen also broke out sales for the holiday season by looking at scans that occurred in December 2004. Of the 359 million total scans Nielsen Entertainment counted in that month, the music industry rang up 149.7 million, or 41% of the total; the book industry took 32%; and the video business had 27%.

Of those three categories, it is the music business that counts on December sales the most. That month contributed 22.5% of all 2004 music sales. By contrast, home video got 21.3% of its sales from that month, and books only took 16.8% of its annual count.

Nielsen Entertainment has tracked music sales trends since 1991. Its data since 1996 shows that CD album sales peaked in 2001 with 712 million units, and were down to 651 million by 2004. Usher’s “Confessions” was the biggest-selling album of 2004, with nearly 8 million units scanned. That was the biggest year-end total for an album since N Sync’s “No Strings Attached” scanned 9.9 million in 2000.

Muratore says that data for the last five years show that mass merchants gained 11 percentage points in market share, growing from 28% of total album sales in 2001 to 39% in 2005. Nontraditional outlets—including online stores, mail-order and 800-number/TV sales—also gained market share, growing from 3% in 2001 to 7% this year. Chain sales, which include consumer electronics retailers and book merchants, fell to 46% in 2005 from 54% in 2001. Likewise, independent merchants also lost market share this year, dropping from 14% in 2001 to 9%.

Nielsen SoundScan also broke out genre album sales from the perspective of retail stores (including chains and independents) and mass merchants. In 2005, the retail segment dominated alternative with 63% of total sales, versus the 37% mass merchants scanned. Retail also dominated jazz sales with 71%, metal with 64%, R&B with 60%, rap with 68%, classical with 68% and deep catalog with 64%. Mass merchants meanwhile dominated country with 72% of scans (versus retail’s 28%), children with 76% and Latin with 62%.

In comparing genre market shares from 2005 year-to-date with the corresponding period in 2003, the biggest swings occurred in Latin, R&B and rap. The mass-merchants’ market share for Latin grew from 52% in 2003. Simultaneously, while retail still dominates R&B and rap sales, it gave up 10 percentage points and nine percentage points, respectively, to the mass-merchant sector.

Following Dylan’s Word

Smithsonian Folkways Spins Icon’s Praises Into Marketing Plan

The staffers at Smithsonian Folkways started reading Bob Dylan’s autobiography “Chronicles: Volume One” as fans. By page 15, they realized they had a potential marketing tool on their hands.

Before the first chapter had come to an end, Dylan declared that Folkways was “the label I wanted to be on. That was the label that put out all the great records.” Folkways acts—New Lost City Ramblers, Doc Watson, Dave Van Ronk and Woody Guthrie, among others—are mentioned throughout “Chronicles: Volume One.”

It was late last year that the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, along with its distributor Ryko Distribution, began plotting a “Dylan Speaks” campaign. Launched in August, Dylan Speaks is an extensive catalog promotion that uses “Chronicles: Volume One” as a road map through the Smithsonian Folkways catalog.

“We’re constantly looking for ways to revive interest in our catalog, so this was a no-brainer,” says Richard Burgess, director of marketing and sales for Smithsonian Folkways. “Bob Dylan was pointing right to our releases.”

In 1987, the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage acquired the recordings and papers of Folkways Records, the New York label founded in 1928 by the late Moses Asch and partner Marian Diestler. Burgess says the Dylan Speaks campaign is the label’s first major national promotion. The label has long shied away from such marketing maneuvers because of its limited funds as a nonprofit, and fears of looking as though it were exploiting its catalog.

“That’s super-important to us,” Burgess says. “We’re a part of the Smithsonian, the national museum of the United States. We need to be taken seriously. At the core of it, we’re an educational entity.”

Jim Cuomo, president of New York-based Ryko Distribution, says Smithsonian Folkways still needed some prodding to launch such a major promotion. With the knowledge that the Martin Scorsese-directed Dylan biography “No Direction Home” would be released this year—airing on PBS Sept. 26–27—it was easier to persuade the label to “Chronicles: Volume One” could be used to turn new fans onto the Smithsonian Folkways catalog.

“We were trying to get them to do these programs, and it’s not what they do,” Cuomo says. “When the Dylan book came out, here was a huge opportunity, and it’s not exploitative, especially when you have such a righteous crusader you want to go on.”

Smithsonian Folkways and Ryko created a nine-song sampler (featuring such tracks as “Buffalo Skinners” by Guthrie and “Pick a Bale of Cotton” by Leadbelly), which will be given away free with the purchase of any Smithsonian Folkways album. Additionally, a Dylan Speaks poster will highlight some of his quotes from “Chronicles: Volume One,” and albums from artists Dylan mentions will be affixed with a sticker that contains a line from the book.

“This is to get people excited about this stuff, especially a younger generation,” Cuomo says. “You need to lead them to it. In this case, Bob Dylan is leading them to it.”

While Dylan’s management did not return calls, Burgess says he would not have moved forward without approval from the Dylan camp. “We’re always going to stay on his right side,” Burgess says.

So far, about 90 independent retailers have signed on, largely those from the Coalition of Independent Music Stores and the Alliance of Independent Media Stores. Mark Gustafson, director of radio and retail promotions for Smithsonian Folkways, says another 90 retailers, including Tower Records, will pick up the promotion in October and November.

This month, United Airlines will highlight the campaign via an inflight station dedicated to the label and the artists Dylan cites as inspiration. Ads were purchased in such magazines as Mother Jones and Oxford American, and samplers will be distributed at the CMJ Music Marathon in New York Sept. 14-17.

“There’s a large segment of the population that doesn’t realize what an influence Folkways had on a number of bands that they listen to,” Burgess says, citing Led Zeppelin as an example. “And from the Folkways point of view, this really carries on the folk tradition—and everything is passed from generation to generation.”
Music, Low-Priced DVD Head For Holiday Rumble

Although record label executives say they realize they are competing against other forms of entertainment for consumer dollars, more often than not they merely give lip service to this reality. Heaven forbid they should take strategic action to confront the issue—like releasing a steady flow of records throughout the year instead of bunching them up into five weeks in the fourth quarter. Or choose street dates in weeks when the overall entertainment software release schedule is light and retailers need help in matching last year’s numbers.

Let’s take Black Friday, for example. The labels’ idea of strategy used to be ensuring that they had a couple of superstar releases on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Nowadays, strategic thinking means partnering with a big-box retailer that will spend lots of money promoting those superstar releases in exchange for some form of exclusive.

Meanwhile, merchants know that come Black Friday, they will be in a free-for-all, bails-to-the-wall, all-out advertisement brawl that undoubtedly will feature low pricing. But which products will be priced at what levels remains to be seen, and any miscalculation could prove lethal.

Consequently, each merchant takes great care in lining up the right product and pricing for that weekend’s advertising, because it will set the agenda for consumers deciding where to shop for the entire holiday season.

Best Buy upped the challenge— as is often the case—when it placed every single-disc title on sale at $9.99 for the first five hours of Black Friday 2000.

By Black Friday 2003, pricing certain titles at $9.99 for that weekend’s circulation was a given for all merchants. Still, most were singed that year by Circuit City’s daylong $9.99 sale price for all of its CDs. That ultimately proved too hot to handle for even Circuit City itself, according to label feedback at the time. But 2003 also saw the debut of the low-priced DVD player as the featured loss leader among home entertainment software merchants.

Last year, DVD players were still in the advertising limelight. But Universal Music Group’s innovative yet controversial JumpStart initiative helped get music back on the front of the circulars, as Circuit City and Best Buy debuted both $7.99 and $8.99 album prices for the holidays.

All of which brings us to this year’s holiday season.

Most merchants don’t like to tip their hands until the Black Friday advertising hits the street, so it is unclear what each will offer. But we can guess that Walmart will feature its exclusive Garth Brooks boxed set (Billboard, Aug. 27).

Music retailers were already concerned about this holiday season because of Microsoft’s upcoming release of Xbox 360, which is expected to diminish music sales. But at the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers’ confab Aug. 11-14, merchants were voicing a new worry.

Two weeks earlier, Warner Home Video had been the talk of the Video Software Dealers Assn. convention with a pricing initiative that could have harmful implications for music this holiday season.

According to retail sources, WHV revealed a Black Fri-
day/Friday Day program that will cut the cost on some block-turner titles—including the “Harry Potter” movies and the trilogy “The Lord of the Rings.” The wholesale cost for these $19.99 list-priced titles would be reduced from about $11 to $7. Plus, another 100 hit movies list-priced at $14.99 would be cut from about $8 wholesale to $4. And boxed sets like “The O.C.—The Complete First Season” will be available for about $16 wholesale instead of $25.

The move will distinguish WHV titles for the holiday season. One major-label executive said he heard about the campaign from practically every account he met with at NARM.

“Retailers are pissed,” the executive said. “They are afraid that they won’t be able to make any money on movies, because the big boxes will jump on the WHV program and sell hit movies priced at $5.99 and $8.99. Also, they are worried [about] how it will impact CD album sales.”

One retail executive describes the WHV initiative as an “extreme JumpStart” that will put pressure on CD pricing as well.

Universal Home Video jumped on the bandwagon with a point-of-sale rebate program for the Black Friday weekend, another merchant says.

In dropping their prices on their products, video companies are asking retailers for placement that could squeeze music from prime real estate, another chain merchant says. Like other retailers, he believes the movie titles will affect the value equation for all merchandise, not just music.

Other merchants are worried that the home video pricing initiatives will do more than hurt CDs, they say such programs could come back to haunt the movie business too.

“This is the crème de la crème of the catalog,” one merchant says. “Once you start to sell these types of movies at $7.99 and $9.99, what is the next price point you have to use to further stimulate sales?”
Lady Sovereign Prefers Chocolate For Her Debut

Next-big-thing status seems to be granted almost yearly to at least one U.K.-based hip-hop artist, from Ms. Dynamite to Dizzee Rascal to M.I.A. Next up is Lady Sovereign, whose single "9 to 5" has become a top 40 hit on U.K. charts.

The 19-year-old’s electronic-based slice-of-life rap was released overseas by Island, and her U.S. debut is scheduled for November from Chicago-based independent Chocolate Industries (home to popular underground rapper Diverse). It may be a brief independent stop for the artist, who has a debut album nearly in the can that features production from Basement Jaxx—with whom she has been performing live.

Lady Sovereign is booked by Little Big Man. Chocolate is slated to issue an eight-track EP that contains a bonus DVD Nov. 15. The EP will feature her first single, "Random," and two remixes of the track.

The label, distributed by Chicago’s Southern Records, is planning an initial shipment of 10,000 copies. Look for features in Fader and Black Book to fuel the hipster hype. According to the artist’s blog, she has been taking meetings with the likes of Jay-Z, and Usher in the hopes of landing a long-term U.S. home. She’s due back in the States this fall to finish her debut and play some showcases.

Her next U.K. single, "Hoodie," arrives Nov. 7.

ETC.: Chapel Hill, N.C.-based Merge Records will shoot for its first appearance on one of the Billboard singles charts this holiday season with the release of Spoon’s “Sister Jack.” The four-song CD single, due Nov. 8, will feature a remix and a previously unreleased song, as well as the video for the single... In October, San Francisco-based Fat Wreck Chords will deliver an anthology from snotty pop-punk act Screeching Weasel, which recorded for Lookout Records for much of its career. Liner notes were compiled by leader Ben Weasel. Fans can go to his blog (benweasel.com) for a glimpse of Weasel’s "self rejected" notes—an enlightening mix of bitterness and pride reflecting on what it was like opening for Green Day in 1995 and coming of age on the opposite end of the multimillion-selling act...
Big Bucks Back Mobile Broadcast TV

Want to watch TV on your mobile phone?
The wireless industry is betting billions that you do.
But we are not talking about just browsing or streaming short clips to your phone. Efforts are afoot to broadcast TV programming nationwide to a new generation of mobile phones that can tune in, just like an at-home TV.

Despite the billions of dollars U.S. wireless operators have spent upgrading their networks to offer such multimedia content as videos and music, they are insufficient for the job.
The problem is that they are designed for two-way, on-demand access. To broadcast programming on such networks would require each show to be sent to each subscriber separately—an impossibly time-consuming and expensive proposition.

"It's very difficult to offer high-definition TV on a handset through existing networks," says Andrew Cole, an analyst with A.T. Kearney.

-You have to offload that through a separate network.
Several initiatives are under way to achieve just that: a separate wireless network built specifically for multimedia broadcasting.

Leading the charge in the United States is wireless bellwether Qualcomm, which has invested $800 million to date in its vision for mobile broadcast TV.

Called MediaFlo, this effort requires Qualcomm to act much like a cable company, such as Comcast. It must build its own content delivery system, consisting of an entirely new network of wireless transmitters, on airwaves paid for by the company. Additionally, it requires a new receiver—also built by Qualcomm—that manufacturers will have to incorporate into future phones if they want their customers to be able to receive such broadcasts. Finally, the company must deal with the fact that Verizon's current VCast high-speed video service, with three times the picture quality.

In addition to the broadcast programming, the MediaFlo system supports a feature called "clipcasting." Users can select content they would like pushed automatically to their phone and replaced when new installments are created, much like a podcast. Content can be refreshed hourly, daily or weekly, and can consist of video and audio programming.

Qualcomm is positioning MediaFlo as a service for all carriers; wireless subscribers, regardless of their carrier, will have access to the same MediaFlo programming.

Carriers could then offer exclusive, on-demand premium programming of their own to set themselves apart. In addition, carriers could incorporate the MediaFlo stream with such applications as a music store or ringtone store. So a user listening to or watching a music channel via MediaFlo can use the carrier network to buy the ringtone or full-song download of any given album.

"It's like giving your TV and Internet together," says Jeff Lorbeek, VP/GM of Qualcomm's MediaFlo division.

As usual, the testing ground for such a dedicated multimedia system is in Asia. Korean operator SK Telecom currently offers a wireless multimedia service using a satellite-based adjunct delivery system called Digital Media Broadcasting. Since its April launch, the DMB service has attracted more than 100,000 subscribers with seven channels of video and 20 of audio. A similar system has been operational in Japan for years.

Also making a play is another wireless giant—Nokia. Its Digital Video Broadcast (DVB) held technology is being tested across Europe by several wireless carriers and in the United States by partner Crown Castle Media.

But like any new technology initiative, the success depends on programming. With this in mind, Qualcomm is aggressively lobbying such well-known brands as ESPN, MTV, Comedy Central and CNN to include their content in the MediaFlo service.

Qualcomm does not expect commercial implementations until next fall, but already has the support of several content providers.

"We think it's huge," says David Del Beccaro, president/CEO of MusicChoice.

"We think media consumption is going to become more and more portable and that the phone is going to be the most robust portable platform."

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\[Antony Bruno\]
AOL Taps Secondary Seats
Creates All-In-One Market With TicketsNow and StubHub

AOL has upped the ante in the secondary ticket market by adding TicketsNow to fellow secondary seller StubHub in the newly formed AOL Ticket Marketplace.

“The Ticket Marketplace is available at aolticketguide.com. AOL entered the ticketing game in July 2001 through a relationship with Ticketmaster. AOL remains in the primary business through its AOL Tickets product, with five primary partners including Ticketmaster and tickets.com.

AOL moved into the secondary market in late 2003 in a promotional relationship with StubHub for auctions and special events. The evolution of AOL’s secondary ticketing profile led to the launch of the Ticket Marketplace pages in mid-August.

Combining the ticket inventories of tickets-now.com with StubHub makes AOL the de facto leader in the open market of secondary tickets — those available for resale by the consumer.

StubHub and TicketsNow retain their own Web presence, and can and do partner with other online portals. But the AOL connection will surely provide juice aplenty to move tickets for both companies. AOL takes an undisclosed percentage of every ticket sold.

“We have integrated ticketing horizontally across all of AOL, so we’re talking about an audience of 110 million,” says Geno Yoham, executive director of AOL Tickets and CityGuide. “If you’re listening to AOL Radio playing a Rolling Stones song, if there’s tickets available we surface a link to buy tickets right in the player.”

The secondary ticket inventory is blended so that “the consumer doesn’t know whether his ticket comes from TicketsNow or StubHub until he actually purchases the ticket,” Yoham explains. “We [also] blend inventory for all our primary partners. You just search for the event, the performer or the sporting team, and we surface those tickets up.”

AOL’s distribution capabilities were a key consideration in TicketsNow coming on board, according to Kenneth Dotson, chief marketing officer for TicketsNow. “AOL has a very large and loyal audience, and access to that audience was important,” he says. “Also we knew a partnership with AOL would create greater awareness of the secondary ticket market and also provide a seal of approval for both the industry and TicketsNow.”

MASSIVE INVENTORY

The AOL Ticket Marketplace makes AOL’s Ticket Center—which offers tickets to more than 40,000 events at some 6,000 venues—an even more comprehensive online resource.

In assembling its ticketing product, AOL has managed the daunting task of bringing normally fierce competitors in primary and secondary ticketing onto the same online store.

“Our first challenge when we built AOL ticketing was putting together competitors in the primary market,” Yoham says. “They saw the value, and they worked with us to make that happen.”

AOL faced perhaps an even bigger challenge in tackling the secondary sector, as StubHub and TicketsNow compete fiercely with a watchful primary market as well as each other.

“It took some doing, not only with them but with our primary partners, because as you go searching for events on the same page but on different paths, you have primary ticketing opportunities and secondary opportunities,” Yoham says. “So we not only had to go through the challenge of the individual secondary partners, but also the challenge of explaining the value to our primary partners, and they were very helpful to get us through. It did take quite a bit of negotiation and discussion.”

Blending inventories with a competitor offers consumers a choice, Dotson says, which is always good. “Having choices will make AOL’s Ticket Marketplace more valuable for consumers, and the more valuable the marketplace is, the more consumers will want to go there repeatedly,” he adds.

The secondary ticket market is not always regarded favorably by the primary concert business, particularly when tickets are sold for greater than face value (Billboard, July 16). Some promoters, artists and venues maintain that ticket resellers are profiting from an event to which they do not contribute; secondary ticket market proponents say they help move ticket inventory and satisfy demand.

“It’s a tough discussion,” Yoham says. He thinks it is just a matter of time until the industry at large completely accepts the secondary marketplace.

“Here at AOL, our prime directive is the best consumer experience; that’s what we start all of our discussions with,” Yoham says. “And primary was just not enough. When tickets were sold out or there were those who wanted specific points and premium seating, we just didn’t have an offering for them, and we were determined to have that.”

According to Yoham, increased revenues for all parties are possible via the secondary market, which he describes as a “market-priced commodity” compared with the “market-predicted commodity” that is primary ticketing.

“The primary parties will see a big benefit from the secondary space because it helps them to price their next round of shows, if not their current round of shows,” Yoham says.

BUFFETT’S BALLPARK SHOWS HIT HOME RUNS

Though fewer artists have been playing stadium dates in the last decade, Jimmy Buffett has two major stadium stops on his current tour, called A Salty Piece of Land.

The dates are first for Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia and famed Wrigley Field in Chicago. Neither stadium has ever hosted a concert.

All four of Buffett’s stadium stops—Aug. 25 and 27 in Philadelphia and Sept. 4-5 in Chicago—sold out, proving that the right artist can attract 40,000 concertgoers per night even with high-end ticket prices.

In Chicago, for example, tickets cost $90 or $120 each.

“We thought if we would ever do a concert, Jimmy should come first, because he’s been here as a fan and has done philanthropic things for Cubs charities,” says Andy MacPhail, president/CEO of the Chicago Cubs.

Joe Giles, director of business development for the Philadelphia Phillies, expects the Buffett shows to be the first of many concerts for Citizens Bank Park, which opened last year. But he adds, “It’s tricky to host concerts, due to the team’s schedule.”

He adds that few artists can draw a large enough crowd, and names the Rolling Stones and U2 as other acts he would seek out.

The Rolling Stones opened their latest tour Aug. 21 at Fenway Park in Boston. U2 did not play stadiums on its 2005 U.S. tour.

Clear Channel Entertainment’s local promoters are involved in both Buffett stints: Larry Magid of Electric Factory was in charge of the Philadelphia dates, and Scott Gelman of Elevated Concerts is handling the Chicago stops.

Gelman says the Cubs organization did its homework before deciding whether to host these shows by visiting Buffett’s Fenway Park concerts last year. Those two dates grossed $5.6 million combined and were attended by more than 67,000, according to Billboard Boxscore.

The four dates from A Salty Piece of Land that have been reported to Billboard Boxscore grossed a total of $7.8 million.

Buffett’s current album, 2004’s “License to Chill” (Mailboat/RCA), debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 and has sold 1.4 million units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Gelman notes that stadium shows are more expensive to produce than amphitheater dates because a stage, sound and lighting all have to be brought into the venue.

“That added cost can be a factor with ticket prices,” he notes. “But Jimmy is one of the very few artists that consistently can play the same markets every year.”

Gelman took advantage of the shows being a first for Wrigley Field in his promotion campaign, which included ads in newspapers and radio. “We had to educate the audience about what seats were available and where the stage would be,” he explains.

A city ordinance had to be passed to allow the Wrigley Field shows to go forward.

As a concession, MacPhail says, the Cubs agreed to not hold a concert in 2006, and to reduce the number of night games next year by one.

Citizen Bank Park’s lease includes a provision allowing it to host a few concerts per year, according to Giles.

Giles’ largest concern was for the playing field itself, which held chairs for 10,000 guests. About 30,000 sat in the stands.

We put up a field covering system, and then put the chairs on that,” he says.

Each organization offered tickets to its season ticket holders first, though prices were the same as those offered to the general public.

The full Buffett tour is booked by Howard Rose of the Howard Rose Agency.
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Calif., when the dice relationship between Ozzy and wife/manager Sharon Osbourne and metal stalwarts Iron Maiden came to a head during Maiden’s final major performance on the tour (billboard.com, Aug. 22). The on-stage saga has been well chronicled on-line and in print, so suffice it to say that Maiden’s parting from the tour (to be replaced, as had been planned at the tour’s start, by Velvet Revolver for the final few dates) was far from smooth. Deborah throwing, egg pelting and mysterious “power outages” during Maiden’s set took place before the largest audience of the tour.

