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Above: Gretchen Wilson calls her fast track to fame "mind-boggling."
See page 50.
Photo: Michael Caufield/
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Cover Photo: Kristin Barlowe

The official CTIA Mobile Entertainment Content, Commerce & Applications Conference
T-Mobile, Sprint, Nextel, HTV Networks and other leading companies are planning for the mobile entertainment future. They will all be at MECCA 2005, the official Mobile Entertainment Conference of CTIA.
In a time when global cultural exchange is of increasing importance culturally and economically, musicians of all types—from household names to up-and-coming artists—are finding it more difficult, time-consuming and expensive to gain access to America, the world’s leading music market.

When the regulations that now govern the provision of work authorizations and visas for musicians visiting the United States first took effect in 1992, they received a relatively warm welcome, and although the U.S. government bureau responsible for their operation (now known as USCIS) was not always able to meet its own 15-day time limit to approve, decline or request more information on an application, the systems generally worked well.

The problems musicians currently face, with delays of up to six months, did not begin until 2001 but were not—contrary to what many think—a result of post-Sept. 11, 2001, security measures.

Musicians started to encounter major problems and delays in June 2001, when USCIS put in place its “Permanent Processing Service.” This was intended to assist large corporations and others that wished to transfer executive staff to positions in their American operations. The service guaranteed them a 15-day turnaround on applications in return for the payment of $1,000 per application, on top of the standard processing fees.

Almost overnight, the average waiting time for visas processed under the standard system crept up from three to six weeks to the current three to six months, posing significant difficulties for agents, venues, promoters and labels wishing to bring musicians to the States but unwilling or unable to pay the additional fees.

Add to this the understandable introduction of new security measures after Sept. 11, coupled with the more rigorous enforcement of existing ones—such as the requirement, since August 2004, that all applicants attend an interview at a U.S. Consulate in their resident country every time they are due to visit the States—and you end up with a system that is failing musicians, audiences and those whose businesses depend on them.

In bringing these difficulties to the attention of the U.S. government, we have been greeted by genuine surprise and concern that a system that was intended to promote cultural exchange and international trade is in fact proving a barrier to those aims.

Indeed, we are grateful to members of Congress—particularly Rep. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee—for their efforts in urging USCIS to adopt reforms to improve visa processing times.

Sadly, these efforts have yet to deliver any noticeable improvement.

I therefore believe that we should be working with all concerned parties to achieve more efficient administration of the current system and legislative change that meets security concerns while reflecting the needs and modal operations of visiting musicians and the countless U.S. record labels, promoters, venues and festival organizers that rely upon them.

In doing this we would not be seeking preferential treatment for musicians; rather, we would be hoping to see them treated in the same manner as others working in similar fields.

Professional footballers, golfers, jockeys, racing drivers and tennis players—to name a few—all benefit from U.S. entry under the far simpler and cheaper business (B-1) visa, or even visa-free, provided their income is principally earned outside the United States. Such options do not generally exist for musicians.

The system for American musicians wishing to tour or take advantage of promotional opportunities in the United States is much more straightforward, simply requiring them to demonstrate that they have an established reputation in their field (normally confirmed by press and publicity materials) and that the promotional opportunities are bona fide.

In the United Kingdom, we have the active support of the Culture and Trade Ministries, plus the wholehearted backing of the cross-industry Music Business Forum.

In the States, we are encouraged by the efforts of the American Symphony Orchestra League and are delighted that our U.S. counterpart group, the American Federation of Musicians, supports our efforts.

I have no doubt that we will enjoy the backing of, among others, the international and U.S. record and concert industries in our efforts to work with the U.S. government on a modern, efficient, secure and future-proof system that will deliver significant economic and cultural benefits to all concerned.

John Smith is the general secretary of the British Musicians’ Union and president of FIM, the International Federation of Musicians.
Sony BMG Efforts Keep Dylan In (Most) Stores

NEW YORK—Just months ago, retailers vehemently protested major labels for handing album exclusives to chains such as Starbucks. Now, thanks to the quid pro quo efforts of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales in releasing a new Bob Dylan album, it appears times may be a-changin’.

Sony BMG gave Starbucks the exclusive release for Dylan’s “Live at the Gaslight 1962” album, which started selling Aug. 30. HMV in Canada responded by yanking all Dylan records from shelves.