The following week, Sharon and her Ozzfest partners in CCMG (headed by senior VP Jane Holman) and Creative Artists Agency have proven they are quite capable of putting together a mind-blowing metal package for years to come. The Iron Maiden debacle is a nuisance at best when compared with the possibility of an Ozzfest without Ozzy. Who else could mount the audience with such grace and aplomb? Of course, nobody involved is talking right now, and it’s easy to understand why. But it is quite possible that when Ozzfest ’05 grinds to a halt Sept. 4 at the Sound Advice Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach, Fla., it closes the curtain on one of the most creative, badass touring machines that ever has rolled down the highways. Viva Ozzyfest! Up the irons!
When Nicholas Firth talks about music publishing, the enthusiasm in his voice makes it easy to mistake him for a twenty-something entrepreneur ready to take on the world.

But it was 43 years ago that the chairman/CEO of BMG Music Publishing Worldwide started out as a management trainee for London-based Chappell Music, then owned and operated by his grandfather and great-uncle. So the best explanation for Firth’s enduring passion is that he truly has a song in his heart and publishing in his blood.

When Firth was tapped in 1987 to lead the newly formed BMG Music Publishing, the company had 15 offices around the world and held rights to the modest catalog of the RCA and Ariola labels. With Firth’s dedication to diversity, the publisher formed a Nashville division in 1988. Three years later it was BMI’s country music publisher of the year.

During the next six years, BMG’s publishing operation expanded in Asia, Europe and South Africa while broadening its repertoire by launching a gospel music division, acquiring production music libraries and developing such artists as Beck. After a sub-publishing deal with Paramount Pictures’ Famous Music and then-parent company BMG’s acquisition of Zomba Music Group, BMG Music Publishing became the third-largest publisher in the world.

“It’s not just any executive who can take the reins of a major publishing company and guide it through more than 240 acquisitions in 15 countries. Indeed, when industry insiders banter about the names of those who might fill a top executive opening, it is not unusual to hear them say, “No, not that guy. He’s not a Nick Firth.”

Today, BMG Music Publishing has offices in 31 countries and controls more than 1 million copyrights, including the catalogs of B.B. King, Barry Manilow, Santana and Fleetwood Mac. Its roster of songwriter/artists includes Nelly, Justin Timberlake, Christina Aguilera, R. Kelly, Alanis Morissette and the members of Coldplay and Maroon 5.

Q: How has your company adapted to the rapidly changing industry in recent years?
A: I don’t think that fundamentally the industry has changed. We have always had to license 10 or 15 different kinds of income streams. If we have to license 20 or 30 kinds, that’s what we do and what we know how to do.

I can remember when I was at Chappell, we licensed a shower curtain. No one had ever licensed a shower curtain before. So we came up with a license. Our business is licensing intellectual property in numerous forms. I don’t care whether it’s a shower curtain or our offices, we can find a way to do it.

The first thing we did when digital licensing came about was to set up a group within the company who was responsible for developing licensing systems and working with these companies.

Q: When new uses come into play, how do you begin to set the terms?
A: You start out with a new document that’s never been done before, you fight it through with the other party, and by the time you’ve done a half a dozen of these, it suddenly becomes pretty routine.

What has become interesting is the blurring of these rights with new uses. When are they mechanical [rights]? When are they performance? Do new rights exist? Intelligent people can have different views on this.

Q: In terms of the global business, how big an issue is this?
A: There is nothing more important for us as a global issue than defining these rights and coming to common agreement with the users, both as to what these rights are and what the new tariffs [royalty rates] should be.

Q: Can there be consistent deals internationally?
A: There are no consistent deals. If a publisher loses consent, they declare the deal dead. It’s disturbing.

Q: What usually happens is that there are precedential deals that are struck. EMI [Music Publishing] did the deal with Sony BMG for ringtones, DualDiscs, etc. We have now struck a similar deal with Sony BMG, and we at this very moment are in negotiations — and have draft licenses out — with every one of the majors.

When you get a number of bilateral deals in place … then suddenly that becomes an industry precedent.

Internationally the major players and the major [collecting] societies are all trying to work in harmonious fashion in order to come to some kind of consistent licensing practices. It’s not easy. There are a lot of global players, and to the extent that we can, we do want to have a consistent licensing policy.

Does that mean that every country is going to have the same rates? No, of course not … While it would be nice to have total consistency, we certainly never had it in the past and it’s hard to see that we will in the future.

Q: How can these bilateral deal terms become the standard if the parties agree that the terms are confidential?
A: There is nothing to stop any record company from offering that deal. If they do, the Harry Fox Agency, which then offers that deal to its [publisher] members.

Q: How do you know if they are the same terms?
A: We’re a very small industry. If people can’t work with some degree of good faith, we’ll never get anything done. There may be a lot of mistrust in the business, but I think the general [deal] terms get pretty well-known within a reasonable tolerance.

Q: Is it important to have an international data standard to track uses and income?
A: It’s unbelievably important. One of my pet peeves is that you can get your credit card statement and 99% of the time it’s correct. If you have a charge in Thailand, it will be on your statement the next month in the U.S. Data standards in the music industry are lamentable.

Q: Should publishers be getting more involved in lobbying efforts throughout the world?
A: Oh yes, absolutely. We have a lot of new, heavyweight players coming into the industry — the telecoms, the hardware companies, the internet companies — and you also have the record industry that has been badly affected. Everybody is trying to get an advantage with respect to their rights in this new world. We have to defend our turf.

Q: Have you become more involved?
A: I’m on the boards of ASCAP, the National Music Publishers’ Assn. and the International Music Publishers’ Assn., which are very active in all the industry-related issues.

Q: What excites you when you go into work every day?
A: You can’t be in the music business and not like hits. The new Coldplay album gets released and sells over a million copies in the first week. That’s exciting.

I love the acquisitions, buying catalogs and companies. I think that my biggest buzz in terms of managing companies is developing people, seeing them become really good music publishers. I like to build our own management team. I’m very proud of them.

By Susan Butler

Q&A

Nicholas Firth

September 10, 2005
The top of every hour the clock in Elton John's dressing room at Caesars Palace breaks wind. And every hour, the farting clock makes John laugh.

The British superstar has every reason to smile. His Las Vegas run, in which he alternates with Celine Dion at Caesars' 4,100-seat Colosseum, has been extended from 75 shows during a three-year period to 225 shows during a five-year span ending in 2008. Every show of "The Red Piano" has been a sellout. A U.K. tour this summer drew almost 400,000 people.

His latest musical, an adaptation of the movie "Billy Elliot," opened to largely rave reviews in London's West End, and there are talks of bringing it to Broadway.

John has wrapped "Lezat," the first musical he and longtime lyricist Bernie Taupin have written together. The play, based on Anne Rice's Vampire Lestat series, will debut in December in San Francisco's Curran Theater before heading to Broadway in spring 2006.

And there are plenty of other projects in the works (see story, page 26).

Much of this activity has accelerated since John sold Twenty-First Artists, his London-based management company (whose roster includes breakout artist James Blunt), to the Sanctuary Group in April for $30.1 million (Billboard, April 16). Frank Presland and Keith Bradley, who owned Twenty-First with John, continue to oversee his business and touring affairs.

The new ingredient in John's management mix is Sanctuary Group CEO Merck Mercuriadis, who tends to the creative side of John's career. The two seem like soulmates joined by an endless enthusiasm and curiosity about music.

This two-part interview took place July 29—the 15th anniversary of his sobriety, John proudly points out—in his dressing room and July 30 in his palatial hotel suite. John and Mercuriadis talked expansively and candidly about some surprises planned for John's upcoming 60th birthday (March 25, 2007) and their plans to return John to the top of the album charts.

They also discussed Sanctuary's current financial troubles (see story, page 26). The future of the multifaceted U.K.-based company remains uncertain, and talks with a third-party buyer collapsed shortly after this interview took place.

BB: What were you looking for when you decided to sell Twenty-First Artists?

EJ: For someone who would pay me the attention that I felt my career deserved, that understood my catalog and that I wanted to still do creative things. I was looking for someone who had the love of music that I do. [Longtime former manager] John Reid was like that at the start of my career, but it fell away. But Merck, I can honestly say, is as bonkers as I am.

BB: Elton, how will it affect you if Sanctuary is sold?

EJ: Because I valued Merck so much, so I said, "Listen, I'm prepared to [sell Twenty-First Artists], but if there's a buyout of the Sanctuary Group, Merck stays with me."

BB: Your last album, 2004's "Peacock Road" (Rocket/Universal) received some of the best reviews of your career, and yet it only sold 300,000 in the United States, making it one of your worst performers. How frustrating is that for you?

EJ: It's frustrating. . . . I'm not storming around saying, "Why isn't my fucking record doing better than this?" I just had to look at it and say, "Was it a shit record?" And it wasn't, it was the best I could do. I'm 58 now, and my time in the sun, as it were, is gone. I have to accept that. Was I disappointed? Yeah, because I put my heart and soul into it.

BB: Merck, I imagine you believe Elton's time in the sun is not done.

MM: Not at all. "Peacock" was a fantastic record. The fact that it only sold 300,000 records has nothing to do with the quality of the record. It has everything to do with where our industry is and what the outlets are. We're no longer on top 40 radio, we're no longer on MTV—those are formats for 13- to 14-year-old kids. Elton [has grossed] almost $40 million in touring in the United States alone this year, yet we've only sold 300,000 records.

BB: Where is the disconnect?

MM: The disconnect comes down to the audience. These people might own 10 or 15 [John] records, but they don't necessarily own the latest one because they don't know that it's out here. To connect with that audience you need to go back at them with four or five reasons to go out and buy that record. It's all about going to them directly.

BB: Does radio fit in?

MM: If you get radio, that's cream.

EJ: [Universal Records] tried to persuade [me] to do a Motown album or a standards album, and I wouldn't do it. I said [no] because I want to still write songs. I still feel as if I've got something else to offer without going down that route.

BB: Were you insulted when they asked you?

EJ: Yeah. I mean, it's like, "That's what you think of me, is it?"

BB: Elton has three more albums with Universal. Merck, as a manager, how do you make sure they get the attention that Elton feels his recent releases have not gotten?

MM: Communication. There are a lot of terrific people at Universal. It's my responsibility to walk into that record company, to bring the infrastructure that I have, and work with everyone in a way that makes them feel like they really are a big part of the team.

BB: Elton, was Sanctuary more appealing to you because it has offices in the United States as well as London?

EJ: Absolutely. I haven't really had an American representative; it's all been done from England. And you have to have someone that's going to be there on a day-to-day basis. It's no good [having] someone popping over once every two or three months to

ers almost the first 30 years of Elton and Bernie's [lives]. So the next studio record that we're going to make, which will come out in Elton's 60th year, is going to be called "The Captain and the Kid," and will be the sequel to "Captain Fantastic," and will cover the [last] 30 years.

BB: Elton, are you and Bernie already working on it?

EJ: I'm starting writing and recording it in Atlanta in January. It was Merck's idea, because he said, "You're always saying how Bernie has become the Brown Dirt Cowboy"—he lives on a ranch in Santa Ynez [Calif.]—and I'm this guy who plays concert after concert, buying art, buying photographs, living a very lavish lifestyle. I've become Captain Fantastic.

We would have been together then about 40 years by the time it comes out. One of the things I'm most proud of in my life is the relationship I've had with Bernie.

BB: You hit No. 1 on the U.K. singles chart this summer with 2Pac's "Ghetto Gospel," which interleaves your "Indian Sunset." You later debuted at No. 4 on the same chart with "Electricity" from "Billy El-iot," in part because people could download the song when they purchased tickets to your U.K. stadium tour. How did that come about?

MM: We created a platform for Elton fans to be able to buy the music immediately via the technology that's available for mobile phones. Elton just did a tour in the U.K. where we did 16 shows; the fans at the shows were given the opportunity to buy the new single on the spot via their mobile phone and get the download the day that it was released. We sold enough singles to people in the audience to be able to enter the charts at No. 4. We made it easy for them. All they had to do was dial it up on their mobile phone and buy it.

BB: The download was tied into a contest, right?

MM: They bought the download for [£] 50. What they got with the download was the ability to enter a contest where they could win a trip to see Elton in Las Vegas.

BB: Is that kosher, or is that a way to manipulate the charts?

MM: Together with Universal in the U.K. we ensured that every step of the plan was approved by the Official Chart Rules Committee and was signed off by them in writing in advance. The prerelase purchase with fulfillment on date of release has been officially recognized by the British charts from the inception of downloading. Also, you didn't need to buy the download in order to enter the contest; they could've entered the contest for free. So that element of the audience chose to buy the download and enter the contest at the same time.

There was nothing controversial about this. We came up with the concept, and Elton's audience is big enough and powerful enough to deliver No. 4 single without even entering the record shops. The sour grapes from those that wish they had thought of it are amusing.

EJ: It was like Prince selling his album and getting on SoundScan. It was like, "It'll happen once, but it won't happen again."

BB: Elton, is it true you buy the new album released every week at Tower Records when you are home in Atlanta?

EJ: I go in there at 3:30 on Tuesday morning, before it opens, and I put the fucking things [out where] I can't find them. They're all on the cart, and I can go through them, one by one, because I know what I want. It's one of my things I look forward to every week. Those guys open up [and] have a cup of coffee there now, and it's just brilliant.

BB: Would you tour with Billy Joel again?

EJ: Yeah, I would, because I love him dearly. My greatest wish is for Billy Joel to have a No. 1 album and get his confidence back. That would make me so happy. You know, we've never been rivals; we've always been friends. Part of my Captain Fantastic's next 30 years include Billy Joel. And it would be great to do a tour.

continued on >>p26

THE VETERAN ARTIST DISCUSSES HIS LAS VEGAS RUN, THE SANCTUARY DEAL AND HIS NEW PROJECTS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR A SEQUEL TO 'CAPTAIN FANTASTIC' BY MELINDA NEWMAN
ELTON’S AGENDA: SITCOMS, SEQUELS AND MUSICALS

With deference to James Brown, Elton John may be the hardest-working man in show business. In addition to his ongoing touring schedule, here is a list of recent and upcoming projects and events:

- John and Bernie Taupin are writing a sequel to “Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy” called “Captain Fantastic and the Kid.” The first edition, released in 1975, covered the pair’s first 30 years; the second will cover the subsequent 30 years and will come out March 20, 2007, five days before John’s 60th birthday.
- John has a development deal with Touchstone Television for a sitcom about a rock star and his entourage. “Sex & the City” scribe Cindy Chupack is writing the pilot.
- John will release “Elton’s Christmas Party” exclusively through Starbucks Nov. 9. The disc will include previously released holiday-themed songs from other artists, plus a new duet between John and Joss Stone. A $2 donation from each album will go to the Elton John AIDS Foundation.
- “Billy Elliot,” a musical written by John and Lee Hall, continues playing on London’s West End. A Broadway opening is planned for 2006.
- “Lestat,” a musical written by John and Taupin and based on Anne Rice’s “Vampire Lestat” series, is scheduled to debut in December at San Francisco’s Curran Theater.
- Last March, John wrote nine songs with Scissor Sisters for possible inclusion on their next album, marking the first time he had ever written in the same room with someone.
- The Society of Singers will present John with its Ella Award Oct. 10 in Los Angeles.

—Melinda Newman

AT SANCTUARY, THE HEAT IS ON TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

BY MELINDA NEWMAN

Having gotten in bed—businesswise—with the Sanctuary Group this year, Elton John is remarkably biased about the company’s financial woes and recent talk of a potential takeover. After all, he has seen this movie many times.

“I’ve been in so many buyouts. PolyGram went to Universal and then Vivendi,” he says, with a shrug.

He adds that he was not fazed when Sanctuary’s disappointing sixth-month numbers were revealed in June.

“Of course I’m concerned at all,” he says. “Nothing surprises me anymore.”

However, Sanctuary’s recent financial pangs have raised a few eyebrows.

In June, the London-based company reported that it was considering a possible buyout (Billboard, June 18). That was followed by the announcement of a dip in first-half earnings (Billboard, July 9).

Then, on Aug. 23, the company reported that talks with a potential suitor, believed to have been Warner Music Group, “were unlikely to lead to an offer or even to near the current share price” (Billboard, Aug. 23).

Sanctuary added that talks were ongoing with other companies, but that it had increased its bank facilities to £120 million (about $216 million), while obtaining waivers and amendments to its £30 million ($54 million) of convertible loan notes.

The company’s 360-degree approach—which includes management, recorded music, music and book publishing, catalog ownership, DVD and merchandising divisions—remains a model that “intuitively, you feel can stand up to scrutiny,” Bridgewell Securities analyst Patrick Yau says. “But [Sanctuary] hasn’t been good at having cash to make it flourish.”

While Yau predicts that if Sanctuary “fails to generate cash in the next 12 months, I think [its creditors] will foreclose.”

Sanctuary’s well-publicized financial problems have not stopped acts from signing with the company, and CEO Merck Mercuriadis stresses to Billboard, “We continue to sign artists across all of our divisions.”

- Dance act the Shapeshifters signed to the management division in June; journey signed with the record label in August and will release a new album in October. In addition, sources say that a label deal with Tom Petty is expected to be completed soon (Billboard, Aug. 13). Petty’s manager declined to comment; Journey’s managers did not return phone calls.
- John himself turned to Mercuriadis to manage the creative side of his career, after John and his partners sold their Twenty-First Artists management company to the Sanctuary Group for $30.1 million (Billboard, April 16).
- Yau says part of Sanctuary’s appeal to acts is also a key factor in its financial distress: “They’re paying disproportionately high advances,” he says, citing Sanctuary’s 2004 annual report, which listed artist advances of £14.1 million ($25.4 million), while recoupment by the label division was only £11.4 million ($21 million). This year, Yau predicts £17 million ($30.6 million) going out for advances with £10 million ($16 million) in recoupment, although Sanctuary expects a greater return.
- Much of the negative focus has centered on Sanctuary Urban (which includes a label and management division), helmed by Mathew Knowles. Sanctuary Group chairman Andy Taylor singled out the urban and recorded-music divisions as particularly poor performers in the six-month results.

Mercuriadis believes Knowles did a “terrific job” managing Sanctuary clients Beyoncé and Destiny’s Child, but adds, “Did Sanctuary Urban Records suffer as a result of it? Perhaps. And was the attention there to be able to get those records delivered? Maybe it was lacking attention, but that’s growing pains of having made a decision to create an urban division and figure out what it takes to make it go forward.”

Planned fourth-quarter releases from Sanctuary Urban include titles from Earth, Wind & Fire and Ray J.

Sanctuary is implementing an annualized £7 million—$8 million ($12.6 million—$14.4 million) cost-reduction program.

“Reducing overhead and layoffs are a component of it, and much of the exercise has already been implemented,” Mercuriadis says.

Cutbacks in the New York office were believed to have affected approximately 15 staffers, while sources say that as much as 30% of Sanctuary’s worldwide staff could ultimately be cut. Mercuriadis would not comment on speculation of further layoffs.

An industry source who has conducted business with Sanctuary says, “They’re pretty lean as it is on the record side. The fat is in the management division; they have more acts than anyone in the business.” Among the acts Sanctuary handles are breaking star James Blunt—who came to the company as part of the Twenty-First Artists purchase—Guns N’ Roses, Joss Stone and Iron Maiden.

Yau compares Sanctuary to EMI before CEO Alan Levy took over in 2001 and slashed the roster and the staff by about 25% each. “EMI thought about where they were going with the company. I suspect Sanctuary needs to go through the same thing.”

While Yau believes some divisions (such as the classical music portfolio or the books arms) could be sold off, he does not believe that a total sale is likely, for a damning reason—Sanctuary is unattractive to buyers.

“Private equity groups like growth, cash flow and margins, and in the case of Sanctuary, you’re not getting any of those,” Yau says. “Basically, the banks have bailed them out, and they should stop looking for a white knight and just get on with running their business.”
THE LATIN KIDS ARE ALRIGHT
MEXICO'S TELEVISA IS TESTING GROUND FOR YOUNG TALENT

BY LEILA COBO

The tension was high and nerves were frazzled as music reality contest "Código F.A.M.A. Internacional" came to a close this past June. There were 10 finalists who had given their all on live TV for a month. Friend against friend, lined up in an uneven row. The preteen with a voice that rivaled Christina Aguilera's standing shoulder to shoulder with the pint-sized 10-year-old from Ecuador who had shown more charm than pipes.

The winner would get a recording deal with Sony BMG and a starring role on a soap opera to air on Televisa, the most powerful Spanish-language network in Mexico and the world's biggest generator of original Spanish-language programming.

Spotting and developing young musical talent is nothing new for Televisa. Dozens of stars—among them Christian Castro, Lucero, Thalía and Belinda— have emerged from the network's array of contests, reality shows and soap operas.

But since the 2001 formation of a formal children's division—Televisa Niños—the shows have also garnered record sales in the millions and created a new generation of talent that has caught every label's eye.

And it showed at "Código F.A.M.A. Internacional," where the international heads of every major Latin label sat on the judging panel.

The hopes and dreams of young performers, who have replaced psychology and new hope, sobbed in cutthroat frustration as the winner was announced.

The judges chose Elizabeth Suarez to be Televisa Niños' new star. A 12-year-old Dominican beauty with emerald-green eyes, Suarez flashed smiles left and right as the others were whisked away. It was great TV. And the hope is that it will turn into great album sales.

"It is an inextinguishable source of talent," Sony BMG VP of A&R Guillermo Gutiérrez says of the Televisa Niños machinery.

Gutiérrez has assembled a number of Televisa Niños albums, including the 2000 BMG release "Amigos por Siempre," which, according to the label, sold 350,000 copies in Mexico alone. Then there was 2002's "Cómplices al Rescate," which has sold 3.6 million worldwide, according to Gutiérrez. Each was the soundtrack to a soap opera of the same name.

The star of "Cómplices" was Belinda, a precocious teen who has since launched a solo career. Signed to Sony BMG, she has become Mexico's most successful teen export.

Gutiérrez is not the only executive singing Televisa Niños' praises. In recent years, almost every major label has been involved in releasing Televisa Niños product.

Led by producer Rosy Ocampo, Televisa Niños was created to generate children's programming. It aims to develop talent for the long run and includes psychology, education, communication and marketing departments for its young talent.

While Televisa Niños' primary products are the successful soaps it airs daily in the profitable 4 p.m. slot, it also produces specials, events and contests. Most successful has been "Código F.A.M.A. Internacional," a reality show franchise in the manner of "Operación Triunfo" and "American Idol."

"Código F.A.M.A. Internacional," labels see an expanded opportunity for talent development throughout the Latin region. "It's very difficult to look for artists country by country," says Marco Bissi, president/CEO of EMI Music Latin America. "The scouting these TV shows do is healthy for everybody. Our feeling when we were there was, we were looking for the future, the next Shakira."

The "Código F.A.M.A." effect is felt long after the episode air. Winning children go on to play in Televisa's child-focused soaps and sing on those shows' soundtracks. The soundtracks, in turn, are licensed to different labels, which fund production, marketing and promotion.

Prolonged TV exposure, coupled with consistent good musical product, has ensured strong sales throughout the years.

"With the sales we've gotten, labels know that a Rosy Ocampo, the song is liquid gold," says Televisa Niños' musical director Alejandro Abarron, who composes and produces most of the Televisa albums.

Abarron (frther of Latin Recording Academy president Gabriel Abarron) works closely with Ocampo as each soap's story line is developed. In each case, there is a "gang of" kids who can become a musical group. And there is always a romantic angle that needs songs of love and loss.

Abarron's knack for writing age-appropriate material that appeals to many generations has led labels to recruit him to produce the solo albums by former Televisa kids.

The most recent is "Jaztish," the self-titled debut by the winner of "Código F.A.M.A. 2." Sony BMG released the album Aug. 23 in Mexico.

"I always try to keep in mind the commercial part of the production," Abarron says. "The music is fundamental in grabbing the attention of both the kids and their moms."

Sony BMG will also release the debut album by Adriana, the winner of "Código F.A.M.A. 3," who will star in Televisa's upcoming soap "Rincón de Luz."

Abarron will produce the soundtrack to "Rincón" as well as Adriana's album. Both are slated for release in early 2006.

Televisa Niños and its label partners have also found profitability when a soap is successfully exported.

"It was the best possible experience, and we are looking for new ways to work with the label," says Sergio Alfonsio, managing director for Warner Mexico.

Televisa Niños should also get a musical boost with the new EMI Televisa label in the United States and Televisa EMI in Mexico, which launched in July. The latter was created specifically to develop and market music from Televisa's programs. The senior VP of A&R for both labels is Adrain Esposito, who, while at BMG, signed Belinda and Martín Saca, another Televisa alumna.

Other Mexican labels are reemerging. There is enough Televisa Niños product to spread around.

The Mexican children's market hasn't been fully taken advantage of," Gutiérrez says. "Taking that 75% of Mexico's population is under the age of 25. 'The potential is enormous'..."
BREAKING
AFTER A MILLION-SELLING DEBUT, CASTING CROWNS ARE CONTENT TO TARGET CHURCH AUDIENCE

BY DEBORAH EVANS PRICE

NASHVILLE—Every once in a while there’s a success story that defies the odds, overcomes obstacles, slays skeptics and rises from obscurity to top the charts. In today’s Christian music community, it is Casting Crowns.

The septet from Georgia burst onto the scene in fall 2003 with its self-titled Beach Street/Reunion Records debut. The album sold more than 1 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and spawned three hits: “If We Are the Body,” “Who Am I?” (a Billboard Hot Christian Songs chart-topper for six weeks) and “Voice of Truth,” which topped at No. 1 for an amazing 14 weeks. “Live From Atlanta,” a 2004 CD/DVD release, scanned 103,000.

With the Aug. 30 arrival of Casting Crowns’ sophomore set, “Lifeson,” the industry is asking: “Can they do it again?”

Early indications are good. The title track zoomed up the charts as the lead single, and is currently No. 2 on Hot Christian Songs and Hot Christian AC Singles.

“I don’t hear any sophomore jinx,” says Terry Hemmings, president/CEO of Provident Music Group, the Christian arm of Sony BMG that includes the Essential and Reunion labels. “There was tremendous demand for new music from Casting Crowns . . . from the radio, listeners and the retail buyers.”

Casting Crowns frontman/principal songwriter Mark Hall admits such expectations made him “a little worried” about the new project. But he got a great boost from artist friends Steven Curtis Chapman and Third Day’s Mac Powell, who advised, “Say what God wants you to say. Don’t worry about if this is going to do OK or if people are going to like it.”

To say that people liked the first album is an understatement. Casting Crowns—the Gospel Music Assn.’s reigning group of the year—is the most successful debut act in the Christian industry. Several factors have set them apart from their peers. Unlike many Christian bands, Casting Crowns have no desire to score a mainstream radio hit. Their music squarely targets the church audience, and the support of that flock has been enough to propel the group’s debut to platinum.

In fact, unlike most big-selling Christian acts, Casting Crowns have not had any exposure on mainstream radio. Their success appears to demonstrate the buying power of Christian music fans.

That’s a lot of sales to a very specific consumer channel,” Hemmings says. “There’s a lot of people out there that maybe we’ve underestimated before as consumers.”

BREAKING THE RULES

Casting Crowns began in 1999 as a worship band in Daytona Beach, Fla. After two years, Hall, Juan DeVevo (guitar/vocals), Melodee DeVevo (Juan’s wife, who contributes violin/vocals) and Hector Cervantes (guitar/vocals) relocated to Eagle’s Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga. There they were joined by Chris Huffman (bass), Andy Williams (drums) and Megan Garrett (keyboards/accordion/vocals).

Hall has served as a youth pastor for 15 years and regularly has 400 young people at his Wednesday-night service. Casting Crowns’ schedule is arranged to accommodate its members’ church commitments.

The band was discovered by Mark Miller, frontman for veteran country outfit Sawyer Brown, who signed them to his Beach Street Records, a Reunion imprint. “God has given him this incredible gift,” Miller says of Hall. “I told Mark: ‘You just figure out what it is you want to say, and we’ll make a record.’ ”

Miller played Casting Crowns for Hemmings, who was about to take the helm at Provident Music Group. The band became one of his first priorities, and he was outspoken in predicting its success. Some thought Hemmings—who had stepped away from the industry for a few years—had been out of it too long to be realistic about Casting Crowns’ chances. Others thought he was plain crazy. After all, there were seven members in the band. They had never toured. They were being produced by a country artist with no track record in the Christian industry. (Chapman co-produced the first set with Miller, and his involvement added clout in the Christian community.)

“While I was a huge fan of what I was hearing, I wasn’t thinking a million copies,” says Dean Diehl, senior VP of marketing for Provident Label Group. “Terry kept pushing, telling us, ‘We need it now. We need it now.’ And I thought, ‘Alright, we’ve got seven people in this band, and they’ve never been outside their church area.’ So for a typical artist development, I’m thinking, ‘Give me nine months here,’ and he gave me four.”

Diehl says the label had to fast-track the album’s release. “We broke all the rules of how we typically set up artists,” he recalls.

The first single, “If We Are the Body,” was polarizing. In a community where most artists target the church with songs of encouragement, Hall’s lyric basically threw down the gauntlet. In Christian circles, the church is known as the body of Christ. In the chorus of the single, Hall asks: “If we are the body, why aren’t his arms reaching? Why aren’t his hands healing? Why aren’t his words teaching? And if we are the body, why aren’t his feet going? Why is his love not showing them there is a way?”

Another song, “Here I Go Again,” spoke of a believer making mindless conversation with a friend instead of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. “American Dream” challenged the cultural preoccupation with material wealth at the expense of family and relationships.

“I have a really unique way of writing those kinds of challenging lyrics without finger-pointing,” Hemmings observes. “He’s not hypocritical. When it’s that genuine and it’s based on experience . . . people respond to it as a challenge in the same way that they respond to their ministers’ challenge on Sunday morning.”

Diehl adds, “They don’t just sing love songs and lullabies to the church. They are singing songs that prod the church.”

BEHIND THE STAINED GLASS

For “Lifeson,” Hall—whom the Gospel Music Assn. named songwriter of the year in 2004 and 2005—wrote or co-wrote every song. He also wrote more lyrics that challenge believers on such songs as “Does Anybody Hear Her?” and “Stained Glass Masquerade.” The latter song—co-written with Nichole Nordeman—asks: “Are we happy plastic people/Under shiny plastic steetles/With walls around our weakness and smiles to hide our pain/But if the invitation’s open to every heart that has been broken/Maybe then we close the curtain on our stained glass masquerade.”

“What I was trying to say is I don’t think it bothers the world if people in church sin. I think it bothers the world that people in church act like they don’t,” Hall explains. “For some reason we [as Christians] feel that we have to act like we have it all together. We’re scared to show people that we struggle and that we are weak, so I guess I’m just trying to be the first in line...
to say, 'Hey, I'm weak. I do dumb things every
day, and it would be awesome to know that I
wasn't alone in this.'"

The band's ministry is more important to
Hal than a successful music career. Diehl sees
that attitude as key to Casting Crown's success.
"For some people, the music is the ministry. For
[Hal] the ministry creates the music ... That's
what makes them different; and ultim-
ately, Casting Crowns is successful because
they're different."

Hal absorbed the feedback people gave him
after the debut album, and it served as inspira-
tion for much of the music on the new one.
"What makes the record exceptional is this isn't
just the making of a second record, this is the
secor d record telling the story of the impact of
the first record," he says.

A few years ago, acts seeking mainstream suc-
cess created a backlash among some in the Chris-
tian industry, who saw such aspirations as
leaving the flock. Now the pendulum has swung
the other way, and bands that do not target the
mainstream are almost viewed as underachiev-
ers. At a time when such acts as Switchfoot and
Reken, K, which started in the Christian mar-
et, have successfully crossed over to mainstream
croy. A number of questions Casting Crowns' decision
to try to reach the same audience.

Hal says his label and other artists are sup-
portive, but acknowledges that there is a per-
cy that "if you aren't out there impacting
[nobievers], you aren't in ministry."

But Diehl disagrees with this assessment and says
the church is embracing the group's position.
"That's what I think Nashville needs to see—
that the church can handle our truth. At the
same time, I don't want to sound like if you are
not writing the way I do, that you aren't in min-
istry, because that's crazy, too."

Diehl says a label's job is to serve the artist's
intent. "If you want to reach the church, sign
artists that sing to the church. If you want to
reach the mainstream, sign mainstream artists."

UNLEASHING 'LIFESONG'
Retailers are predicting strong sales for
"Lifewater." Tim Peterson, country and Chris-
tian music buyer for Trans World Entertainment,
says there is a significant buzz surrounding it.
"The first album sold so well, and the band has
built up their fan base with their presence on
the road," he says.

The album was presold through LifeWay, Fam-
ily Christian and other major Christian stores,
and Hemmings says sales are strong. At radio,
the label initiated "Win it before you can buy
it" contests. It also organized a radio promo-
tion asking listeners to phone in or e-mail their
"life song."

Promotion, Diehl says, "will give people an
opportunity through radio to share their stories."

Casting Crowns will be on the road this fall
with Building 429 and Beach Street newcomers
Josh Bates. But, as usual, the band members plan
to be at Eagle's Landing First Baptist Church for
nearly every service keeping themselves plugged
into the source of their life song.
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IN STORES NOW!
At 90, the legendary guitarist still has a few tricks up his sleeve, including his first album in almost 30 years.

Les Paul reflects on a career that has shaped the sound and technology of popular music in an exclusive interview with Paul Verna, co-author of 'The Encyclopedia of Record Producers,' published by Billboard Books. Read the interview online at billboard.biz/lespaul.
Les Paul turns 90 (cont.)

music in our careers, to meet and work with Les Paul gives me true perspective on what the business of music really looks and sounds like.

Next came the challenge of picking tracks and artists to participate. Cutarella called publishers to ask them to send over their catalog and pored over countless selections. He also made phone call after phone call to prospective artists.

“I could have put together four Les Paul albums instead of one,” Cutarella says. “Who do you choose, whose schedule is available, and will their label allow it? We got [Jeff Beck first, and then everything came together.”

Cutarella teamed with producer Fran Cathcart for the recording process, which took place primarily at Capitol Studios in Los Angeles.

Peter Frampton says he jumped at the chance to participate. “To be on a track with Les is a great thing to be able to say. They ran about five tracks past me, and I picked ‘So Into You’ [originally performed by Atlanta Rhythm Section]. Everyone loves that track.”

Kenny Wayne Shepherd teamed with Edgar Winter for “Rock & Roll Hoechie Koo” by Dick Derringer. “We just stunk it,” Shepherd says. “I was really honored to be part of a project with a living legend.”

Paul’s contributions were recorded later at his home in Mahwah, N.J. Though arthritis prevents him from playing “blaring, blazing solos,” Cutarella says, “he made important contributions.”

“Les is a perfectionist,” Cathcart observes. “He wanted to make sure his parts were fully mature, and he wanted his ideas clearly on the album.”

Keith Richards, who participated on the Yardbirds track “Good Morning Little Schoolgirl” with Buddy Guy and Derringer, says, “We had to put all that together without Les Paul, generations of flash little punks like us would be in jail or cleaning toilets. This man, by his genius, made the road that we still travel today.”

Neil Schon, who is featured on the original song “I Wanna Know You” with vocalist Beth Hart, echoes the sentiment. “So many good guitar players nip stuff from him,” he says. “I totally admire the man and love him as a human being.”

He adds that he wanted to play a slow blues number for the tribute because “it’s where I initially came from as a guitar player. We did just that. We picked a key, somewhat arranged where the vocals would be, played live one take, and that was it. It’s very real.”

“Les Paul & Friends” will be backed by a three-pronged marketing campaign comprising press exposure, retail and advertising.

EMM VP of catalog marketing Herb Agner says the exposure began with the release of the “Best of the Capitol Masters” special edition in June.

“We thought that would be a great place to start celebrating.” Agner says. “We timed that to his birthday and set up the new record for the fall.”

Agner says that early on, the company prioritized a publicity campaign because “we know we cre-
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With 90 years of life experience under his belt, Les Paul can and does draw from a deep well of stories whenever the mood is right.

He is, in fact, as accomplished at spinning yarns as he is at creating revolutionary music technology and playing at the peak of pop guitar chops.

Even so, he can be forgiven for repeating himself now and then—and apparently there’s one line he has been known to toss out when the occasion arises.

It concerns an encounter with a young guitarist who caught his act one night and came up afterwards to find out just who this elder wizard was. On being introduced to “Les Paul,” the kid stared disbelievingly and answered, “Wow. So, you’re not a guitar—you’re a person!”

No doubt there are young keyboard players who might have offered a similar response on being introduced to Bob Moog. But there’s something unique about the two identities that the words “Les Paul” conjure.

Other pioneers of musical-instrument design—from Moog, Harold Rhodes and Leo Fender all the way back to Antonio Stradivari—are immortalized in the names of the companies they created.

Guitarists know that “Les Paul” has a more specific reference, to a line of guitars launched more than 50 years ago by Gibson, a company that bore its own founder’s family name.

In 1952, Les Paul (the person) and Gibson (the guitar firm) were already fixtures in American music. Gibson had been in business since 1896, when Orville Gibson began building string instruments at his workshop in Kalamazoo, Mich. He sold the operation after just a few years to a group of investors who retained the name.

By the time Paul began stirring up notice as a guitarist in the 1940s—in part through a series of wartime recordings in which he was billed as Bing Crosby’s accompanist—Gibson had achieved worldwide renown.

Thanks largely to in-house designer Lloyd Loar, whose contributions included the F-holes introduced on the 15 arch-top guitars of the early 1920s, Gibson had a reputation for innovation as well as for the elegant appearance of its products.

This was what drew Paul to Gibson in the mid-1940s. His stature as a player earned him access to its management in 1946, when he first made his pitch for manufacturing solid-body guitars—in Paul’s mind, the next logical step in that early stage of electric-guitar development.

But the time wasn’t right for an industry based on the pursuit of acoustic resonance in its instruments—not yet, at least.

During the next few years, two critical developments set the stage for a second, more fruitful encounter between Paul and Gibson.

First, Paul became something of a star, with his records on Capitol in the late ‘40s and early ‘50s establishing him as a hard-swinging virtuoso overflowing with revolutionary ideas about recording.

“He was instrumental in inventing sound-on-sound recording,” says Tom Wheeler, former editor in chief of Guitar Player and author of a number of books on guitar history and design. “Even as a kid I realized that there was nothing out there like what he was doing on ‘How High the Moon’ or ‘The World Is Still Waiting for the Sunrise.’

“Just listen to something from the same period by Perry Como or Patti Page, and it’s easy to see why Paul’s records were like visitations from outer space.”

Equally important was the dawn of the solid-body era in 1950, when Fender introduced its flagship Telecaster guitar. This, along with Ted McCarty’s installation as president of Gibson that same year, changed priorities immediately.

Suddenly Gibson was open to proposals that it had recently been quick to dismiss. The company came up with a prototype, gave it to Paul, incorporated several of his suggestions and, in 1952 issued the first of its guitars to bear the name—and reflect the influence—of the artist.

Through the latest variations on the original concept, the fundamental elements of the Les Paul guitar have been its mahogany/maple construction and the twin “humbucking” pickups, both of which are critical to the instrument’s reputed purity and richness of sound.

“We’ve had hollow-body Les Pauls,” Gibson Guitars president/CEO Henry Juszkiewicz says. “We’ve been creative with the idea and will probably continue to be. And Les is so creative that he’d be the last guy to say, ‘No, man, there’s only one way to do the Les Paul.’ But two humbuckers and the maple/mahogany laminate—that’s essential to the icon.”

Though the quality of the Les Paul was evident from the start, a number of factors began to threaten the vitality of this line by the early ‘60s. A decline in Paul’s popularity as continued >> p.16

From Classic and Supreme to Doublecut and Melody Maker, Gibson’s Les Paul models are used by guitarists Eric Clapton, Peter Frampton and everyone in between.
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THANKS TO YOU,
I HAVE A GIG!

[Signature]

05.
GIbson Success (cont.)

a recording artist, escalating costs involved in remodeling the Gibson factory in Kalamazoo, a costly labor dispute and Paul’s reportedly declining enthusiasm for some of the company’s alterations in solid-body designs led Gibson to eventually suspend use of the guitarist’s name.

Things began to change in the mid-‘60s, when a new generation of artists, spearheaded by Eric Clapton and Michael Bloomfield, began performing and recording with Les Paul guitars. In those days one could track down these discontinued instruments only through pawn shops or other outlets for used gear. As young fans took note, wise heads at Gibson did too.

One such enthusiast was Dan Erlewine, now an author of a number of books on guitar maintenance and repair. In the mid-‘60s, though, he was a Bloomfield freak who happened to live not far from Kalamazoo.

"The Les Paul was dead in the water then," he remembers. "So I talked with Ray Jude, who was head of service back then, and asked, 'Why don’t you start making it again?' He told me, 'We threw away the mold.'"

"So I went back to Herb David’s Guitar Studio in Ann Arbor (Mich.) and bought this Les Paul that had been hanging on the wall there for years. It was only $135, but nobody wanted it. Later, when I met Bloomfield, I sold it to him for $100 plus the gold-top model he played on the ‘East-West’ album with the Paul Butterfield Band."

"It’s my sound, pure and simple; that’s what the Les Paul means to me."

"To be dead honest, the first thing that attracted me to the Les Paul was how it looks," says British-born Billy Bollinger, currently playing with the band Camp Freddie with former Jane’s Addiction/Red Hot Chili Peppers member Dave Navarro and Velvet Revolver’s Matt Sorum. "I used to see pictures of Pete Townshend with a Les Paul hanging down to his knees. It was that image that attracted me, way before I realized how different they sounded."

The same point is evident from the retail perspective, according to Dave Weiderman, artist relations director for Guitar Center.

"A kid will buy a guitar because his hero plays it," he explains. "Les would be the hero to people like Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page, whereas today the hero who plays a Les Paul would be Zakk Wylde. But it all goes back to Les being an amazing player, pop artist and inventor."

Paul and Gibson renewed their association in 1968, with two new models that they unveiled at the annual National Assn. of Music Merchants trade show.

"It is, after the last stop in a process of phasing out its music operations, Norlin sold Gibson to a consortium consisting of three friends from Harvard’s MBA program: Juszkiewicz, David Barryman and Gary Zebrowski."

After assuming duties as CEO, Juszkiewicz made it a priority to form a bond with Paul.

"Before I had finished purchasing the company, I was in the office with the gentleman who was running it when he took a call from Les," he recalls. "After they’d talked for maybe half an hour, he hung up and looked at me and said, ‘Les is just some old guy you’ve got to talk to at least once a year. His name is on the guitar."

"Les probably wasn’t getting respect from Gibson for quite a while," Juszkiewicz acknowledges. "But even though he is the consummate entertainer, this guitar is how his name will survive the test of time. It is, after all, a marriage of Les, who is Mr. Guitar, and Gibson’s ornate appearance."

"So," Juszkiewicz concludes, "it’s beautiful and an exceptionally good working instrument. That means a lot when you understand that there is a man behind the concept and that he’s a musician. Suddenly the words ‘Les Paul’ mean a lot more."

...
In 2001, the Cochran brothers, Russ and Mike, gave guitar fans everywhere the limited edition book, Chet Atkins--Me and My Guitars. This limited edition of only 1200 numbered copies sold out in less than a year at $150 per copy. Copies of this limited edition now sell on eBay for around $300, when you can find one.

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Without his pioneering work with multitrack recording, EQ might not exist.

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On July 31, 2004, Daddy Yankee's "Barrio Fino" became the first reggaetón album to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart. It was an independent album, released on Yankee's own El Cartel Records, with songs under his own publishing, Los Congri. The only major thing about it was its distributor, Universal Music & Video Distribution, and the swaggering name of the artist, which in Puerto Rican slang means "Big Daddy." A year later, Yankee is indeed big, and reggaetón is even bigger.

As a movement, reggaetón has been bubbling under the surface for at least 10 years in Puerto Rico. There, artists have been recording and selling their albums independently, with little radio or media support until last year. But during the past 12 months, the genre has single-handedly shaken up radio in the United States, reinvigorated sales of Latin music and crossed over into the mainstream. In addition, labels across the board are vying to sign and develop new talent, anticipating even further growth for the genre.