Remarkably, no other large chain has followed HMV’s lead. U.S. merchants say that Sony BMG piled on some persuasive value propositions to keep Dylan in most stores.

There were plenty of trials to assuage. In late June, when Newbury Comics CEO Mike Dreese heard about the Starbucks exclusive, he said Dylan was “no longer considered an essential at Newbury Comics.” In the past, the 27-unit, Brighton, Mass.-based chain has declined to carry albums after their exclusive period elsewhere ends, and reduced catalog inventory for artists that provide those exclusives.

Nonetheless, two weeks after the Aug. 30 release of another Dylan album, “No Direction Home: The Soundtrack”—a collection of previously unreleased songs from Martin Scorsese’s Dylan documentary—Newbury is carrying it. “We had a series of conversations with Sony, and made requests which were met, so we are at decent,” Dreese says.

Likewise, Trans Word Entertainment in Albany, N.Y., has pulled catalog titles when exclusives were given to other merchants. Yet the 850-unit chain is also carrying “No Direction Home.” Company executives decline comment.

Others say that they are carrying Dylan because Sony BMG has been more open to cooperative advertising funds in essence, providing retailers with marketing dollars in exchange for pricing and positioning in stores. Sony BMG is also offering six-song samplers made available to accounts that agree to promote the album.

“Starbucks is one piece of a larger marketing plan, and we did things that made sense for other accounts,” Sony BMG Sales Enterprise co-president Bill F. Foolish says. Initially, he says, "some obvious concerns were voiced, but now everybody seems to be doing what they should be doing, which is maximizing a click of the album to the consumer."

“No Direction Home” has sold 75,000 units in its first two weeks, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Better sales for the $24.98 list-priced double-album are expected after the documentary debuts Sept. 26 on PBS.

Working the Dylan catalog is a priority for Sony BMG, which has 53 SKUs, not including 16 of those titles in a hybrid stereo format issued over the last couple of years.
SONY BMG (cont.)

"We conducted a thorough analysis and we scrupulously followed the correct procedures before making the final decision," he says. However, Helen Smith, deputy secretary general of Impala, sounds just as confident. The commission did not test the statements made by Sony and Bertelsmann, she says. "They took it at face value."

The judges will consider verbal testimony along with previously submitted written testimony and documentation. Although they are not part of the case, Sony BMG's parent companies Sony Corp. and Bertelsmann are directly interested in its outcome. Accordingly, they will make a joint statement before the court. Bertelsmann spokesman Oliver Herrgesell says, "We are optimistic." Brussels-based Impala lodged the appeal in November 2004. It argues that the EC did not fully take into account the implications of the merger on collective dominance, cultural diversity and market access conditions. A few weeks ago, the court issued a 90-page document outlining the different points in question. "It revealed a lot about how the court understood the different arguments," Smith says, without going into the details of the report. At a board meeting held in Sept. 13 at the Popkomm trade show in Berlin, Impala chairman Michel Lambert told members he is confident the organization has a good case.

Bourgeois says that although he thought the EC's market analysis appeared fair, some questions remain. In particular, he cites the possibility that Impala's challenge would focus on issues of "collective dominance" that the EC dismissed. He also suggested that Impala's motivation might not be solely to overturn the decision. "There are many reasons to fight," Bourgeois says. "They may need to show their members that they tried everything to prevent the merger, even if it ultimately fails."  

Additional reporting by Leo Cendrowicz in Brussels and Wolfgang Spahr in Berlin.

The court in 2002 overturned the EC's decision blocking a merger of French electronics manufacturers.
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Four Days In The Superdome

SMG Exec Recounts Trying Times In Hurricane Katrina's Most Notorious Refugee Camp

Nearly 20 days after Hurricane Katrina rocked his world, Doug Thornton is still running on adrenaline.

Thornton, regional VP for SMG, the Philadelphia-based venue management firm that runs the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, has seen his home destroyed and the venue he oversees for eight years take a severe beating.

Thornton is now working out of Baton Rouge, La., while waiting for the future of the Superdome—if indeed it has one—to be assessed. He left the dome four days after Katina's Aug. 29 arrival in the Big Easy.

"I wake up in the morning, and half the time I don't even know what day it is," Thornton tells Billboard. "It's a bitch, I have to tell you.

While thousands of fleeing Katrina, Thornton actually returned to the stadium from an out-of-town business trip before disaster struck.