"It has served as a much needed adrenaline shot for the business by expanding the consumer base," Univision Music Group president/CEO José Behar says. "We had lost the tropical consumer, and it had boiled down to pop and regional Mexican. It's exciting to see young consumers flocking to retail."

Univision is one of many labels that is expanding its urban division to accommodate a growing roster of acts that fall under not just reggaetón, but also Latin hip-hop and urban regional music. That growth has accelerated exponentially as an increasing number of radio stations have flipped to youth-driven, urban formats in the past nine months. At press time, 17 U.S. stations—including former English-language outlets—had flipped to rhythmic Latin formats with reggaetón-dominated playlists.

Meanwhile, reggaetón sales keep multiplying, thanks not only to airplay—which literally did not exist a year ago—but also to major distribution that has allowed such product to enter mainstream and mass-merchant accounts. During the past six months, in any given week, three to five of the top 10 titles on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart have been reggaetón.

"The genre is in the zenith of its explosion," says Jesús López, chairman of Universal Music Latin America/Iberian Peninsula, adding that the movement is not limited to the United States. "It is now awakening interest in the rest of the world."

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REGGAETÓN FEVER (Cont.)

from >>p39

major to express an interest in reggaetón, signing a licensing deal in 2002 with Puerto Rico-based Nightman Records—and Universal’s drive to discover new talent continues.

When sales of tropical music, a Universal stronghold, began declining in recent years, the company turned to Puerto Rico to explore up-and-coming music trends.

López, who came to Universal from BMG, had seen the possibilities of reggaetón with Panamanian rapper El General, a pioneer in the genre who sold several million albums by the late 1990s. Initially, Universal signed licensing and distribution deals through its Latin label, Universal Music Latino, and its distribution arm, UMVD, which distributes the bulk of reggaetón in the United States. Today, many reggaetón stars (including Yankee, Don Omar and Luffy Tunes) are distributed and/or promoted and marketed via some kind of agreement with Universal.

But in the past year the company has also focused on signing and developing its own artists. In addition, earlier this year, Universal created the Machete Music label, which is dedicated to all styles of Latin urban music.

GOING SOLO

A key change in the business, Machete president Gus-tavo López says, is the recent emergence of artists’ solo albums, as opposed to the multi-artist compilations that had dominated the reggaetón marketplace.

“Compilations are a mainstay of the business,” notes López, who reports to Jesús López (no relation). “But now you’re seeing the artists from these compilations coming out on their own.”

Many of these acts—Héctor "El Bambino," Wisin & Yandel, Angel & Khriz—are Puerto Rican.

But now, López says, “we’re seeing U.S.-based acts as well. I think now with the radio stations opening up their doors, the markets can develop their own product and they’re not so dependent on getting reggaetón product from Puerto Rico. I think we’ll start to see stations supporting some reggaetón from Panama [and] Mexico.”

In addition, with reggaetón going from a state of informal deals and independence to a state of contracts and major-label signings, compilations will not be quite as simple to create, as labels will be looking out for their artists’ interests.

“In that, the rules of the game will change,” Universal Music Latino president John Echevarría says. “The next time [Universal recording artist] Baby Rasta is asked to be on a compilation, I’ll authorize the license, not him. And that will happen with all the labels.”

However, Echevarría adds that compilations will remain part of reggaetón culture. “We won’t block them,” he notes.

But rather than concentrating on compilations, labels want to develop the acts they sign.

“The next stage is, we’re going to have to break an artist, and that will be the real start of the reggaetón movement,” Urban Box Office CEO Adam Kidron says. Created only 18 months ago, UBO has become a strategic player in the reggaetón realm, thanks to a series of low-priced and strategically marketed CDs, including the documentary CD/DVD "Chosen Few."

“The idea is to create living Latin music that has a growing population and a natural audience in the United States.”

continued >>p42

Don Omar, above, was a nominee for this year’s Billboard award for reggaetón album of the year. The award went to Daddy Yankee.
from >> p.41

REGGAETÓN FEVER (Cont.)

says Kidron, who self-distributes. "Daddy Yankee's 'Gasolina' is not enough. It's going to be artist-driven from now on, and we'll all have to learn different tricks—developing artists requires investment in touring, in their image and, more than anything, in albums and artists."

The willingness to sign and develop acts, not merely license or distribute them, opens up possibilities for new talent, who as recently as one year ago would have had to do things themselves. "Our strategy is about artist development first and foremost," Sony BMG Norte president Kevin Lawrie says. "It's generally not about purchasing someone else's talent."

Sony BMG has a joint-venture deal with Puerto Rican indie White Lion that originated before the Sony-BMG merger. Although the label will continue to work artists who fall under that agreement, it is also seeking new acts that complement the label's expertise. (Acts that have been signed so far include Alexis & Fido and MRF.)

Beyond Latin labels interested in reggaetón, there is a whole other realm of non-Latin labels that are creating urban Latin departments or launching affiliate labels to focus on Latin hip-hop and reggaetón.

For example, Atlantic Records, which recently signed Tego Calderón, now has an entire staff dedicated to the Latin market that will promote and market his upcoming album. And not too long ago, Interscope signed Yankee.

Although the details of these deals were not disclosed, each is said to be in the millions. Sources at Latin labels say they are not paying anywhere near that amount of money to those types of artists, nor are they willing to do so.

"The assumption is that the current artists are the ones that are going to be successful, and that is not correct at all," UBO's Kidron says.

Kidron is banking on new reggaetón artists who are still "under the radar." They can more easily reach a bigger audience, he believes, because they are bilingual.

"We don't try and compete in that way," he says, echoing the sentiments of many Latin labels that do not have the budgets to offer million-dollar recording contracts. "The way we try and complete is by showing people we can out-market, out-think and out-position."

Labels look for different ways to best position their reggaetón acts.

Univision Records recently signed a licensing deal with Filtro Music, the label created by former Perfect Image Records partner José Gualala and reggaetón artist Ivy Queen. Queen's upcoming album, "Flashback," will be released Sept. 27, and Univision will promote it to Latin and non-Latin buyers.

By doing so, the label ensures that the album is positioned in Latin and mainstream accounts that would normally not carry Latin product.

Another new joint venture is Wu-Tang Latino, created by label president Ray Acosta, formerly with UBO, and Wu-Tang Records.

Wu-Tang Latino's first release will be the compilation "Wu-Tang Latino: Quemando el Género," due before year's end. It will feature Wu-Tang Latino's current acts—including Lo Yo Yai—who all hail from Puerto Rico or the United States and play a mix of styles within reggaetón.

"The new Latin generation wants to see artists in both hip-hop and reggaetón," Acosta says. He adds that having the resources of Wu-Tang Records at his disposal gives him "the best of both worlds."

The two worlds Acosta is referring to are the musical direction of his label and the capacity to market that music in Latin and non-Latin markets.

It is a fast-paced music environment and, although reggaetón is exploding now, things are expected to settle down eventually.

"Reggaetón is coming from all over the world, and people are adding their own sound to it. So radio will have to adapt. It will change," Acosta predicts.

And as much as reggaetón is influencing Latin pop and other music, executives are confident that it will not displace other styles.

"There will always be an audience for pop and regional Mexican," Behar says. "I don't think that thirst can be quenched with something musically unrelated."

In fact, no other reggaetón album has made it to No. 1 on the Billboard Top Latin Albums chart since "Barrio Fino." At least for now.
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Panel 2 • Corporate Marketing - What Are Corporate Marketers Doing To Reach The Young
Bilingual Latino Market
Moderator: Leila Cobo (Billboard)
Panelists: Gerry Rojas (US Concepts), Fuego Magazine, Flavio Morales (Mun2), Adam Kidron (UBO), SiTV,
Nahum Madrid (Batanga), Jorge Cano Moreno (Urban Latino)

Panel 3 • Regional Artists - Exploding Into The National Scene
Moderator: Riggs Morales (Shady Records)
Panelists: Boy Wonder (Chosen Few/UBO), Chingo Bling, Lil Rob, Sal Rojas (Brownpride.com),
Toy Hernandez (Control Machete/Machete Records)

Panel 4 • Town Hall Meeting - The Industry Meets Face to Face With Young Bilingual Latinos
Moderator: Marianela (Fuse TV/Daily Download)
Panelists: Richard Bull (EMI Latin), Gus Lopez (Machete Records),
Jose Tillan (MTV Latin America), Domingo Ramos (Atlantic Records), Chris Martinez (Warner Latin)
Ray Acosta (Wu-Tang Latino) Jessica Rodriguez (MiGente.com), Cesar Chavez (Univision Music)

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Breaking new Latin acts has always been particularly difficult in the United States, where radio formats are especially rigid and notoriously unfriendly toward unknown names. But reggaetón is changing all that.

As of press time, 17 stations nationwide have switched formats in the past year, and are now airing reggaetón and Latin hip-hop. In search of music to fill the airwaves, these outlets are more likely to embrace new artists.

In addition, reggaetón—like hip-hop—feeds on collaborations. Until recently, the genre was dominated by compilations featuring multiple artists. Now, those compilations are launching solo careers.

“People are very reluctant to work artists from scratch,” says José “Gocho” Torres, president of Puerto Rico-based MVP Records (which is now distributed by UMDV through Machete Music).

“The compilation business continues to be important. In Puerto Rico, we use them almost as mix tapes. It’s a way to promote yourself before you release a solo album, so you don’t start from zero.”

Don Omar’s breakthrough song, “Dale Don Dale,” was first included on the compilation “MVP I.”

Although “MVP I” sold less than 200,000 copies, according to Torres, the success of “Dale Don Dale” made Omar a star, and the song was included on his hit solo album, “The Last Don.”

Machete is currently helping promote Wisin & Yandel’s “Ráclata,” which is from the compilation “Más Flow Vol. 2” (Más Flow/Universal), presented by Lumpy Tunes and Baby Ranks.

Wisin & Yandel’s upcoming debut album, which includes “Ráclata,” will most likely benefit from the early exposure.

The label also signed a new artist, Nostra, who already has a fan base thanks to a mix tape he released with DJ Camilo. Several thousand copies of the tape have been distributed free in New York to create a buzz there for his approaching debut record.

Last year, Machete released the solo debut of female reggaetón artist Glory, who provided vocals on “Dale Don Dale” and Daddy Yankee’s “Gasolina.”

According to Machete Music president Gustavo López, part of the reason for reggaetón’s quick acceptance is the variety of ways to promote the artists. “It’s different from other genres, because you have the channels and opportunities to work either at the local level or through these compilation packages or to make them tour,” he says.

Even with so many major-label deals now in place, the plethora of compilations in the market has permitted an unusual level of cooperation between labels and artists.

Urban Box Office, for example, is an independent company that has managed to get top names on its “Chosen Few” compilations because of its astute promotion and history of successful sales.

UBO CEO Adam Kidron says he will promote an artist not signed to his label to sell UBO product and get the material included in the compilation.

“The success of ‘Chosen Few’ gives us an advantage,” Kidron says. “People think we’ll market the hell out of it.

“You’re just signed an artist for a couple of million dollars, and you want to give some exposure to your artist before his album comes out,” he continues. “I tell all the artists and producers this: ‘Become more accessible as you become successful, not less. Everyone you’re involved with is responsible for the expansion of your brand.’”

On this note, Kidron is preparing to release “El Reggaetón Draft,” a compilation of brand-new acts produced by Boy Wonder (“Chosen Few”) and Chencho of Plan B. The first single will be a track by Rakim y Ken-Y. Even though the act is signed to indie label Pina Records, UBO will promote it.

When it comes to promoting his own acts, Kidron says there is no formula and that compilations are not necessarily an integral part of the strategy. However, he adds, “We never sign an act unless we have a very clear idea of how we’ll market them.”

Another common marketing strategy is pairing a reggaetón act with a successful hip-hop artist. One such coup: rapper Lil Jon’s appearance on a remix of Yankee’s “Gasolina.”

Most recently, Pitbull collaborated with Universal artist Adassa on her debut album, “Kamasutra.”

By Leila Cobo
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Radio is desperate for some fresh sounds, and reggaetón is it... this sound is exploding.

- GUY ZAPOLEON, RADIO CONSULTANT

By Chuck Taylor

On July 24, 1978, New York radio station WKTU flipped its listeners when it flipped its format from adult contemporary to disco. Within months, the dance-music craze catapulted the station to No. 1 in the ratings, setting the stage for numerous copycats and fueling a cultural phenomenon.

Fast forward some 27 years. The latest music fashion, reggaetón, is burgeoning with such intensity that the number of radio stations dedicated to the sound has increased exponentially during the past few months.

"Radio is desperate for some fresh sounds, and reggaetón is it," radio consultant Guy Zapoleon says. "Reggaetón found a way to mix hip-hop and reggae and make both more palatable to a hip, young audience. Now this sound is exploding.

Record labels are rapidly embracing the genre, which originated in Puerto Rican clubs, and turning it into a mainstream outreach of hip-hop. Such signature reggaetón artists as Daddy Yankee and Don Omar found themselves suddenly thrust from the clubs onto rhythmic and mainstream top 40 radio stations.

'We've found that the appeal of reggaetón is universal," says Tom Polen, Clear Channel senior VP of programming and PD of mainstream top 40 WHTZ (Z100) New York. "It's just not just about Latin listeners; white suburban kids have a lot of passion for it..."

At WKTU, PD Jeff Z adds, "Daddy Yankee was a star in the Latin market long before WKTU started playing his hit 'Gasolina.' We kept hearing this extremely infectious hook at every club we were attending. We took a chance and followed our gut, because we felt that's what New Yorkers wanted to hear."

Likewise, in Philadelphia, mainstream top 40 WIOQ (Q102) became another East Coast supporter.

"For many years, the Hispanic community has searched for rhythmic top 40 and hip-hop stations," PD Todd Shannon says. "Finally, there are radio stations that reflect their culture and musical tastes, which is a win-win for everyone."

With the explosive popularity of reggaetón music on English-language radio, it was only a matter of time before radio groups saw visions of dollar signs dancing before their eyes.

Univision, Spanish Broadcasting System and Infinity were the format's primary early adopters. They followed what was regarded as the first full-on English-language reggaetón station, WVOZ San Juan, Puerto Rico, which squashed its format of Spanish-language mainstream top 40 to focus on a blend of reggaetón and American hip-hop.

The reggaetón revolution hit the mainland of course, but it also invaded the mainland...bophora and Latin pop.

Univision senior VP/GM Claudia Puig offered her enthusiasm for the new sound of WRTO Miami, saying, "With this new format we will meet the needs of younger Hispanics in South Florida. We are confident that La Kalle's 'radical mix' will position WRTO as a market leader in its target demographic, delivering a dynamic format with a sound unique to Miami."

Also among the converted: Sun City Communications launched KFMR Phoenix in May as Club 95: Latino Vibe, featuring a mix of reggaetón, Spanish hip-hop and Spanish pop. Envision's KZZA Dallas flipped to Casa 106.7; and Infinity transformed country/rock hybrid WYUU (Outlaw 92.5) Tampa, Fla., into La Nueva FM 92.5: The Latin Sound of Tampa Bay.

No one can predict whether reggaetón is high-octane enough to maintain its popularity and ultimately prevent a retreat by radio stations always in search of the coolest, hottest youth trend. However, Zach Horowitz, president/COO of Universal Music Group—which recently launched reggaetón imprint Machete Music—is certainly counting on its longevity.

"The signs are all there," Horowitz says. "It really does remind me of hip-hop when it was first starting. It was a cultural event. It resonated with youth, and it's still with us..."

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The reggaetón buzz continues to spread beyond the United States. During the past two years, the emerging Latin music genre has traveled from its birthplace in Puerto Rico to markets as far flung as Japan and Eastern Europe, and recently reached the upper echelon of the British singles sales chart. However, the jury is still out as to whether reggaetón will become a lasting trend in non-Latin countries.

"If it's a mixture, a hybrid, we will still hear a lot of reggaetón rhythms for a long time," says Wolfgang Boss, managing director of German indie label Mach1, a joint venture with U.K. dance powerhouse Ministry of Sound. "But I don't think pure Puerto Rican reggaetón will suddenly become as big here as hip-hop.

Boss is regarded among his peers as one of the first executives to recognize reggaetón and introduce it to European audiences. In 2003, having heard the genre bubbling up in the Dominican Republic, Boss licensed "Siente el Ritmo" by Speedy (featuring Lumidee) for several European territories.

Speedy, who is signed to Puerto Rican label Pina Records, became an overnight sensation in France, where "Siente el Ritmo" helped broker a pact for urban and dance broadcasters Channel U. MTV Base and Kiss, according to a label representative. The single will feature a remix by dancehall producer Curtis Lynch.

"In much of Europe, reggaetón is about hits of momentum, hits of the summer," adds Boss, who masterminded the European success of the Crazy Frog novelty records. "But to be honest, I don't think it will become bigger than it is now, unless it blends with other genres."

British broadcaster Mark Goodier, founder of London-based radio syndication company Wise Buddah and host of the BBC World "White Label" show, agrees with Boss. "It will take more than one special record" for the genre to catch on, he says. "We're not there yet in the United Kingdom, but I think [Daddy Yankee's] "Gasolina" is a great song. It is so refreshing and so unusual to hear a song in Spanish on British airwaves."

Where Speedy's "Siente el Ritmo" is widely regarded as the first international reggaetón hit, Yankee's "Gasolina" (El Cartel) has been the biggest.

Helped by a No. 5 debut in the United Kingdom, the track reached No. 8 on the Eurochart Hot Singles list in late July. In Britain, which in the past has embraced such Caribbean-flavored tracks as Shaggy's "Oh Carolina" and Sean Paul's "Dutty Rock," "Gasolina" sold more than 14,000 units in its first week, according to charts compiler the Official U.K. Charts Co.

Despite the single's success, Yankee's album "Barrio Fino," which was released in the United Kingdom July 4 through Polydor Records, has yet to break the top 75 on the Official U.K. Albums Chart. (Universal Music Group International handles Yankee's releases in the world outside the United States.)

Casino, who is regional managing director for EMI Music Publishing Latin America, recently helped broker a pact that sees the publishing giant administer Yankee's catalog for the world. It excludes the United States and Puerto Rico, where the artist will continue to self-administer his work.

"I think everybody wants to get into the scene," Moot adds. "Outside the United States, it's just really important that we try and cultivate album sales in the future with these acts. We all know that we can have some hit singles, but the next step is to cement some album sales out of this."

Jesus López, chairman of Universal Music Latin America and Iberian Peninsula, notes that newly signed female reggaetón artist Adassa is finding much success in Japan.

"The sales we're obtaining beyond Latin America are encouraging everybody to push strongly for certain artists and certain compilations that bring together the best in the genre," López says.
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The artists of reggaetón, Latino rap and urban regional come from a broad array of locations and backgrounds, but they all share the same hunger to flourish in the market. Many use the familiar tactic of taking traditional rhythms and reinvigorating them with new melodies for a fresh sound.

In recent years, top-tier acts like Daddy Yankee, Tego Calderón, Ivy Queen and Pitbull have begun topping the charts with dance-friendly hits. Like most others, these artists struggled underground for years before record sales and packed dancehalls helped push them onto radio airwaves and into bigger venues.

Hardcore followers of reggaetón and Latin urban music know the influential players and the must-have CDs. For new and casual fans, here is a guide to the genre's major and up-and-coming acts.

DON DINERO
Don Dinero offers a more relaxed, R&B-flavored reggaetón mix on his benchmark album, "Que Bola." The best cuts include the title track and the easy-grooving "Don Dinero O'Mingo," but he also seamlessly mixes hip-hop and rap on "Where You At?" He is signed to Universal Latino.

TEGO CALDERÓN
Puerto Rican singer Tego Calderón is a serious student of salsa and the other Caribbean styles that he injects into his reggaetón sound. Like the artist Ja Rule, Calderón's voice is heavier and raspier than most rappers in his field. His signature hits include "Oye Mi Canto" and "Pa'Que Retesen," which are from the Jiggity/Atlantic album "El Abayarde."

ADASAA
Adassa is a Miami-born, Virgin Island-raised Colombian singer. She heated up things quickly with her sophomore CD, "Kama Sutra," on Universal Latino, which features collaborations with fellow Miami-based Pitbull and reggaetón heavy hitters Raby Rasta and Gringo. The first single, "De Tra," has already made a big splash in Japan.

ANGEL & KRIZ
The San Juan, Puerto Rico, duo of Angel & Kriz came out of nowhere last year to find some success before their debut album, "Los MVP," was even released. The duo, whose real names are Angel Rivera and Christian Colon, worked quickly to get the album on the street and release the hot single "Ven Bailalo."

AZTEKA
Inspired by the experiences of lower-income Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles, Azteka sings about familiar themes with flowing rap and smooth vocals. Born Adan Zapata, Azteca was raised on the west side of Los Angeles. His 2004 Univision debut, "Sueño Americano," touched on many of the social issues that affect Mexican-Americans. The album features the midtempo track "Mexicano Por Fortuna."

Enemigo
New York-born, Puerto Rico-raised Enemigo drew followers with his mix of whipping hip-hop beats, smooth love songs and confrontational raps. His 2001 independently released debut, "Quien Es Enemigo," sold 30,000 copies. He made his major-label debut this year with "Camionando on Univision Records, which includes the rousing track "Set It Off," featuring Petey Pablo.
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FLAKISS
Rising Latin rap star Flakiss likes singing about the strengths and plights ofLatinas. Deep, bass-driven grooves are the backdrop for her rapid-fire raps and alluring choruses. She also shifts quickly from English to Spanish but can deliver a thumping dance number too, as she displays in “P.Y.M.P. (Party y Mas Party).” Flakiss’ latest album, “Así Soy,” epitomizes her diversity. She is signed to Univision Records.

GLORY
She may be a new face to many, but the Puerto Rican singer Glory has been in the music industry for more than a decade. Among her early credits are collaborations with such acts as Hector & Tito, Don Omar, Daddy Yankee and Eddie Dee. Her latest release is “Glo/GLory” on Machete Music, and it includes the hot track “La Popola.” The album also contains the singles “Perreo 101” and “La Tracionera” with Don Omar.

JAE-P
South Central Los Angeles’ reputation as a hub for gang violence proved to be fodder for Jae-P (born Juan Pablo Huerta). He grew up with the urban sounds of South Central and the traditional music of his Mexican parents. The result was a fusion that has resonated with Latino fans. His debut CD, “Ni de AQUÍ Ni de AYA,” detailed his struggles with cultural identity. At 19, he released 2004’s “Esperanza.” He is signed to Univision Records.

PITBULL
Miami-based Cuban-American rapper Pitbull fused his love of chunk, hip-hop and dancehall into a bilingual stew that generated the catchy tune “Culo,” which features crunk master Lil Jon. Pitbull’s best-selling album is “M.I.A.M.I.” on TVT Records.

MAGIC JUAN
On his 2005 album “Inevitable” (Koch), versatile singer/rapper Magic Juan simmered on slow-burners like “Never Been Afraid,” featuring Malik, and “U Gotta Believe.” He also heats up intense numbers “Sigue la Chercha” and “Vamono” de Bonche,” with New York-based, Dominican-American, merengue-rap act Fulanito.

LA PURA NETA
La Pura Neta utilizes thumping rhythms and aggressive lyrics in its music with themes of cultural struggle. The group, consisting of rappers XL and MC Japon, first gained attention by winning a string of rap contests in south Texas. Its self-titled debut album on EMI arrived this year. La Pura Neta’s collaboration with Jae-P landed on the top-selling videogame “Fight Night: Round 2.”

LUNY TUNES
Luny Tunes—comprising songwriter/producers Francisco Saldana, formerly with Peabody, and Victor Cabrera, formerly with Lynn—are considered the Neptunes of reggaeton. Luny Tunes are masters of the dance hooks that drive the infectious genre. On their Mas Flow/Universal Latino album “Mas Flow 2,” the signature track is the feverish “Tiburon,” which blends hip-hop, reggae beats and rap. Meanwhile, Daddy Yankee guests on “Mireme,” another tribalistic workout that is easy to sing along to. continued >>p56
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Other guests on the album include Ivy Queen, Vico C and Calderón.

IVY QUEEN
The leading lady of reggaeton, Ivy Queen, has a distinct vocal style that evokes Gwen Stefani. On the chart-topping singles “Papi Te Quiero” and “Quiero Bailar” from the album “Diva,” she shows off how effortlessly and quickly she alternately sings and raps. Queen’s next album, “Flashback,” will be released Sept. 27 on Filtro Musik/Univision Records.

DON OMAR
Breakthrough album “The Last Don” (VI Music/Machete) showcased Don Omar’s mix of tropical beats, hip-hop and hard raps on such tunes as “Dale Don Dale,” “Caseros #2” and the frantic “La Noche Esta Buena,” a duet with Yankee.

TONY TOUCH
Puerto Rican freestyle DJ/producer Tony Touch was born in Brooklyn and began his career in the early 1990s in mix tapes featuring R&B, Latin reggae, rap and house. He won the Mixtape Award for best freestyles and has produced songs by Cocoa Brovaz, Flip-mode Squad and Sunz of Man.

Touch signed with Tommy Boy in 1999 and released “The Piece Maker.” His latest album, “The Reggaetón Album,” was released on EMI Latin.

ZION & LENNOX
Zion & Lennox, who are from Puerto Rico, may seem like new faces but they are really veterans in the urban/reggaeton field. Their new album, “Moviendo a La Yal” (White Lion/Sony BMG), has yet to top the charts, but the duo should get a huge boost when they open at least half the dates on Daddy Yankee’s Who’s Your Daddy tour this fall.

DADDY YANKEE
Rapper Daddy Yankee spent years working the music scene before mixing up the highly potent “Gasolina.” The track, from the album “Barrio Fino” (Interscope), glides along the basic reggae beat and adds an infectious chorus, “Dame mas gasolina” (Give me more gasoline).

The song’s “Macarena”-like dance hooks have kept it atop several charts and made Daddy Yankee a phenom. His Who’s Your Daddy tour is under way in the United States.

COMPILATION CRAZE
There are numerous noteworthy reggaeton/urban regional compilations that have been released through the years. Here is a brief taste of what’s out there.

“The Chosen Few: El Documental” (UBO)
“The Chosen Few” CD/DVD offers tracks by N.O.R.E., Nicky Jam, Notch, Vico C, Tego Calderón and many others. There is also a documentary on the history and rise of reggaeton.

“Sandungueo.com: Reggaeton Hits, Vol. 1” (Cutting)
“Sandungueo.com” is a 16-track set that features hits by Daddy Yankee, Calderón, Don Omar, DJ Blass and many others.

“Power 96 Presents: Dancehall Nice Again 2004” (Sequence)
Fans of Miami radio station WPOW (Power 96) can compare reggae and reggaeton on a 19-track collection that includes hits by Elephant Man, Ivy Queen, Calderón, Sugar Daddy, Sean Paul, Notch, Mr. Vegas and many more.

—Ramiro Burr
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ON THE CHARTS

The chart recaps in this Latin Music special cover the period from the Dec. 4, 2004, issue—the beginning of the chart year—through the Aug. 13, 2005, issue. Because the Latin Rhythm Albums chart did not appear in Billboard until the May 21, 2005, issue, the recap below was culled from Top Latin Albums. Likewise, the Latin Rhythm Airplay chart did not launch until the Aug. 27, 2005, issue, so its recap was culled from Hot Latin Songs.

The airplay recaps reflect cumulative audience impressions as calculated by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems, while the album charts reflect cumulative sales as reported by Nielsen SoundScan. Titles receive airplay points for each week they appeared on Hot Latin Songs or sales points for each week they appeared on Top Latin Albums.

The New Artist category gauges performance on Top Latin Albums and Hot Latin Songs. Acts who have not charted an album prior to the Oct. 2, 2004, issue are eligible, so long as they have not appeared on New Artist lists in previous years. Prior activity on our airplay charts does not disqualify an artist from being considered new. These recaps were prepared by Anthony Colombo, with assistance from Latin charts manager Ricardo Companioni.

TOP NEW LATIN ARTISTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pos.</th>
<th>ARTIST (Charted Titles)</th>
<th>Imprint/Label</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BABY RANKS (2) Mas</td>
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<td>RBD (4) EMI Latin</td>
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<td>REYLI (3) Sony Discos</td>
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<td>ELIEL (1) VI/Machete</td>
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<td>HECTOR &quot;EL BAMBINO&quot; (1)</td>
<td>Gold Star/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>(1) Mas Flow/Universal Latino</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>LA AUTORIDAD DE LA SIERRA (2)</td>
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<td>Latino/Madacy</td>
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<td>ANDY ANDY (2) Wepa/Urban Box Office</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>LA SA ESTACION (2) Sony Discos</td>
<td>(1) Ariola/BMG Latin</td>
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<td>DJ TEPEHUANES (1) Disa</td>
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HOT LATIN SONGS

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<td>1</td>
<td>HOY COMO AYER—Conjunto Primavera—Fonovisa</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>LA CAMISA NEGRA—Juanes—Surco/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>AIRE—Intocable—EMI Latin</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>PORQUE ES TAN CRUEL EL AMOR—Ricardo Arjona—Sony Discos</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>LA TORTURA—Shakira Featuring Alejandro Sanz—Epic/Sony Discos</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>OBSESSION (NO ES AMOR)—Frankie J Featuring Baby Bash—Columbia/Sony Discos</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>TE BUSCARIA—Christian Castro—Ariola/BMG Latin</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>LA SORPRESA—Los Tigres Del Norte—Fonovisa</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>VOLVERTE A VER—Juanes—Surco/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>LO QUE PASO, PASO—Daddy Yankee—El Cartel/VI/Machete</td>
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TOP LATIN ALBUMS

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<td>MI SANGRE—Juanes—Surco/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>CHOOSEN FEW: EL DOCUMENTAL—Various Artists—Chosen Few Emerald/Urban Box Office</td>
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<td>Y SIGUE LA MATA DANDO—Grupo Montez De Durango—Disa</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>MEXICO EN LA PIEL—Luis Miguel—Warner Latina</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>MAS FLOW 2—Luny Tunes &amp; Baby Banks—Mas Flow/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>X—Intocable—EMI Latin</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>DIVINAS—Patrulla 81—Disa</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>RAZON DE SOBRA—Marco Antonio Solis—Fonovisa/UG</td>
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Top new Latin artists include RBD, above, and Hector "El Bambino."
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Lunas del Auditorio Awards 2005
Reggaetón's success is already generating industry events, including an awards show and a conference.

The first Mega Reggaetón Awards will take place Nov. 23 at New York's Madison Square Garden, one day before the Megaton Reggaetón concert.

Both events are being put together by WSKQ (97.9 FM La Mega) New York, one of the first U.S. radio stations to play reggaetón.

The honors will be awarded based on Nielsen SoundScan data, New York-area sales and airplay on La Mega, among other criteria.

Reggaetón merited its own awards because of its popularity, but La Mega PD George Mier notes, "We are a tropical station. We play whatever is rhythmic."

Prior to the first annual Reggaeton Awards, New York will host the third annual Latin Rap Conference. The event will take place Sept. 20 at midtown club LQ.

The daylong conference covers reggaetón, Latin rap and hip-hop. Panels will focus specifically on reggaetón, plus broach more generic topics like bilingual audiences and new marketing strategies.

The conference, which also will feature a showcase for up-and-coming artists and a Latino youth town-hall meeting, is organized by the Fuerte Group and Jesse Perez (aka Shysti of Rhythm Impact). For more information and a full list of panelists, go to latinrapconference.com.

Top Latin Rhythm Albums

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<th>Pos.</th>
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<td>BARRIO FINO</td>
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<td>El Cartel/VI/Machete</td>
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<td>Various Artists - Chosen Few Emerald/Urban Box Office</td>
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<td>MAS FLOW 2</td>
<td>Luny Tunes &amp; Baby Ranks</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>THE LAST DON</td>
<td>Don Omar</td>
<td>VI/Machete</td>
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<td>THE LAST DON: LIVE</td>
<td>Don Omar</td>
<td>VI/Machete</td>
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<td>LA TRAYECTORIA</td>
<td>Luny Tunes</td>
<td>Mas Flow/Gold Star/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>THE HITMAKERS OF REGGAETÓN</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>VI/Machete</td>
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<td>REGGAETON SUPER HITS</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>New Records/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>LOS BANDOLEROS: THE FIRST DON OMAR PRODUCTION</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>Allstar/VI/Machete</td>
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<td>AHORA LE TOCA EL CANGRI! LIVE</td>
<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
<td>VI/Machete</td>
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Top Latin Rhythm Songs

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<td>LO QUE PASÓ PASÓ</td>
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<td>El Cartel/VI/Machete</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>MAYOR QUE HO</td>
<td>Baby Ranks, Daddy Yankee, Tony T Kun</td>
<td>Mas Flow/Universal Latino</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>GASOLINA</td>
<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
<td>El Cartel/VI/Machete</td>
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<td>REGGAETON LATINOS</td>
<td>Don Omar</td>
<td>Chosen Few Emerald/Urban Box Office</td>
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<td>RAKATA</td>
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<td>Zion &amp; Lennox</td>
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<td>Angel &amp; Khriz</td>
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La Mina Radio, left, scored two top Latin rhythm albums, while Tony Touch had one of the top 10 songs.
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TEGO CALDERON
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ARTIST OF THE YEAR
IVY QUEEN
GLORY
NINA SKY

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BARRIO FINO
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LOS CANGRY

REGGAETON DUET OR GROUP
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ZION Y LENNOX
WISIN Y YANDEL
TREBOL KLAN

REGGAETON SONG OF THE YEAR

REGGAETON ALBUM
COMPILATION OF THE YEAR
MAS FLOW 2
CAZADORES
PATRONES DEL REGGAETON
BANDOLEROS

REGGAETON DJ
THE OF YEAR
DJ JOE
DJ NELSON
DJ MERCENARIO

REGGAETON PRODUCER
OF THE YEAR
LUNY TUNES
ELIAS DE LEON
HECTOR EL BAMBINO

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DUET OF THE YEAR
ANGEL Y KHRIZ
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YEARWOOD BACK ON TRACK

NASHVILLE—Successful artists can often feel like they are on a fast-moving treadmill that never stops. Trisha Yearwood took the risk of stepping off and has no regrets.

After a self-imposed hiatus, she will return Sept. 13 with "Jasper County," her first new album since "Inside Out" debuted at the summit of the Billboard Top Country Albums chart in 2001.

Yearwood's break was spurred by both creative and business considerations.

"When (former MCA Nashville chairman) Bruce Hinton retired, that was really the catalyst for me," she says, citing the changing of the guard that followed at the label. "There was a lot of stuff going on, and I thought it would be a good time for me to take a break and let everything get sort of settled down before I came out with an album."

Produced by Garth Fundis, who has helmed many of her albums, "Jasper County" is the Georgia native's 11th MCA project. She says she intended to take only a year off, but then had a hard time finding tunes.

In fall 2002, "I took some songs that I liked and we recorded them, but... I kept trying to make them be something they just weren't," she says. "I was so anxious to get into the studio, but just don't think the songs were quite there."

She and Fundis resumed their search for material in spring 2003, sapping such writers as Beth Nielsen Chapman, Al Anderson, Anthony Smith and Leslie Satcher. continued on >>p64

FACT FILE

Label: MCA Records
Management: Ken Levitan, Vector Management
Booking: William Morris Agency
Publishing: Dining Room Music (ASCAP)
Last album: "Inside Out" (2001), 427,000
Best-selling album: "Songbook: A Collection of Hit's" (1997), 2.8 million

LATEST BUZZ

>>> OMARION OFFERS 'HELP'
Former B2K lead singer Omarion, who\'s solo debut "O" bowed at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 earlier this year, is ready for his close-up. Backstage at the Video Music Awards Aug. 28, Omarion said he will appear in the upcoming horror flick "Help." Shooting begins once he finishes his stint on the Scream tour alongside Bow Wow and Bobby Valentino.

—Leila Cobo

>>> GOTHs, GET READY
Bauhaus will return to North America this fall for its first tour in seven years. The group last played stateside in a one-off date at this year\'s Coachella festival. The four original band members will begin the tour Oct. 20 in Vancouver.

—Melinda Newman

>>> CMA HALL OF FAMERS ANNOUNCED
Alabama, Glen Campbell and DeFord Bailey will be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame Nov. 15, during the Country Music Assn. Awards at New York\'s Madison Square Garden.

Bailey will be inducted in the category of artists who achieved national prominence prior to World War II, and Campbell will be in the field between World War II and 1975. Alabama is the first act inducted in the new category for artists who achieved national prominence after 1975.

CMA\'s Hall of Fame panel of electors chooses the inductees. The awards will be telecast on CBS.

—Phylis Stark

>>> McBRIDE GETS CREATIVE
Christian McBride has been named creative chair for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Assn. The jazz bassist succeeds singer Dianne Reeves. McBride will oversee jazz programming for the Philharmonic\'s shows at Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl during his two-year tenure.

—Melinda Newman
Don’t Call Them ‘Boy Bands’
New Round Of Acts With Teen Appeal Play Their Own Instruments, Write Their Own Songs

Are we on the verge of a new boy band explosion? It sure looks that way. But this time the band members write much of their material and play their own instruments. We’re calling them “guy groups” to differentiate them from the earlier class of boy bands, best-known for their sweet harmonies and smart dance moves.

Another significant difference from their predecessors: Radio isn’t necessarily leading the charge for these acts.

The Click Five—none of whose five members are older than 23—debuted at No. 15 on The Billboard 200 in the Sept. 1 issue with “Greetings From Imrie House” and are No. 28 this issue. The Berklee School of Music grads wear identical suits and play shiny power-pop.

Still ahead are debuts from Barefoot, a five-piece whose sound builds on the Southern California rock style of the 70s, and the Jonas Brothers, three siblings who combine pop and rock à la Hanson. (The comparison is inevitable.)

Barefoot bows Nov. 1 on Joe Simpson’s Geffen-distributed imprint, Papa Joe Records, while the Jonas Brothers’ album streets Nov. 22 on Columbia.

“It does seem like this could be the next incarnation of the boy band,” Lava Records GM Lee Trink says.

Columbia president Steve Greenberg is loath to call these acts boy bands, instead describing them as “young rock bands.” He says the mood is right for a new guy group wave: “If you look at the teen magazines today, there are very few singers; it’s mostly actors. And any time that condition exists, you know the time is right for a comeback of teen music. There aren’t enough acts making the music that’s appropriate for the teen audience. I noticed the exact same thing in 1996, right before I signed Hanson.”

Simpson simply states, “As long as there are girls, we need guy bands. However, in this day, it is not good enough to just sing great. You have to write, sing and play. We want it all.”

As evidenced by the Click Five—who managed the top 15 debut while its radio play is in its early days—these acts start with a grassroots groundswell driven by the Internet. Click Five’s first single, “Just the Girl,” hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot Digital Songs chart last issue.

“Radio is not the thing leading the charge,” Trink says. Instead, the story on the Click Five started when the band opened for Ashlee Simpson in February. It has since toured with Backstreet Boys and Jesse McCartney, among others.

In the week after Click Five’s first stop on Ashlee’s tour, Trink says, the project went from “a record that just got delivered to us as a priority.” The first night, the band was immediately “bombarded for autographs. The same thing happened the second night, and we decided they needed security.”

Instead of rushing out the album, Lava decided to let the story continue to build, but it quickly pressed a three-song EP that it is offering alongside the band’s merchandise.

For Click bassist Ethan Menitzer, the teen tour has been a blast. “We knew when we started this band that a lot of our appeal was going to be in the teen market. We knew that’s who buys records; kids in college burn CDs.” He notes with some amusement that when the Click Five opened for Aaron Carter, who performed to tracks, “for the kids at that show, it was the first they’d seen a band.”

By the time Lava did make the move to radio, there was undeniable proof of the band’s popularity. This issue, “Just the Girl” is No. 11 on The Billboard Hot 100.

Similarly, there is no immediate radio push for the Jonas Brothers. “Radio is part of the plan, but it’s not the first step,” Greenberg says of first single “Mandy.” Instead, the Internet has been a driving force, noting that in the course of a few weeks, the Jonas Brothers have garnered more than 1,000 friends on myspace.com.

“Young people really live on the Internet, and a lot of these bands are being marketed on the Internet—they’re able to bypass the traditional methods,” he says. “In some ways, these young pop acts are being marketed like indie rock bands because the bigger media tends to be more conservative and less open to change.”

Barefoot’s first single, “Rain,” goes to radio this month, but the band is also developing a live following: It will open 12 dates for Ashlee starting Sept. 18.

The Click Five’s success comes at a time when Lava’s fate is unsure following the August departure of founder Jason Flom from his co-chairman/CEO post at Atlantic Records Group. But Trink says the label is buoyed by the band’s success.

“If anything, it’s given us a point of solidarity at the label to also show the industry that things are humming over here at Lava. It’s a difficult time for the industry, certainly, but we’ve got a lot of things cooking.”

YEAWOOD (cont.)

“MELINDA NEWMAN mnewman@billboard.com

from >>63

“I knew I wanted to make a country record,” the three-time Grammy Award winner says. “I wanted it to be new and not sound like what had been done before by me, but I also wanted it to be familiar. Being off the radio for three years, I didn’t want the first thing people heard to be something they couldn’t recognize [that would make them say], ‘Gosh, what was she thinking?’”

Yearwood says “Georgia Rain,” which is currently No. 17 on the Hot Country Songs chart, was the obvious choice for a first single.

“It’s one of those story songs that I love so much,” she says of the tune, which features harmonies by fiancé Garth Brooks. “That song set the tone. All the songs we ended up cutting had to be something that you’d [say], ‘Oh yes! That is what I would expect Trisha to do, but I’ve never heard this before.’”

WORTH THE WAIT

Brian Smith, VP of store operations for retailer Value Central Entertainment, applauds Yearwood’s decision to not rush the album. He notes that customers are already asking about it. “It allowed her ample time to find quality songs,” he says, “and she, in turn, delivered a quality record.”

Smith hopes other artists will take the same approach. “Fans are demanding more than one or two hits per disc today, and this is an example of an artist listening” to that demand.

Yearwood has long been known for her extraordinary voice and great song sense. She has placed 38 titles on the Billboard country singles chart, with 19 landing in the top 10 and five reaching the summit. Six of her 10 previous albums have been certified platinum, and four have gone gold.

Her latest offering mixes frisky, up-tempo numbers like “Pistol” and “It’s Alright” with potent ballads like “Tryin’ to Love You” and “Georgia Rain.”

While some artists who take a long hiatus come back to find themselves displaced because the market has shifted in their absence, Yearwood has no such concerns.

“I still think there is a market for artists like myself,” she says. “It would be a mistake to try to cut a record for the market, because it wouldn’t sound like me and it wouldn’t be sincere. So my only choice is to do what I do and hope that the market, for me, is still there.”

Not surprisingly, Universal Music Group Nashville senior VP of sales and marketing Ben Kline believes Yearwood still has a country home, in part because she has never tried to follow the latest fad.

“The trends come and go, but Trisha has made a classic Trisha Yearwood album,” he says.

To let Yearwood fans know “Jasper County” is hitting the shelves, Kline plans calls for consumer advertising, radio promotions and online activities.

“You’re going to see positioning in the front of stores,” he says, adding that his street teams “have been working for months getting the word out and creating a buzz.”

Yearwood’s comeback will also be touted via numerous media outlets, including the cover of Redbook.

CELEBRITY PROFILE

Yearwood’s new album is not the only thing her fans have been interested in lately. Following her May engagement to Brooks, she found herself in the middle of a media frenzy. Kline is not worried about the attention on Yearwood’s personal life eclipsing her music. “Any opportunity for consumers to know that there’s a new Trisha Yearwood album, we’ll take it,” he says, “because the music stands on its own.”

Yearwood says she understands fan interest in her personal life. “The only place that it has to be really careful is I don’t want people buying tickets to my shows thinking they are going to see Garth Brooks, because he is a stay-at-home dad,” she says. “He is not coming on tour with me, and I just don’t want people to be disappointed.”

In the future, Yearwood says, she would love to record a big-band project, a live set and a duet album with Brooks. She will do a theater tour this fall, and is happy to be back in the spotlight, but admits her priorities have shifted.