"I drove back into New Orleans for two reasons," Thornton says. "One, to board up my house, which is now gone. And secondly to go to the dome, because we knew it was going to be used as a refuge of last resort and I felt I just needed to be there.

"We had the keys to the spaces and the equipment to support the National Guard," he continues. "It would've been a much more difficult situation if some of us had not been there.

Thornton endured at the Superdome until the National Guard advised him to evacuate his stuff on the morning of Sept. 1, and he was escorted out with armed MPs.

"It became difficult for the National Guard to protect our offices any further," says Thornton, the last staffer to leave the building. "They didn't want to use force on the population, so they just let the perimeter expand to include those plaza areas outside the dome, and we would've been engulfed in the general population.

The Superdome opened in 1975. By the time Thornton made his exit, he estimates that 70% of the roof had sustained damage, which allowed rain to penetrate. Water inflicted considerable harm to the interior spaces, including sheet rock, ceiling tiles, carpet, electrical distribution, mechanical systems and elevators.

"Then there was just the hardship on the facility of it being used as an evacuation shelter for an extended period of time," Thornton says. "Tremendous pressure was put on the rest room facilities. The general public spaces where we had these people housed were very cramped quarters, hot, muddy.

The Superdome lost power when the storm hit, though the stadium stayed dimly lit because of its emergency generator power. Thornton and his staff slept in their offices, and their families stayed in the meeting rooms "until we had to move them out due to the safety issues.

During the course of those four days, Thornton managed four hours of sleep. Conditions began to deteriorate as the Superdome's population grew from 10,000 on Monday to a peak of 24,000.

Asked if he was ever tempted to cut and run, Thornton says it was not an option: "There was no way to get out. We were like everybody else."

Even so, Thornton says leaving was never a consideration. "It was very trying for all of us who were there, a test of not only our will but our ability to survive in that environment," he says. "I think the National Guard would tell you without [the staff's] help it could've been a lot worse.

Published reports say as many as 10 people died in the Superdome, which Thornton would not confirm. As for the future of the venue, "It's too early to pass any judgment," he says. "We're in the process of cleaning up the facility. Debris and trash removal is under way, and that's an enormous task. I'm talking about everything from blankets, ice chests, televisions, personal items left behind by the evacuees, mountains of trash and personal effects.

Following trash removal, an environmental company will be brought in to decontaminate the facility from human and biomedical waste, Thornton says. Within 60-75 days he hopes to have a damage assessment report from design firm Ellerbe Becket.

"Then we'll sit down with state officials to determine what the future should be," he says. "Should we rebuild it, renovate it, tear it down and rebuild it, or do some sort of comprehensive re-engineering using the existing steel superstructure?

Reports have stated that repairing the roof alone could cost as much as $7 million, but SMG execs say that any price tag is premature until damage assessment is complete.

"Any comment relative to the future of the dome that everybody states with any certainty is not based upon any factual evidence," SMG senior VP of stadiums and arenas Glenn Mon says. "Structurally we believe the building is sound.

The lingering feelings Thornton holds from Katrina are sadness and frustration. "You felt like you had everything collapsing on you at one time," he says. "It's like watching a close friend get beat up by a bully and you can't do anything to stop it.

Thornton also feels a twinge of pride at the role his venue and staff played in the crisis. "At the end of the day, even though the dome was severely damaged, bloodied and beaten by the storm," he says, "It did save thousands of lives.

New Orleans Event Biz Takes Stock

In the wake of Hurricane Katina, the touring industry is pondering when the concert business will return to the Gulf Coast—particularly New Orleans.

Despite the magnitude of the catastrophe, most predict this tradition-rich region will again host live music. "It may take years, but New Orleans will recover," says promoter Louis Messina, who got his start in New Orleans. "This city's got too much history.

The city's premier music event, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, will also return, according to Randy Phillips of AEG Live, which produces the event with Festival Productions.

Phillips says that "touring tourism back into New Orleans" is key to the long-term health of the city and the state of Louisiana. "That's what Jazz Fest is going to be—a big, halcyon wake-up to the world that New Orleans is still here and bigger and better than ever.

The Katrina catastrophe hits close to home for Messina, who was born and raised in New Orleans. He promoted the first rock show at the Superdome, a 1975 bill that included the Allman Brothers Band, the Charlie Daniels Band, the Marshall Tucker Band and Wet Willie.

"When you see the mighty Superdome show its weakness, it's just unbelievable," he says.