“I am not the person who I was 10 years ago,” she says. “I’ve grown as a woman and as an artist, and I think the music that I’m making should reflect that.”
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THE GLOBAL STANDARD FOR MUSIC INFORMATION
NASHVILLE—For Ryan Shupe & the RubberBand, “Dream Big” is not just its first single, it could also serve as the act’s motto.

During a nine-year span, the Salt Lake City-based group recorded four independent albums and extensively toured the western United States, building a regional following and honing its live act.

That riveting stage show caught the attention of executives at Capitol Records Nashville, which signed the band and bought the rights to its latest album, also titled “Dream Big.” Produced by Jason Deere, the record comes out Sept. 6.

The group was introduced to radio programmers at the Country Radio Seminar in March. Its performances there earned the band standing ovations from the notoriously tough crowd.

Some, like KUSS San Diego PD Mike O’Brien, came home from CRS and immediately put “Dream Big” on the air. He calls the group’s live show “genius”—including a highlight in which the band members line up at the front of the stage and play the instrument of the person on their right.

But O’Brien notes that not everyone who liked the band at CRS has been playing their music. “The feeling in the room [at CRS] was, ‘Wow, we are witnessing something special.’ But, for whatever reason, [some] folks lost that ‘feeling in baggage claim on the way home.’

The single is now No. 28 on the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart after 21 weeks on the list. At his station, O’Brien says “Dream Big” has become one of its most requested songs, and he has spun it more than 600 times to date. “This is a big single from a band that has the potential to really add another layer of texture to the format,” he says.

The single is getting bonus exposure on NBC, where it is being used in promos for the network’s new fall series, “Three Wishes.” The group will also appear in an episode of the program.

Sporting a sound that blends country, bluegrass, folk and pop, the group’s songs reference everyone from Béla Fleck and Tony Joe White to the radio seminar host, Ron O’Brien. But O’Brien notes that “Dream Big” is the kind of music “ties back to an earlier sound of country, but with a modern twist.”

In addition to lead vocalist Shupe (who plays fiddle, mandolin and guitar), the band comprises Roger Archibald (guitar, vocals), Colin Botts (bass, vocals), Craig Miner (banjo, bouzouki), guitar, mandolin and vocals) and Bart Olson (drums and fiddle).

Capitol senior VP of marketing Fletcher Foster says the group came to the label “ready-made” after years of doing everything for itself. “They had offers out of New York and Los Angeles as well as several labels” in Nashville, Foster says.

The act chose Capitol, Shupe says, because it was the label “that was most excited and equipped for the task of launching Ryan Shupe & the RubberBand for world domination.”

Shupe views the band’s nine-year wait for a label deal as a positive. Without label deal, he says, “We were forced to make our live show the tool that would win people over.”

That is the reason Capitol held off launching the band until CRS: so radio executives would have an opportunity to see it perform. “We knew the live aspect was what was going to sell this band,” Foster says.

That live show will get additional exposure this fall when the group opens 10 West Coast dates for Trisha Yearwood.

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In The Spirit

DEBORAH EVANS PRICE dprice@billboard.com

Kenoly Ministers A New Generation

Veteran Artist Spreads The Word Around The Globe Through His Florida Label

Music and faith are two of the ties that bind the talented Kenoly family. Patriarch Ron has built a successful career as one of the industry’s most gifted worship leaders, and his sons, Samuel and Bingo, are both involved in the family’s music ministry.

Since leaving the Integrity Music label in 2001, Ron has spearheaded the development of Next Generation Ministry Records, an Orlando, Fla.-based label that Word distributes in the Christian market and WEA handles in the general market.

Ron’s new effort, “Fill the Earth,” was released Aug. 23. It was preceded by the July release of “H.O.G.S.,” Bingo’s rap/hip-hop collection. Both projects were recorded at KFM (which stands for Kenoly Family Music) Studios.

“My sons run it. They do their recordings out of there, and we do a few projects for people we know and believe in,” Ron says of the studio.

“We just kind of quietly do what God has given us to do,” he continues. “We just go where God opens doors, and he’s just been opening doors all the time. We’ve been to 90 different nations.”

Ron has been encouraged by the reception he has received abroad. “The ministry just goes over natural barriers like language or culture or age or social status,” he says. “Everywhere our ministry goes, we are accepted with grace and with large crowds. Even though the majority of the songs we sing are in English, the people know all my songs. God has been really, really gracious to me in that respect.”

Ron is currently working on an album in Portuguese and plans a French project. He admits the profit margin isn’t large for such endeavors, but he doesn’t mind. “We are serving the whole world, and God put it in my heart to do,” he says. “It doesn’t matter if it makes money—it wins hearts. When people see that you’ve taken the time to try to communicate with them at their level, they are willing and ready to receive whatever you have to give.”

Ron says one of the things he’s enjoying the most about this phase of his career is the opportunity to mentor others. He does that on his new CD and graciously shares the spotlight with a group of young people he’s working with called High Praise.

“I’m singing a majority of the songs, but I have great participation with the group,” he says.

Those who have most visibly reaped the benefits of Ron’s mentorship have been his three sons. In addition to Bingo, who is a performer, and Sam, who handles personnel management for his dad and runs the label, Ron’s third son, Tony, does computer graphics and Web design. The family uses Tony’s services, which, Ron says, “makes our projects very, very cost-effective.”

He appreciates his years with Integrity Music, but is enjoying this phase. “Through Integrity, God has blessed me with a high visibility and profile throughout the world. I really appreciate Integrity for that,” he says. “But it’s better for me, as this stage of my life, to be a big fish in a little pond as opposed to a little fish in a big pond.”

He’s proud of the contributions his sons are making to the family ministry and relates with fatherly pride how Sam negotiates overseas distribution agreements and how Bingo is blossoming as an artist.

“He has an individual story that he wants to tell, and he has a testimony that needs to be shared,” Ron says of Bingo.

---

RON KENOLY says of his record label, “We just kind of quietly do what God has given us to do.”
Toby Keith is fond of using the expressions "big dog" and "double dog" in his speech and his songwriting. In the end, however, he chose Show Dog Records as the name of his new label.

It's a fitting moniker for a business run by one of the top acts in country music. As first reported exclusively in Billboard last issue, Keith and veteran label executive Scott Borchetta have partnered to launch a new venture that will see them each running a label, but sharing staff, resources and office space. Borchetta's label is named Big Machine Records. Universal Music & Video Distribution will distribute both labels.

While Keith and Borchetta departed Universal Music Group Nashville under less than amicable conditions this year, Borchetta notes that both have nothing but respect for the company's distribution arm.

"Neither one of us has a rocky relationship with Universal Distribution," he says. "They have sold millions and millions of Toby Keith records." Until March, Borchetta was senior VP of promotion and artist development at UMGN, overseeing those departments for MCA Nashville, Mercury and DreamWorks. Immediately following his unexpected split from that company, he began talking about plans to launch his own label.

Keith has also been speaking publicly about starting a label since March, when he announced at the Country Radio Seminar that his days at his then label, DreamWorks, were likely numbered.

In the wake of Keith's departure, the DreamWorks imprint has been shuttered (see story, page 6).

Keith says he and Borchetta started talking about joining forces and "found out we had a lot more in common than we had differences."

For Borchetta, who was instrumental in taking Keith from star to superstar at DreamWorks, the new venture is a bit like getting the band back together. Much of the former DreamWorks team, including VP of sales Johnny Rose, West Coast regional promoter Lisa Owen and Northeast regional promoter Suzanne Durham, have joined Show Dog/Big Machine in similar capacities.

At DreamWorks, Borchetta says, "We helped change the game. This new venture will be an extension of a lot of the ideas we had there."

One new addition to the staff is Show Dog GM George Nunes, formerly of Sovereign Artists. Keith says he knew Nunes only by reputation, but hired him "on the spot" the first time they met.

Show Dog will serve as the umbrella company. Re-leases from Keith's label will bear only that imprint. Borchetta's releases will be labeled Big Machine/Show Dog. Borchetta calls the setup "one staff with two A&R sources."

Borchetta says he and Keith are "on the same page as far as what we want to do musically, and the buck stops with Toby and myself."

He predicts that the combined roster for the two labels will eventually top out at seven to 10 acts, including Keith.

Earlier this year Keith announced plans to start a publishing company and sign 10-15 writers. He says those plans, while still in the works, have been scaled back so he can focus on the label.

In addition to Owen, Durham, and previously reported VP of promotion Denise Roberts, the promotion and marketing team will comprise John Zarling (national promotion and new media), Tony Morreale (Southeast), Greg Sax (Southwest) and Darcy Miller Lashinsky (promotion coordinator). All are experienced Nashville promotion execs.

"Our promotion department is lethal," Borchetta boasts. "We’ve got veterans in every corner."

Borchetta’s wife, Sandi Spika-Borchetta, will handle creative services for Big Machine. Office manager Andrew Kautz joins from Emerald Studios.

Former Sony Music Nashville president/CEO Allen Butler, who was rumored to be involved in the new label, will not play a role.

With the staff he and Keith have assembled, Borchetta predicts the label will "have monster game from day one."
New York—Irving Fields turned 90 a couple of weeks ago. For the past 18 months or so, six nights per week, the native New Yorker has been sitting behind an upright piano at Nino’s Tuscany restaurant in midtown Manhattan, treating diners to an international mix of standards.

Fields revels in the blurring of musical borders. Long before today’s mash-up phenomenon, in the 1940s and 1950s, he pioneered the Jewish-Latin craze with recordings like the long-out-of-print 1959 album “Bagels and Bongos.” The Decca disc, which married classic Jewish songs to Latin rhythms, was credited to the Irving Fields Trio.

Now, with the help of a handful of like-minded folks—ranging from university professors to label executives—Fields and other forgotten artists are poised for a return to the limelight. On Aug. 23, nonprofit independent label Reboot Stereophonic (distributed by Bayside) debuted with a remastered reissue of “Bagels and Bongos.” It will be followed, in November, by “Ol’l’ Moog: The Electronic Prayers of Gershon Kingsley,” an enhanced double-disc featuring material the tech-savvy Kingsley recorded between 1968 and 1972, some of it being released for the first time. Joe Quijano’s “Fiddler on the Roof Goes Latin,” originally released in 1965, will arrive next year.

Reboot Stereophonic’s mission is to shed contemporary light on long-misplaced musical stories from the Jewish past. While this is not necessarily an obvious musical direction for a new label, Reboot Stereophonic was never meant to be a traditional outlet.

Big sales are not the motive here: Only 4,000 copies of Field’s album were initially pressed. “We see it more as a vehicle to spread ideas and to educate,” says Josh Kun, a University of California-Riverside English professor. Kun co-founded Reboot Stereophonic with Roger Bennett and Jules Shell.

Two other label partners are Birdman Recording Group president David Katznelson and Interscope Griffen A&M head of new media and strategic marketing Courtney Holt. They are all members of Reboot, a 3-year-old national Jewish network of people from film, music, TV, technology, publishing and politics.

Like the organization for which it is named, Reboot Stereophonic strives to bring people together to discuss and examine generational changes in community and identity. Ideally, Bennett says, these recordings will enhance these discussions.

And while albums like “Bagels and Bongos” and “Fiddler on the Roof Goes Latin” may inspire communication, they are primed to be embraced solely on the basis of their kitch factor—much like today’s appreciation of the reissues of Juan Garcia Esquivel.

JOSH Schwartz, managing editor of music at barnesandnoble.com, says this is part of their charm. In the Jewish community, “things can be reverent and kitch at the same time. Young people, especially, like that ironic edge.” In other words, Schwartz adds, if the right people discover Reboot Stereophonic, “these releases could be very popular.”

According to Schwartz, for those interested in Jewish music and history, there is a need for a label like Reboot Stereophonic. “Such recordings let us reclaim a community that our parents and grandparents had.”

In addition to targeting the Jewish community, Reboot Stereophonic will promote to the Latin market using the Internet, consumer press and college and specialty radio.

The dance/electronic world is also part of the label’s potential audience, particularly with Kingsley’s groundbreak-
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EXECUTIVE KEYNOTE

VAN TOFFLER
President, MTV Networks

PANEL TOPICS INCLUDE:
- Music: ringtones, ringback tones, full song downloads, mobile gaming, mobile gambling, mobile publishing strategies, demographic research & feedback, device capabilities.
- Mobile messaging and marketing, multimedia technologies, distribution strategies, off-portal vs. on-portal distribution, rights management issues, negotiating with carriers, revenues and transactions, subscription vs. download models.

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S
dania Twain heads an
all-female line-up
joining the women of Wisteria Lane. Her new song, 
"Shoes," is the debut sin-
gle from a Sept. 20 Hollywood
Records soundtrack featuring music inspired by the hit ABC ser-
ies "Desperate Housewives." 
"It's upbeat, playful and from
a female point of view," compi-
lator supervisor Mitchell
Leib says.

Produced by Twain's hus-
bond, Robert John "Mutt" 
 Lange, "Shoes" goes to country
radio Sept. 6. A forthcoming
pop remix will target AC and
modern AC stations.

Also recorded for the proj-
eat are several covers, includ-
ing the '70s bands "Girls" take on
"Mrs. Robinson." Joss Stone
done "Treat Me Right" and
Anna Nalick on "Band of Gold.

Plus, the compilation contains
the opening theme by Danny
Elman. There are no plans for
any of the songs to be featured
in the series.

"Housewives" starts its sec-
ond season Sept. 25. Discus-
sions are ongoing for ABC and
CMT to debut the video for
"Shoes" the same day.

"MARS' MUSIC: Unlike "Dis-
perate Housewives," Nett-
werk's "Veronica Mars" sound-
track will draw upon music that
has been or will be featured in
the UPN series. Among the
acts appearing on the Sept. 27
release are Spoon, Tegan &
Sara. Stereophonics, the Per-
ishers and Mike Doughty. The
show's theme by the Dandy
Warhols, "We Used to Be
Friends," is also included.

Supervised by Tamar Cham-
mou, the entire album will be
serviced to radio, with the U.K.
all-girl pop/punk act the
Faders' "No Sleep Tonight" as
the focus track.

"We had so much great
music to choose from—young,
iconiclastic, perfect for the
show," says Maria Alonso
McCoy, senior VP of film/TV
music for Nettwerk. "But these
rocker girls could easily be
Veronica's sidekicks."

The show's second season
starts Sept. 28.

SHANIA TWAIN is among
the women who will con-
tribute songs to an album
inspired by the ABC TV hit
"Desperate Housewives."
The Aug. 30 release of Akwid’s album “Los Aguacates de Jiquilpan” (Univision Records) was accompanied by a unique retail strategy.

Although “Los Aguacates” is available everywhere, four retailers are each offering a different digital exclusive.

The strategy underscores the Latin music industry’s interest in expanding its base by experimenting in the digital realms.

This isn’t the first time Univision has offered an exclusive download with the purchase of an album, but it is certainly the first time it has offered four of them. (Additionally, “Los Aguacates” is available as a CD or a CD/DVD combo.)

“This time, we spread the love,” Univision Music Group national accounts manager Rita Silva says. “Everybody gets something different from anybody else.”

Those who buy the Akwid set at Wal-Mart, for example, get a code that allows them to download an exclusive track. Circuit City customers receive a code to download a song ringer from iTunes. Target buyers can download a ring tone where Akwid can be heard in the background. And Kmart customers will be able to download the video of Akwid’s new single from Univision.com.

The notion behind the online promotions, Silva says, is not to take away from the stores’ sales, but to provide added value via the Internet.

“Akwid has the right profile as far as downloading goes,” Silva says. “The people that buy Akwid really visit Web sites.”

While Univision’s plan involves the most extensive use of digital exclusives, other labels have had success with them, and they are increasingly common.

Last month, for example, Universal Music Latino offered an exclusive bonus track on Luis Fonsi’s album “Paso a Paso” to Target’s brick-and-mortar customers and provided a different exclusive track to those who bought the album from iTunes.

Both offers did “extremely well,” Universal Music Latino senior director of sales Eddie Laca says. “Target had never done that kind of business with Luis Fonsi before.”

Universal plans to continue to expand its exclusive offerings for different genres. On Sept. 20, tierra caliente group Trini y la Leyenda will release a new album and offer an exclusive bonus track through walmart.com.

However, such promotions are still the exception.

“If we feel there’s an opportunity and it makes sense, it’s something we’ll pursue,” Sony BMG Norte VP of sales Reuben Leyva says. “We’re certainly not looking to [do it with] every release.”

As it turns out, Sony BMG has been particularly active in this arena. Last year, the label offered an exclusive through walmart.com for Ricardo Arjona’s album “Solo.” This year, it offered an exclusive Shakira download through Wal-Mart to coincide with the release of “Fijación Oral.” Most recently, Wal-Mart customers were able to download an exclusive track by rock group Jaguares at the retailer’s Web site. And Natalia y La Forquetina’s Aug. 30 release, “Casa,” includes a code that allows buyers to download exclusive tracks at iTunes.

For Jaguares, who are not a big commercial group, such exposure is a key component of their campaign.

For a top-selling act like Akwid, on the other hand, exclusives are part of an ongoing effort to entice the buyer.

“We have to be careful not to repeat ourselves,” Silva says. “The consumer wants something else, and that’s what we’re doing.”
BRENDAN LITTLE

After running away from home in his early teens, Brendan Little began performing in Boston's Newbury Street shopping district to earn money for food and cigarettes. Now 19, he has accrued more than some grime and grime, having opened for such acts as Betty Serveet, Ben Lee and Buffalo Tom. Little—who cites Bob Dylan, Radiohead and U2 as influences—is in the studio recording his first album with producers Jon Carin (Pete Townshend) and Perry Geyer (Joey McIntyre). The upcoming set has already drawn the attention of MTV, which is filming the singer/songwriter for a You Hear It First segment slated to air this fall. By then, Little expects to be selling his album. "I've been working on the record on and off for two years, so we're just taking our time," he says, "but hopefully I'll find the record label." Contact: Perry Geyer, 617-424-1062

—Katy Kroll

RICARDO MORENO

Singer/guitarist Ricardo Moreno is an unlikely artist in an unlikely place. Born in Cuba, he traveled to Germany 18 years ago to take vocational courses—and stayed. Today, Moreno uses music to get close to the country he left behind. For the past five years, Moreno and his T-piece band Latin Explosion have played gigs in and around Berlin. A mix of boleros, son and pop, Moreno's music is evocative and well-crafted. But making it big in Germany with Latin music—sung in Spanish, no less—is tough, he admits. His first major break was meeting Dieter Brussat, who has helped Moreno find a local audience via his own label, the small JonPaul Productions. With an 11-track album complete, Brussat is seeking partners to deliver Moreno's music outside of Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Contact: Dieter Brussat, db@jonpaul.de

Edited by Todd Martens

tmartens@billboard.com

JIM JONES

Jim Jones celebrates summer in the city on his latest solo album, "Harlem: Diary of a Summer," which dropped Aug. 23 on Diplomats/Koch.

The Diplomats Records CEO and Dipset member has been creating a buzz with lead single "Summer Wit'/Miami," featuring Trey Songz. The song debuts at No. 78 on the Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop Singles chart this week.

After charting last week because of street-date violations, "Harlem" moves to No. 1 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart this issue. It debuts at No. 5 on The Billboard 200. Jones says this project differs from his 2004 Koch solo album, "On My Way to Church," in several ways. "The last album was incredible for me, but this time the energy is real different. It's not so much of the soulful samples that people are used to hearing Dipset use," Jones says he tried to keep the album simple this time around, opting for fewer guest appearances. But plenty of folks did show up, including Diddy, Paul Wall and Jones' fellow Dipset members Cam'ron, Juelz Santana and Jhuda.

Though Jones is focusing on his rap career, he hasn't lost his business sense. In January, he added the title of director of A&R for Warner Music Group to his résumé. He also recently inked a label deal through WMC's Asylum Records. The first artist on the B.G./Asylum imprint will be Max D. A release date has not been set.

The hustling mentality of Harlem (N.Y.) was instilled in me at a young age," Jones says, "so for me to have on the CEO hat and the artist hat is just something I've done since I was younger.

UBIQUITOUS: California-based Ubiquity Records releases its latest gem Sept. 13 when Omegha Watts' "The Find" hits shelves. Ready to taste success on the home front, Watts has already wooed fans overseas with his old-school hip-hop sound.

For his first album with the indie label, Watts handled not only production, but the cover design as well. He has also lent his artistic skills to Adidas and Ubiquity's clothing line. Album standouts include "Saturday Night Live," featuring Seral and Sharlo Poem, "Floor Rock," and "Your Love," featuring Tiffany Simpson.

PIONEERING SOUNDS: To further satisfy fans' thirst for hip-hop's early days, a handful of releases are due from some of the genre's pioneers.

Run-D.M.C.'s legacy will be revisited when expanded versions of the trio's first four albums are released Sept. 6 on Profile/Arista/Legacy. "Run-D.M.C." (1984), "King of Rock" (1985), "Raising Hell" (1986) and " Tougher Than Leather" (1988) have all been remastered and spruced up with bonus tracks, including previously unreleased demos, live recordings, B-sides and remixes.

Priority Records/Capitol pays tribute to the late Easy-E with its revamped "Eternal E: The Best Of," due Sept. 6. The release of the "Gangsta Memorial Edition" CD/DVD marks what would have been the rapper's 41st birthday on Sept. 7 and the 10th anniversary of his death March 26, 1995, from AIDS-related causes.

The CD features such classics as "Straight Outta Compton" and "100 Miles and Runnin'," while the DVD includes seven of his videos. The package also contains a previously unreleased track that features Easy-E's 21-year-old son Lil' E, and three HIV/AIDS public service announcements.

QUESTIONs with GAVIN ROSSDALE

With such modern rock hits as "Glycerine" and "The Chemicals Between Us," Gavin Rossdale rode a wave of success in the mid-1990s as the lead singer of Bush. Although the band never officially broke up, its members have not performed together since 2002. Since that time, though, Rossdale has remained in the spotlight—as Gwen Stefani's husband, collaborator with Blue Man Group and contributor to the "XXX" soundtrack. This time, Rossdale returns with his new band, Institute. Produced by Helmet's Rage Hamilton, the album "Distort Yourself" comes out Sept. 13 on Interscope.

Q: Institute's music is heavier than Bush's. Are you concerned about how Bush fans will react to I?
A: I was lucky enough with Bush to sell enough records that if I tried to satisfy everyone that bought a Bush record, I would drive myself nuts. We just did what we thought was best at the time—try to make the best music, the best songs and sing the best we could. You just have to try to be good and keep the quality up, and hopefully everything else will follow.

Q: Institute also includes Helmet guitarist Chris Traynor. Is the band a collaborative effort or is your vision?
A: Mostly I wrote the songs. I'm pretty forceful in the music I make—I can write songs and I can sing a bit, so that inevitably brings a direction with it. So I bring in a lot, but it was an open forum and we used everyone's experience [to do] what was natural and what was best for each song.

Q: Will Institute perform any Bush songs while on tour this fall?
A: Yeah, we have to put a few Bush songs in there. I don't like it when [artists] are wilfully obscure in their set lists. I always judge [it by] what I would like to see when I go to watch a band. If they don't play some of the stuff I know, I'm just like, "Oh, my god, you guys suck.”

Q: First single "Bullet-Proof Skin" climbing the Billboard Mainstream Rock chart. Do you still care about having a hit?
A: Obviously I would like it to be, but it's dangerous to expect too much. It's just better to keep pushing the confines of what you can do and what you can do, and the rest hopefully takes care of itself. Or not. There's not much you can do about it. On the excitement level and the quality level, I think we have a good shot.

Q: How much pressure do you feel to have a successful album?
A: There's much more pressure to make sure that when I perform, I perform well, and when I have the chance to be in the studio, I record well, I mean, as simple as it sounds, the pressure should be about what you can control. Feeling immense pressure about things that are out of your hands can drive you to a lunatic asylum.

Q: So as long as you enjoy yourself and release a good album, that is all that matters?
A: It's mostly what matters. [laughs] I hope it appeals to everyone, but I mean, obviously it won't, and I've got to live with that.
superlative.

Streisand’s impassioned "Stranger through its long history and stature..." with her "vocal powers". The album expands the band’s concert repertoire by a song or two, while delivering middling quality that neither diminishes nor expands their iconic legacy. "A Bigger Bang" stays that course, offering 16 songs of stilted lyrics that almost compensate for generally embarrassing lyrics. The standout time is "Streets of Love," whose delicate melody and minimally swelling chorus hint at a greater depth than the song’s own words. For every vintage-sounding track—and there are some beau- ty in the honky-tonk crunch of opener "Rough Justice," the boozy-woozy slide guitar of "Back of My Hand"—the set delivers just as many unconvincing couplets.

(Worst case in point? "Sweet Beelo Con," which lambast our president as a fraud. But with writing as bad as this, W looks like a genius in comparison. It’s hard to imagine a bigger bang than that. —BW

YOLANDA ADAMS Day by Day Producer: various Elektra/Atlantic Release Date: Aug. 30

Yolanda Adams continues to defy stereotypes as she addles the fence between urban music and gospel on her first Atlantic album. Her four-year recording hiatus turns out to have been a plus, result- ing in a wholly satisfying package that triumphantly showcases her arresting vocals. Opening with the rousing "Victory," Adams further ministers through such AC-leaning songs as the title track and "Better Than Gold," the latter pointedly illustrating the blurred line between talking about a boyfriend/husband when actually talking about God. But Adams doesn’t ignore her roots on the glorious anthem "Lift Him Up," lead single "Be Blessed" and the soaring ballad "This Too Shall Pass." Teaming up with Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, Kirk Franklin and other contemporary producers, Adams proves you can draw inspiration from R&B, hip-hop and jazz without compromising gospel’s tenets. —GM

TRAPT Someone in Control Producers: Don Gilmore, Trapt Warner Bros. Release Date: Sept. 13

Trapt’s "Someone in Control" has already hit chart gold with lead single "Back Up." This song’s raw guitars and power chorus signal the grizzler feel this effort possesses in comparison with the band’s debut. It also shows the progress Trapt has made in putting together more cohesive arrangements. "Someone" has plenty of radio rock to keep the band on the airwaves for months. "Disconnected" and "Influence" are in the same vein as "Stand Up," while "My Own Design" is a powerful declaration of independence with a U2-style intro. "Waiting" and "Lost Realist" are strong pop tracks. On the latter, Trapt dives down into the guitars, enhancing the majestic song with strings and lyrics that detail the conflict between emotional distance and allowing one’s self to be vulnerable in love. —CLT

JAMES B silent You’re Beautiful (3:33)

Producer: Tom Rothrock 
Writer: Blunt, Skarbek, Ghost 
Publishers: EMI/Bucks Music

Atlantic (CD promo)

It’s not often that a new U.K. artist is ushered to the United States while his first hit is still on fire overseas. But Atlantic is understandingly keyed up over the undeniable universal appeal of James Blunt’s wondrous, aching ballad, "You’re Beautiful," which spent five weeks at No. 1 in the United Kingdom. There are no production gadgets at work here, just timeless songwriting, a vulnerable, searching vocal; and an Everly Brothers lyric proclaiming, "You’re beautiful/I saw your face in a crowded place/And I don’t know what to do/’Cause I’ll never be with you.”

The old-fashioned eloquence and honesty in this song make it one of the supreme efforts of the year. Pure musical caviar. —CT

BARBRA STREISAND Stranger in a Strange Land (4:05) Producers: Barry Gibb, John Merchant Writers: B. Gibb, A. Gibb, S. Gibb Published: Northern Lights

Columbia (CD promo)

For all of Barbra Streisand’s eccentricities and polarizing political views, her reunion with Barry Gibb—who masterminded 1980’s stellar "Guilty"—pairs her with some of the best arrangements she has ever sung throughout the full-length "Guilty Pleasures," due Sept. 20.

First single "Stranger in a Strange Land" is a positive yet poignant and timely expression honoring soldiers who have perished "fighting someone else’s war.” The video is streaming at amazon.com. The melody, Gibb’s background contributions and Streisand’s impassioned performance are superlative. "Stranger" is written and produced by a pop king and sung by his parallel queen. Priceless. —CT

JAMES BLUNT You’re Beautiful (3:33)

Producer: Tom Rothrock 
Writer: Blunt, Skarbek, Ghost 
Publishers: EMI/Bucks Music

Atlantic (CD promo)

It’s not often that a new U.K. artist is ushered to the United States while his first hit is still on fire overseas. But Atlantic is understandingly keyed up over the undeniable universal appeal of James Blunt’s wondrous, aching ballad, "You’re Beautiful," which spent five weeks at No. 1 in the United Kingdom. There are no production gadgets at work here, just timeless songwriting, a vulnerable, searching vocal; and an Everly Brothers lyric proclaiming, "You’re beautiful/I saw your face in a crowded place/And I don’t know what to do/’Cause I’ll never be with you.”

The old-fashioned eloquence and honesty in this song make it one of the supreme efforts of the year. Pure musical caviar. —CT

familiar and the nostalgic into something wholly unexpected. —TM

AMY RIGBY Little Fugitive Producer: Jon Graboff, Amy Rigby Signature Sounds Release Date: Sept. 6

On the first track of singer/songwriter Amy Rigby’s fifth album, the one-time "mod housewife" willingly compares herself to Lazarus—Russia’s most infamous and rakish character. Odd entrance? Seemingly so, but the sly humor and infectious melody of "Like Raspoutine" demands repeat spins. The rest of the 12-song package is equally rewarding, suggesting Rigby is questioning why her new husband’s ex-wife has become a friend ("The Trouble With Jeanie"), dreaming of punk dancing with Joey Ramone or brilliantly tapping into the psychedelic vocalics of "Revolver-era Beatles ("So You Know Now."). Rigby’s raw-rockin’ delivery and fed-up-with-cheap-crap themes are most prominent, yet she also plays it jauntily on "Needy Men," Roche-like folk style with the harmony-rich "Girls Got It Bad" and nostalgic on "Always With Me." Recorded in two days in New York with guitarist Jon Graboff as co-producer, "Little Fugitive" is one of the best pop/rock albums of the year. —DO

MARTY STUART & HIS FABULOUS SUPERLATIVES Soul’s Chapel Producer: Marty Stuart Superlatone Records/Universal South Release Date: Aug. 30

In the first of a trilogy of themed records that launch Marty Stuart’s Superlatone imprint, the artist really nails it, offering an eclectic collection with a deeply Southern flair and more soul than a revival meeting. From the country music opener "Somebody Saved Me” to the inspired instrumental title cut that closes, "Soul’s Chapel" is a treasure trove of gospel jewels that dwell on trials in this world and rewards in the next. Heavy on fine fretwork and goosebump-giving vocals (arguably the best singing Stuart has ever done), chestnut resurrects are performed ("Lord Give Me Just a Little More Time") and new songs are born. Other highlights: "The Gospel Story of Noah’s Ark," which owns jaw-dropping guitar and authority to burn, and "Move Along Train" with Mavis Staples, an instant classic.

Can I get an amen? —RW

WORLD

SEU JORGE Cru Producer: Gringo do Parada Wrasse Release Date: Sept. 6

Moviestars already know the melancholy yet sweet voice of Brazilian singer/guitarist Seu Jorge. A former street kid from Rio de Janeiro slum, he played Knockout Ned in "City of God" and wistfully sang David Bowie songs in Portuguese in "The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou." Jorge is not one for vocal perfection, as his raw tone occasionally meanders off pitch. However, the charismatic force he brings to these songs is undeniable, whether he’s rapsinging through Serge Gainsbourg’s "Chatterton,” tenderly caressing the samba-tinged ballad "Luna Mujer,” declaring "Eu Sou Favela (I Am Favela)” or furiously ranting about the proliferation of breast implants in "Mania de Peito." (Since Wrasse went to the trouble of printing the mostly Portuguese lyrics, it’s too bad they didn’t add English translations.) Jorge is already the epitome of hip; on "Cru," he proves that he’s also a deeply compelling artist. —AT

BLUES

NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS Electric Blue Watamelon Producer: Jim Dickinson ATO Release Date: Sept. 6

The North Mississippi Allstars rejuvenate their world boogie on their most persuasive studio outing since their debut disc...
“Shake Hands With Shorty.” “Electric Blue Watermelon” consistently demonstrates that they have arrived at a place where their special feel for hill country blues and their Southern rock sensibilities are in sync. The album opens with “Mississippi Boilweevil,” a growing blues number animated by Luther Dickinson’s superbly dirty guitar. The other 10 tunes are all over the map, from a life-and-drum track with V. A. Turner (“Bounce Ball”) to the no-apologies lyricism of “Mean Old Wind Died Down” to the bruising funk of “Stompin’ My Foot.” A major winner.—PVV

**DANCE**

**ARMAND VAN HELDEN**

**Nympho**
Producer: Armund Van Helden
Ultra
Release Date: Sept. 6
Sure, Armund Van Helden has taken five years to deliver a follow-up to his last proper studio album (“Killing Puritans”)—four years if you count the alt hit “missing” that was “Gandhi Khan.” But the time “off” has served him well. The cut-and-paste sensibilities (the iPod shuffle, if you will—that permeated Van Helden’s 2004 DJ mix, the “90s-sounding New York: A Mix Odyssey,” is hard at work on the wickedly feisty and sexy “Nympho.” Proven dancefloor hits (“Hear My Name” featuring Spalding Rockwell and “My My My”) are included, but consider them a tease for what follows. “Into Your Eyes” is a disco whip lash à la Eric Prydz’s “Call on Me,” and will have “Sugar” and “Brainwashing,” Van Helden channels Divine-era Bobby “O” Orlando. When the Lights Go Down,” meanwhile, sounds like an outtake from some lost Romantics recording.—MP

**POP**

**JAN BAEZ**

Bowery Songs
Producer: Mark Spector Koch
Release Date: Sept. 6

Decades pass, and Joan Baez’s voice never gets old. Neither, sadly, does her message. Indeed, “Bowery Songs,” named for New York’s Bowery Ballroom, where it was recorded last November, begins with an a cappella rendition of “Finlandia,” one of four songs on the 14-track set Baez hadn’t previously cut. The others are “Curses” by old comrade in arms Bob Dylan, the traditional “Dink’s Song” and Steve Earle’s “Jerusalem,” which ends the beautifully rendered disc on the same pacificist note as its start. Other tracks effectively encapsulate the folk goddess’ career. They include “Silver Dagger,” which opened her 1960 solo album debut, her haunting signature “Joe Hill,” and Natalie Merchant of “Mandolin Woman” and Greg Brown’s “Roscoe’s Daughter,” both from her acclaimed 2003 album of contemporary singer-songwriter fare. “Dark Chords on a Big Guitar”—JB—JU

**GOSPEL**

**THE WILLIAM MURPHY PROJECT**

All Day
Producers: William Murphy, P. Newton, Warryn Campbell
Sony Urban/Epic
Release Date: Aug. 16

Hit songwriter William Murphy is far better known for his writing credits than for being an artist, having penned the smash “Prayin’ to Lay Me Down” for Stevie Wonder. However, there is that is almost extra-terrestrial and a seasoned tunesmith’s flair for catchy hooks and choruses. Murphy’s magic is poised on this debut to establish himself as an artist of major significance. With effortless echoes of gospel, R&B, pop and rock, his appeal is broad. He reinvents “Prayin’ to Lay Me Down” as “I Don’t Wanna Go,” bouncing astonishing improvisations off his sturdy vocal ensemble, while “Let It Rise” is a rousing anthem, as Murphy dazzles with power and finesse. “The William Murphy Project” is the explosive intro- duction of a talent to be reckoned with.—GE

**REVIEWS**

**JON SECADA**

Window to My Heart
(3:45)
Producers: J. Secada, M. Morejon
Publisher: P.I.P. Interna- tional
Big 3 Records (CD promo)

What a week for grown-ups: Barbara Streisand, Simply Red and Jon Secada all make worthy returns this year. Secada put a blowtorch to top 40 radio in the early ‘90s with such indelible hits as “Just Another Day,” “Angel” and “If You Go.” He then went back to his Latin roots, continually wowing Spanish-language fans and the Grammy Awards. Now signed to indie Big 3, Secada issues a bull’s-eye reminder of why he was such a force a decade ago. “Window to My Heart” is in the shadow of those former triumphs, showcasing Spanish guitar, an uptempo pop sound and that spectacular vocal imprint, which, arguably, no one has surpassed since. Truly one of the great returns of the year, this is timeless pop music, and it provides a vote of confidence for any Latin artist with a great voice.—CT

**COUNTRY**

**PATTY LOVELESS**

Keep Your Eyes on Me
(3:21)
Producers: Emory Gordy Jr., Justin Niebanck
Writer: R. Thompson
Publisher: Interscope (BMG) Epic (CD promo)

This first single from Patty Loveless’ Sept. 15 release, “Dreaming My Dreams,” is a sweet slice of traditional country music heaven. Producers Emory Gordy Jr. and Justin Niebanck create a vibrant musical arrangement for Loveless’ stellar vocal performance. Her gorgeous mountain voice is showcased to reveal a steady resilience and ach-ing heartbreak in equal measure. Richard Thompson’s well-crafted lyric about a soured relationship gives Loveless a creative palette with which to work her heart. Her voice is as perfect as it was on the one of those singles deemed “too country” by some programmers, but if any artist can make a beautiful traditional tune palatable to a widespread audience, Loveless is the one to do it.—DEP

**LEGENDS & CREDITS**

EDITED BY JONATHAN COHEN (ALBUMS)
AND CHUCK TAYLOR (SINGLES)

CONTRIBUTORS:

* Pick: A new release predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the corresponding format.

**CRITICS’ CHOICE:** A new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

All albums commercially available in the United States are eligible. Send album review copies to Jonathan Cohen and singles review copies to Chuck Taylor (both at Billboard, 770 Broadway, 8th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003) or to the writers in the appropriate bureaus.

**REVIEWS**

** simpRed**

**RED ROOM**

**PERFECT Love**
(3:14)
Producers: Andy Wright, Mark Jacobson, Danny Saxton
Writer: M. Hucknall
Publisher: New York’s “Salsa Gitana,” which gives the track a sexy, hip-swinging sensibility. The bilingual song is off to a solid start at radio and is likely to chart for AC and adult top 40 stations. Simply Red’s new album, “Simplified,” is out Oct. 18.—K.C.

**rock**

**augustana**

Stars and Boulevards
(4:21)
Producer: Brendan O’Brien
Writer: Augustana
Publishers: EMI/Augustana Music
Epic (CD promo)

“I sang my life away,” Dan Layus sings—and he’s not lying. The moody voice of Augustana’s 20-year-old vocalist soars like a kite cut loose on an empty beach. Adopted by premier rock producer Brendan O’Brien (Bruce Springsteen, Pearl Jam), the foursome stewards with a grace and skill, poetic and polished, less-is-more songwriting. Clearly, these young musicians from California (by way of Illinois) are comfortable in their own skin. “Stars and Boulevards”—the quasi title track from Augustana’s debut album, “All Stars and Boulevards,” out Sept. 6—is an organic slice of alt-country rock with a thick crust of slow-rolling guitars and lush piano. Midtempo, and almost anemic, “Stars” never really climaxes. That’s the beauty. Here, it is the simplicity that is spectacular.—SP

www.americanradiohistory.com
Digital Digs Deeper Sales For ‘Six Feet’ Set

A banner chart-week by soundtrack “Six Feet Under, Volume Two: Everything Ends” touches new and old lessons.

One of the first benefits that the Billboard charts department noticed in 1991 when we flipped two of our lists from ranked sales to point-of-sale data provided by Nielsen SoundScan was that POS-driven charts could more quickly

and accurately track the impact—or lack thereof—of TV exposure.

Sales activity in the wake of the final episode of HBO’s “Six Feet Under” series reminds us of that, but also illustrates what a meaningful pipeline digital sales can represent for certain kinds of music.

With sales increasing almost tenfold (moving 14,000 copies) from the prior week, “Volume Two” bows at No. 74 on the Billboard 200 while re-entering Top Soundtracks at No. 3. More than half of those sales (54%) came via digital downloads, which makes the soundtrack an easy No. 1 on SoundScan’s Digital Albums chart, a list that will soon appear in Billboard.

The album sold more than 7,500 downloads during the tracking week, more than twice those of “Black Eyed Pear” “Monkey Business,” at No. 2 on the Digital Albums chart.

That large chunk of digital sales is impressive when you consider that the format accounted for less than 1% of all album sales in 2004 and 2.4% so far in 2005.

The first “Six Feet Under” soundtrack, which was on Universal spent one lone week on Top Soundtracks. The new one, from Astralwerks, had one prior week on that list in the July 16 issue, several weeks after “Six Feet Under” began its final season.

As Inside Track reported last week, the dramatic concluding minutes of the show’s finale were accompanied by “Breathe Me,” a song from U.K. electronic artist Sia, who looks almost like she could be the sister of Brenda Chernowith, the character played by Rachel Griffiths.

While most albums’ iTunes and other download services offer allow consumers to buy any song a la carte, some of the tracks on “Volume Two,” including Sia’s, could only be accessed by purchasing the whole soundtrack bundle.

KEEPING UP: While we wait for Kanye West to dominate next issue’s charts with an opening week that could reach the neighborhood of 800,000-850,000, an artist with a similar resume—albeit less visibility—owns the Hot Shot Debut on The Billboard 200.

Meet Jim Jones, who, like West, wears the hat of rapper, producer and label executive. Jones, a member of the hip-hop collectives known as the Diplomats and Dipset, has also directed music videos. He rallies to a No. 4 start on the big chart (74,500 copies).

Jones also graces the highest rung on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums after street-date violations caused an early start at No. 66.

Talk about keeping up with the Joneses—this is the second time in five months that a rapper named Jones (or related) has topped the R&B/hip-hop list. Mike Jones (no relation) did so in the May 7 issue, when he entered The Billboard 200 at No. 3.

Next week’s big chart will be busier. Aside from West’s fast start, first-day sales cited by retailers project debuts of 230,000-240,000 for Tony Yayo, 105,000-115,000 for Brooks & Dunn, 60,000 or more for Rhiana and 40,000-plus each for Eric Clapton and Cold.

KEEPING SCORE: Billboard 200 champ Hilary Duff seems a typical second-week slide of 51%. In this soft frame, that’s enough to hold the top spot (101,000 copies). It’s the first time she has led the big chart for more than a week.

In a bewildering chart that appears in this issue, Delbert McClinton bows at No. 1 on Top Blues Albums. It’s his third chart-topper on that list.

On a rotating album chart that would not normally appear this issue, saxophonist/flutist Najee replaces Brian Culbertson on Top Contemporary Jazz. This is Najee’s third No. 1 on that chart, his first dating back to 1987. Culbertson’s latest headed the list for four weeks.

In recognition of this changing of the guard, the top 15 positions of the Contemporary Jazz chart occupy this issue’s “From billboard.biz” spotlight on page 90.

Market Watch

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKLY UNIT SALES</th>
<th>OVERALL UNIT SALES</th>
<th>YEAR-TO-DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALBUMS</strong></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Week</td>
<td>9,658,000</td>
<td>9,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Week</td>
<td>10,276,000</td>
<td>10,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>-6.0%</td>
<td>-14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Week Last Year</td>
<td>10,886,000</td>
<td>113,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>-11.3%</td>
<td>-20.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT**

- **00**
  - Album Sales
  - 397,700,000
  - 364,700,000
  - 23.4%

- **04**
  - Digital Tracks
  - 75,600,000
  - 210,100,000
  - 20.8%

**TOTAL Albums**

- **00**
  - 369,613,000
  - 362,077,000
  - 21.5%

- **04**
  - 6,839,000
  - 1,846,000
  - -7.0%

Other

- 1,109,000
- 759,000
- -31.6%

**DISTRIBUTORS’ MARKET SHARE**: 08/01/05-08/28/05

- UMVD: 16.0%
- Sony BMG: 29.3%
- Indies: 20.6%
- WEA: 23.2%
- EMI: 9.9%

- Current Albums: 15.3%
- Digital: 31.5%
- Digital Tracks: 21.5%
- Compact Discs: 31.6%

For week ending Aug. 26, 2005. Figures are rounded. Complied from a national sample of retail stores and rack sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.