Messina, now president of the Messina Group/AEG Live, will produce the One Country benefit concert Oct. 1 in Houston, featuring George Strait, Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Martina McBride, ZZ Top and Willie Nelson. Messina expects the concert to raise at least $6 million locally.

In all, eight SMG venues—including the Superdome—sustained damage from Katrina. The costs to the Philadelphia-based management firm in damages, personnel and lost events will be tremendous.

"We anticipate that these are recoupable through various assistance programs," SMG senior VP of stadiums and arenas Glenn Mon says.

Mon also believes the Crescent City will rebound. "New Orleans is a city that will be back," he says. "But what form it will take, I don't think anybody can accurately predict that right now."
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Clap Your Hands Say Yeah Ships 25,000 Units By Dealing Directly With Indie Stores

When the self-titled debut from Clap Your Hands Say Yeah landed on the Billboard Top Independent Albums chart last month, the group accomplished the feat without a label or distributor.

Instead, the band took its album directly to indie retailers, finding a national distributor in Junkeetboy, a company owned by the Coalition of Independent Music Stores. Now, the dance-rock act is finding that with a well-timed tour and a wealth of Internet buzz, a record label may not be all that important.

The five-piece, led by eccentric singer Alec Ounsworth, has sold 12,000 copies of its debut, according to Nielsen SoundScan. College friend and manager Nick Stern says the act has shipped more than 25,000 copies since July, fulfilling most orders itself from a Brooklyn, N.Y., apartment.

The band just signed a U.S. distribution deal for the album with Warner Music Group’s Alternative Distribution Alliance, which will give it access to larger retailers. Stern, whose day job is in the publicity department of Atlantic Records, is not ruling out a record deal for the band, but says it is not a priority.

“We’re much more open to a label situation overseas than we are in the U.S.,” Stern says. “Why would we need one? The distribution we need, but I do think there’s a new way of doing things.”

Before CYHSY’s, A&R president Andy Allen calls his company’s one-off deal with CYHSY highly unusual. “Other than [band] O.A.R., who’ve had a strong relationship with us, we’ve never actually done a deal directly with a band,” Allen says.

Tapping into the Web-savvy audience that catapulted the Arcade Fire to the top of the indie community, CYHSY began selling its album to non-New Yorkers via its Web site.

When sales started to take off, Stern enlisted the help of online retailer Insound, where the act has been the top seller since June.

Cut to Dallas retailer Good Records, an A&R affiliate co-owned by the Polyphonic Spree’s Tim Delaughter, Buyer C.J. Davis listened to songs at CYHSY’s Web site, bought a box of CDs and alerted A&R head Eric Levin. Meanwhile, Pitchfork gave the album a glowing 9.0 review. Most stores have not been able to keep it in stock.

Of course, being without a label offers some challenges. “We’re paying a little over $1 per CD, so I can’t order 5,000 CDs until I get money for the CDs I just sold,” Stern says. “Since it takes three weeks to print the CDs, there’s been a lag in getting CDs out to stores.”

Allen says A&R is ready to ship to larger retailers—amazon.com and Tower, for instance, have yet to stock the album—as soon as the company gets some discs. “My understanding is that we’ve already had orders for about 9,000 pieces, and we don’t even have stock yet,” he says.

Demand is sure to increase, as CYHSY is in the midst of a national tour. “This is the first time they’ve gone somewhere beyond Philadelphina and Boston,” Stern says. “We’re trying to figure this all out day to day. As far as I’m concerned, this is the tip of the iceberg.”

Billboard Panel, Showcase Set For Advertising Week

NEW YORK—The marketing, entertainment and media worlds will converge during Advertising Week 2005, Sept. 26-30 at various locations here. Advertising Week, with its speeches, presentations, panel discussions, awards shows and artist showcases, focuses on the sharing of ideas—as well as the fine art of schmoozing.

For this second annual Advertising Week, Yahoo! Music and Billboard will present a panel on the intersection of music and advertising, followed by showcases for a number of exciting up-and-coming acts.

The panel, "I’m With the Brand," will take place at 4 p.m. Sept. 27 in the Reuters Building in Times Square. Moderated by Billboard brand marketing editor Michael Paletta, the panel will focus on the use of nontraditional marketing to help sell music and generate buzz.