Go to www.billboard.com for complete chart data.
THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Price</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HILARY DUFF</td>
<td>Most Wanted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASON ALDIEAN</td>
<td>Jason Aldean</td>
<td>Mary Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trace adkins</td>
<td>trace adkins</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MARIAH CAREY</td>
<td>Mariah Carey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS</td>
<td>The Black Eyed Peas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIM JONES</td>
<td>Jim Jones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9TH WAVE</td>
<td>9th Wave</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BOBBY VALENTINO | Bobby Valentino |.
| JASON MRAZ | Jason Mraz |
| SHO'NUFF-MUSICLINE/LAFACE | Sho'Nuff-Musicline/Laface |
| GEORGE STRAT | George Strait |
| BRATZ | Bratz |
| OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN | Olivia Newton-John |
| BLACK HEEL | Black Heel |
| MIKE JONES | Mike Jones |
| 3OH-3 | 3oh-3 |
| HALO | Halo |
| JODELLE | Jodelle |
| KELLY CLARKSON | Kelly Clarkson |
| KATY PERRY | Katy Perry |
| MARY MARY | Mary Mary |
| JASON ALDIEAN | Jason Aldean |
| MARY MARY | Mary Mary |
| PAPA ROACH | Papa Roach |
| BOW WOW | Bow Wow |
| THE CROWD | The Crowd |
| MATT BELLAMY | Matt Bellamy |
| JOSH KELLEY | Josh Kelley |
| TORY TOBY | Tory Toby |
| JOSH KELLEY | Josh Kelley |
| R. KELLY | R. Kelly |
| KE$HA | Kesha |
| BRYAN CRANSTON | Bryan Cranston |
| JASON ALDIEAN | Jason Aldean |
| MIKE JONES | Mike Jones |
| 3OH-3 | 3oh-3 |
| JASON ALDIEAN | Jason Aldean |
| MARY MARY | Mary Mary |

Data for week of SEPTEMBER 10, 2005 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 90

www.americanradiohistory.com
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Artist/Label</th>
<th>Week no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Just In Time</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Still</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>What I Call Love</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Don't Let Me Be Lonesome Tonight</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>In The Morning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Like You</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Lose Control</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>PwN the Game</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>Don't Cha</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>Missing You</td>
<td>1</td>
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### ADULT TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
<th>Week no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Play Something Country Blues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>My Way</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Scars</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Don't Think About My Heart</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>Tell Me</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>Mississippin Girl</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>A Real Fine Place To Start</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>One Love</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>Scream &amp; Shout</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ADULT CONTEMPORARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
<th>Week no.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Good Is Good</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>I'll Think Of You</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>If You Ever Need</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Right Here</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>You And Me</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MODERN ROCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
<th>Week no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Let Me Be There</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>I Cant Be Alone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>It Feels So Right</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>I Love You</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>I Wanna Be Your Man</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Week no.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>The Story Of My Life</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>Hold On</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>Don't Lie</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>Help Somebody</td>
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<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>Back In Time</td>
<td>1</td>
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### BILLBOARD HOT 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Label</th>
<th>Week no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1</td>
<td>Just The Girl</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2</td>
<td>In The Morning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>What I Call Love</td>
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### Billboard HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<thead>
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### Billboard MODERN ROCK

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>I Wanna Be Your Man</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>I Love You</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### FULL WEEK 9/10/05

Data for week of September 10, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 79

www.americanradiohistory.com
### POP 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Don't Cha</td>
<td>Ciara</td>
<td>LaFace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don't Speak</td>
<td>OutKast</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Letterman</td>
<td>Bob Dylan</td>
<td>Reprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I'm Not a Chair</td>
<td>Snoop Dogg</td>
<td>Doggystyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The Next Episode</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>Lava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Never Stop</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Wake Me Up</td>
<td>Wyclef Jean</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Back to You</td>
<td>Only Child</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>All the Small Things</td>
<td>The Black Eyed Peas</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Girl I Love</td>
<td>Avril Lavigne</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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</table>

### POP 100 AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>We Belong Together</td>
<td>Matchstick Guitars</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Just the Girl</td>
<td>Matchstick Guitars</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Straight Outta Compton</td>
<td>Straight Outta Compton</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baby Daddy</td>
<td>Nick Carter</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The World's On Fire</td>
<td>Sananda</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
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### NOT SINGLES SALES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't Cha</td>
<td>Ciara</td>
<td>LaFace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll Be Missing You</td>
<td>Barack Obama</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Humps</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Can't Do That</td>
<td>Wyclef Jean</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back to You</td>
<td>Wyclef Jean</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wake Me Up</td>
<td>Wyclef Jean</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm Not a Chair</td>
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<td>Jive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wake Me Up</td>
<td>Wyclef Jean</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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</table>

**Legend for Sites Used to Compile Chart:**
- studio@nmg.com
- Billboard Sales Data Systems.
### TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint 2</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fell/Hustle &amp; Flow</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>FAITH JONES</td>
<td>Bumpin'/Bumpin' The Label</td>
<td>Def Jam/Def Jam South</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BIRDGE</td>
<td>Back To The Future: The Very Best Of Jodeci</td>
<td>Jive/Interscope</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>LL 11</td>
<td>Back In Business</td>
<td>Def Jam/Def Jam South</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>KGAM</td>
<td>Salt Of The Earth</td>
<td>SRC/Volcano</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R. LOY</td>
<td>Get Lifted</td>
<td>SRC/Timberland</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
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### TOP BLUES ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>HANK WOODS</td>
<td>Ain't Misbehavin'</td>
<td>Blue Note</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>BOOGIE WATTS</td>
<td>The Best Of Boogie Watts</td>
<td>Ecko/Boogie Watts</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DANNY PINES</td>
<td>Ain't That Love</td>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ROBERT JOHNSON</td>
<td>The Real Robert Johnson</td>
<td>RCA/Liberty Music</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>JIMMY RIVERS</td>
<td>Ain't Nobody</td>
<td>Black &amp; Blue</td>
<td>$18.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**SPECIAL PRICING HELPS LIFT COLE**

Ian Jones may rein over Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, but Kjetia Cole's "The Way It Is" soars into the top 10 for its best sales period since the set's release (1-4). Cole also vaults 73 on the Billboard 200, posting a 52% gain to earn PaceSetter honors.

Target had her album on sale for $7.98 while Circuit City tagged it at $8.98, fueling its second increase since it bowed at No. 2 on the R&B list.

---

**Between the Bullet**

rumors have surfaced that Cole has been added to a major tour lineup, but she has denied the reports. Cole's manager, however, has confirmed that the singer is in talks with several booking agents about a potential tour.

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**For all the latest Billboard charts, visit [www.billboard.com](http://billboard.com).**

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

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**Data for week of September 10, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://billboard.biz) for complete chart data. | **

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**Between the Bullet**

Ian Jones may reign over Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, but Kjetia Cole's "The Way It Is" soars into the top 10 for its best sales period since the set's release (1-4). Cole also vaults 73 on the Billboard 200, posting a 52% gain to earn PaceSetter honors.

Target had her album on sale for $7.98 while Circuit City tagged it at $8.98, fueling its second increase since it bowed at No. 2 on the R&B list.

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**For all the latest Billboard charts, visit [www.billboard.com](http://billboard.com).**

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**Data for week of September 10, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://billboard.biz) for complete chart data. | **
### HOT R&B/HIP-HOP AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Title</th>
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<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>WE BELONG TOGETHER</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>DON'T CHA</td>
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<td>United Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LIKE YOU</td>
<td>RAY J (REPUBLIC/ATLANTIC)</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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### ADULT R&B

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### HOT R&B/HHOP SINGLES SALES

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### RHYTHMIC AIRPLAY

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LET ME HOLD YOU</td>
<td>FALLOUT (DIE DREAMS/RECORDING LABEL)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>SHAKE IT OFF</td>
<td>NARAY (RHYTHM AND REASON)</td>
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</table>
COUNTRY SONGS: SINGLES SALES

Song Title: "Dream Big"
Artist: Loretta Lynn

American Radio History

COUNTRY SONGS: SINGLES SALES

Song Title: "Inside Your Heaven/Independence Day"
Artist: Blake Shelton, The Bellamy Brothers

Football Kicks Off Big & Rich Single

With $870,000 audience impressions from spins detected at 14 monitored stations, Big & Rich's "Comin' to Your City" makes its first national chart appearance exclusively in Billboard and Billboard Radio Monitor. The song is the lead single and title track from the quirky duo's sophomore album, due Nov. 15. Although Warner Bros. is not soliciting airplay just yet, programmers responded early to a customized version of the song ESPN is using as the theme for the network's "College GameDay" promotion, which launches Sept. 3. The reworked version—which features rapper Cowboy Troy—will not be served to radio, but it will enjoy plenty of exposure as the intro song for the college games all season. The song plays in its entirety and will be interspersed with football highlights that will be updated regularly.

"Comin' to Your City" takes the Hot Shot Debut, but the duo bowed higher once before when "Holy Water" opened at No. 51 last October.
### HOT LATIN SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist(S)</th>
<th>Week(s)</th>
<th>Peak(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Ole y Ole&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Disa Kpa&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Premium&quot;</td>
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### TOP LATIN ALBUMS

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<th>Peak(s)</th>
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<td>&quot;REBEL&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;El Chico&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;En Vivo&quot;</td>
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Data for week of SEPTEMBER 10, 2005 | CHARTS LEGEND On Page 90
### Latin Airplay

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<td>Grupo可分为</td>
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<td>Yamaha</td>
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<td>J Alvarez</td>
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### Latin Albums

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<td>Yamaha</td>
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Data as of September 10, 2005 | For chart requests call 646-654-4633 | www.americanradiohistory.com
### Japan Single Chart - August 30, 2005

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### United Kingdom Single Chart - August 27, 2005

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### Netherlands Single Chart - August 30, 2005

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### Denmark Single Chart - August 30, 2005

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### Brazil Albums - August 29, 2005

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### Ireland Albums - August 29, 2005

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### Poland Albums - August 29, 2005

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**Album Charts**

- **Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan.** Sales data for R&B/Hip-Hop retail charts is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of music stores that specialize in those genres.

- Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.

**PRICING/CONFIGURATION**

CD Cassette prices are suggested list or equivalent prices, which are projected from wholesale prices. After list price indicates album only available. DualDiscs available. If CD/DVD combo available * indicates vinyl LP is available. Pricing and availability are not included on all charts.

**Top World**

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<td>Putumayo</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Vangelis</td>
<td>Midas</td>
<td>Time's Heaven YMI associated 20441</td>
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<td>PUTUMAYO PRESENTS: SONGS FROM THE ATLANTIC PALMS PUTUMAYO 234</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td>Putumayo</td>
<td>PUTUMAYO PRESENTS: REGGAE RISING PUTUMAYO 222</td>
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</table>

**Radio Airplay Singles Charts**

Compiled from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of gross audience impressions, computed by cross-referencing exact times of airplay with Arbitron listener data. The aggregates are the Rhythmic Top 40, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are all based on total audience.

- Songs showing an increasing audience (or detections) over the previous week, regardless of chart movement.

**RECURRENT RULES**

Songs are removed from the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks for more than 20 weeks and rank below 20. Songs are removed from the Hot Country Songs chart if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 15 in total audience or are not gaining enough audience to make the chart. Songs are removed from the Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Adult R&B, and Hot Dance Airplay charts if they have been on the chart for more than 25 weeks and rank below 15 (20 for Modern Rock and Latino).

**Single Sales Charts**

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

**Predictors**

- *Predictor* refers to the HotPredict status in that particular format based on research data provided by Promusiquemedia. Songs are blind tested online by Promusiquemedia using multiple listeners and a nationwide sample of music consumers. Songs are rated on a 1-5 scale; final results are based on weighted positions. Songs with a score of 3 or more (75% or more to count) are judged to have hit potential, although benchmark number can fluctuate per format tuned on the strength of available music. For a complete and updated list of current songs with HotPredict, commentary, polls, and more, please visit HotPredictor.com.

**Dance Club Play**

Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

- Titles with the greatest club play license percentage over the previous week.

**AWARD-WINNERS**

- **Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)** certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold).
- **RIAA certification for net shipment** for 1 million units (Platinum).
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million units** (Diamond).
- **Weighed Platinum or Diamond symbol indicates album’s multi-platform level.** For listed titles, albums with a running time of 100 minutes or more, the RIAA multiplies shipments by the number of discs and/or tapes.
- **Certification for net shipments of 100,000 units (Gold).**
- **RIAA certification of 200,000 units (Platinum).**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 500,000 singles (Gold).**
- **RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million singles (Platinum).**

**Music Video Sales Charts**

- **RIAA gold certification** for net shipment of 25,000 videos for single videos.
- **RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 videos for shortform or longform video.**
- **RIAA platinum certification** for net shipment of 100,000 videos for single videos. **RIAA platinum certification** for sales of 100,000 units for shortform or longform videos.

**Sales/Warehouse Sales/Warehouse Rentals**

- **RIAA gold certification** for net shipment of 50,000 units at $1 million in sales at suggested retail price.
- **RIAA platinum certification** for sales of 100,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price.
- **RIAA platinum certification** for a minimum sale of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of $3 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or of at least 25,000 units at $1 million in suggested retail for non-theatrical titles. **RIAA platinum certification** for a minimum sale of 250,000 units or a dollar volume of $18 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or at least 50,000 units at $2 million suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.

**Top Independent Albums**

Independent Albums are current titles that are sold via independent distribution, including those that are fulfilled via major branch distributors. Where available, links to sales for sales and explanations. FROM BILLBOARD BIZ: A weekly spotlight on one of the charts that are updated weekly on billboard.com, including links that are exclusive to Billboard’s web sites. © 2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Principal Performers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE SILENCE IN BLACK AND WHITE</strong></td>
<td>Hawthorne Heights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAST, PRESENT &amp; FUTURE</strong></td>
<td>Rob Zombie</td>
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<td><strong>CHOSEN FEW: EL DOCUMENTAL</strong></td>
<td>Chosen Few</td>
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<td><strong>THE BEST OF PANTERA</strong></td>
<td>Pantera</td>
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<td><strong>LIVE AT DONINGTON</strong></td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>LIVE IN BUCHAREST: THE DANGEROUS TO JR</strong></td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NUMBER ONES</strong></td>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE ULTIMATE NASH-UPS PRESENTS: COLLECTION COURSE</strong></td>
<td>Jay-Z, Link Park</td>
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<td><strong>SPEND AN EVENING WITH SADDLE CREEK</strong></td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
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<td><strong>THE CONCERT IN CENTRAL PARK</strong></td>
<td>Simon &amp; Garfunkel</td>
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<td><strong>THE CELTIC WOMAN</strong></td>
<td>Celtic Woman</td>
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<td><strong>LIVE FROM THE INSIDE</strong></td>
<td>Shoshana</td>
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<td><strong>STAR WARS EPISODE II REVENGE OF THE SITH</strong></td>
<td>The London Symphony Orchestra and London Voices (John Williams)</td>
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<td><strong>LIVE AT THE GREEK THEATRE</strong></td>
<td>Chicago And Earth, West &amp; Fire</td>
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<td><strong>LIVE FROM LUTHER WITH LOVE: THE VIDEO</strong></td>
<td>Lillian Verdesco</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JERRY GARCIA BAND: LIVE AT SHORELINE</strong></td>
<td>Jerry Garcia Band</td>
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**TOP HEATSEEKERS**

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<th>ARTIST</th>
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<td><strong>MISSY ELLIOTT</strong></td>
<td>Lose Control</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE</strong></td>
<td>Helios (So Long A Goodbye)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rihanna</strong></td>
<td>Don't Look Back (Dance with the Devil)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gwen Stefani</strong></td>
<td>You And I</td>
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For ad placement call 1-800-223-7524 or write Jeff Serrette at classifieds@billboard.com or fax 646-654-4798/99

HELP WANTED

Director of Integrated Marketing & Brand Development
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 person 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 world-wide 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 a 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: entertainmentrecruit@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.

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Voivod's Denis D'Amour, 45

Voivod guitarist Denis D'Amour, better-known to fans as Piggy, died Aug. 26 at a Montreal hospital after a battle with colon cancer. He was 45.

Although fans focused mainly on Voivod's futuristic lyrics, D'Amour's complex, jazzy guitar work fueled the band musically.

One of the first Canadian thrash metal bands, the Quebec-based Voivod (which also originally included singer Denis "Snake" Belanger, bassist Jean-Yves Thériault and drummer Michel Langevin), released a string of such genre classics as 1984's "War and Pain" and 1987's "Killing Technology." But the band truly hit its stride with the 1989 prog-metal effort "Nothingface," even headlining a U.S. tour supported by Faith No More and Soundgarden.

Just as it appeared the mainstream metal world might be catching up with Voivod in the '90s, Thériault and Belanger exited the band. Voivod continued recording throughout the decade and was in recent years rejuvenated by the addition of former Meraica bassist Jason Newsted, as well as the return of Belanger.

The new lineup toured as part of Ozzfest in 2003 and issued a self-titled studio album the same year on Newsted's Chophouse label.

Voivod then signed with the End Records, and was gearing up to enter the studio early next year. Newsted recently told Billboard that more than an album’s worth of songs had already been demos. It is unclear what will happen to that material.


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—Greg Prato
Publishing's Big Lists. Hugo Alexander

From left: Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams.

Hugo, Billboard Hot Tracks, Billboard recognized 314-affiliated writers who BELOW:

BMI honored its 19th annual BMI Urban Awards Aug. 35 at the American Airlines Arena in Miami Beach.

BELOW:

Billboard’s 2005 BMI Urban Honorary Awards Aug. 35 at the American Airlines Arena in Miami Beach.

TOP RIGHT:

BMI’s 2005 BMI Urban Awards Aug. 35 at the American Airlines Arena in Miami Beach.

BOTTOM RIGHT:

BMI’s 2005 BMI Urban Awards Aug. 35 at the American Airlines Arena in Miami Beach.
MADONNA GETS MOBILE
Madonna will soon appear in an ad for Motorola. According to our sources, the spot, created by ad agency Ogilvy & Mather, will feature a new Warner Bros. sitcom, "Younger." When contacted Aug. 31, Madonna's rep, über-publicist Liz Rosenberg, would only confirm that the diva was shooting the Motorola spot in London that very day. People who call in sick when they come down with the sniffles should take note—Madonna cracked and broke several bones during a horseback riding accident just a few weeks ago on her 47th birthday. But we digress. Track also hears that, in addition to Madonna, the ad features Iggy Pop, Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong, Lil John, Little Richard and others.

Now, whether or not the spot is for Motorola's Moto ROKR mobile phone—which may or may not be the iTunes-ready model (marketed by Cingular Wireless, perhaps?)—remains to be seen. But if it does have something to do with Apple, Track finds Madonna's participation in the ad interesting, as the bulk of her music is not available at the iTunes Music Store.

JAMMIN' JACKSON
Plugging into his producer alter ego, "American Idol" Judge Randy Jackson signs on as executive music producer for the JammX Kids. The nine-member, multicultural hip-hop group's members range in age from 8 to 16. The act is to star in two TV specials for broadcast on Kids' WB during the 2005-2006 season. The dancing, singing and acting outfit will also be featured in a DVD series distributed by Warner Home Video. Retail launch of the DVD is set for first-quarter 2006.

In addition to developing original music with other top producers, Jackson will be a partner in the JammX Kids enterprise. Besides recordings, the project lends itself to licensing and merchandising opportunities, live performances and films. The JammX Kids brand is owned by Light-Force Entertainment, founded by Merv Adelson, co-founder and chairman/CEO of Lorimar Telepictures. Purchased by Warner Communications in 1989, Lorimar's TV résumé includes "Dallas," "Family Matters" and "Full House.

DOES GWYNETH KNOW?
Not that we are anxious to point out other people's typos, but we can't help but note Madison Square Garden's ad in the Aug. 25 edition of The New York Times that lists Sept. 6 dates for "Coldplay." That's more editorializing than Track would ever dream of.

GUYS JUST WANTA HAVE FUN
At least Jerry Cantrell, Dave Navarro, Gene Simmons and Chad Kroeger do. The quartet descended upon Las Vegas the weekend of Aug. 26 for the first Vegas Rock Star Poker Tournament and Sweepstakes held at the Palms Casino Resort. Damageplan drummer Vinnie Paul also stopped by to try his hand at poker. Simmons dropped out of the game early, but still scored. The Kiss bassist took the opportunity to pursue several female onlookers, who didn't seem to mind. The big winner, however, was Cardboard Vampires fan Jason Vouid from Wisconsin, who walked away with the $10,000 grand prize as the last standing poker player.

LAVA STILL STICKING
Tongues are wagging over the latest activity at Lava Records. On Aug. 30, senior VP of promotion Lisa Velasquez, who was with the Atlantic group for 23 years, retired. Then, it was learned that two promotion positions in the label's Los Angeles office were eliminated, costing the jobs of Mark Gorlick and Anton Zovic. According to sources at Lava, the changes were months in the making—and not the result of founder Jason Flom's recent departure (Billboard, Aug. 10). Looking ahead, Mike Easterlin, formerly of Island Def Jam (good morning, Mr. Colen), will assume the senior VP of promotion position. He will report to Lava senior VP Andy Karp and GM Lee Trink.

COVERT OPERATION
Jeff Jackson is exiting his post at Orlando, Fla.-based Relevant Media Group to start a management company, Covert Management. His first client is Gotee Records band L.A. Symphony, whose new album "Disapper Here" streeted Oct. 4. Jackson spent the previous year as brand director of books and music at Relevant. Prior to that, he was label director at Gotee Records, logging nine years at the Nashville indie that is the Christian label home of Capitol breakout act Relient K.

EDUCATE THE KIDS
The Indiana Parent/Teacher Assn. has partnered with the Music Education Coalition to preserve music education in all Indiana schools, grades K-12. This coincides with the MECA's Support-Music initiative (supportmusic.com), an online effort to support school music programs nationwide. Acts like Collective Soul and Take 6 are already on the SupportMusic landwagon.

MUSEUM FIT FOR A KING
With blues icon B.B. King on tour, the timing is perfect for a King-related fund raiser. On Sept. 26, four days after his 80th birthday, a benefit at the Los Angeles home of Concord Records artist Mary Haskell and her husband, Sam (a TV veteran), will raise money for the B.B. King Museum in Indiana, Miss., which broke ground earlier this summer. King will be on hand to perform at the event.
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