Lending their expertise on the topic will be panelists Josh Rubinowitz, senior VP/director of music at Grey Worldwide; Tony Granger, chief creative officer of Saatchi & Saatchi; Dave Tiggiew, VP of music resources, EMI Music Publishing; Cheryl Berman, chairwoman/chief creative officer of Leo Burnett; Ken Levitan, co-founder, Vertical Manager & Records, and Randy Miller, executive VP of marketing at Virgin Records.

That evening, the focus will shift to the B.B. King Blues Club & Grill, for “Yahoo! Music Who’s Next Music Showcase,” co-produced with the Micon Entertainment Group, the show will provide an opportunity for new artists to perform for an invitation-only audience of advertising and media agency personnel. Here is a look at the artists scheduled to appear:

- Aqualung’s debut Red Ink/Columbia album, "Strange and Beautiful," is No. 168 in its fourth week on The Billboard 200.
- Rock As Fast As will be opening a series of dates for O.A.R., starting Oct. 14 in Memphis. The band is signed to October Records.
- Indonesian band Miiri Ben-Ari has made a mark with her writing and virtuoso violin contributions to Kanye West’s smash album "The College Dropout." Her skills will be on further display Sept. 20 when Universal Records releases her debut album.
- New Jersey native Daniela Cotton breaks out her blues rock on "Small White Town," her debut album from Hip-Shake Music.
- West Texas country traditionalist Lane Turner debuted last year with the Warner Bros. Nashville album "Right On Time."
- Cuban-born actress/cover girl Mayra Veronica is turning her attention to Latin pop/hiphop under a deal with Flash Records, which will release her musical debut.

For information or to register for the Advertising Week events, go to advertisingweek.com.
BMI Points To BlueArrow To ID Performances

How much of a song do you need to hear before you can name that tune?

The human ear and brain can identify a song in a few notes with such clues as the year the song was a hit or the name of the artist who recorded it, says Darren Briggs, BMI senior director of strategic development. Without clues it takes an expert at least five to 10 seconds to hear the sounds, allow the brain to compare them to something heard before as stored in memory and then identify it.

This quick identification still beats most of the systems that have been built to recognize sounds, he adds. But BMI recently acquired technology that it says will identify performances in less than five seconds (Billboard, Sept. 10).

It is called BlueArrow, and it will be the core technology for a new system to monitor music performances and collect other audio data.

BlueArrow is a form of pattern recognition technology — also called waveform analysis or fingerprinting — that identifies audio waves much like the FBI identifies a fingerprint.

The software application looks at audio waves and picks out particular anchor points — high points, low points, time offsets or other characteristics. It essentially connects the dots between the points, creating unique combinations.

The technology then creates mathematical values from these combinations and compares them to a reference database that contains fingerprints of previously stored recorded music. If there is a match, the technology identifies the music. If not, then the technology kicks back the sounds as unidentified.

Using fingerprinting technology for music is not new.

BMI COO John Cody says the organization has been testing much of the available technology for several years. After putting BlueArrow through its paces for two years and being convinced that it works like no other available music recognition technology, BMI decided to purchase all rights in it.

Briggs says that other available technologies take between one and two minutes — and sometimes the entire duration of a song — before a performance can be identified. Briggs claims that BlueArrow can do this in less than five seconds.

Cody says BlueArrow differs from other forms of pattern recognition tools in several more ways. It is capable of handling all the music and other data that BMI can pump into it now and in the future without degrading the quality of the information.

It is able to pick out music from other sounds in high-noise surroundings with greater than 99% accuracy. BlueArrow also works with all sources of performances — broadcast and satellite radio, broadcast and cable TV and the Internet.

The BlueArrow reference library already has fingerprints made from more than 1 million commercially released recordings. BMI is aiming toward fingerprinting all recordings ever released.

BMI acquired from U.K.-based Shazam Entertainment all rights in the core technology (including all patents and source code) and certain software applications. As part of the deal, BMI granted Shazam an exclusive license to use the technology for its business activities aimed at the mobile consumer.

BMI is also building a business around the technology, Landmark Digital Services. Cody says Landmark is developing a business plan for a rollout of the system in early 2006.

It will create listening stations in certain parts of the United States where computers will be located to receive broadcast radio signals to feed into BlueArrow. This information will supplement the other performance data that BMI receives and processes, such as Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems info, as part of its royalty distribution system.

Landmark will also develop a customer base to exploit information gathered through the applications being built on the system.

For its data collection, ASCAP uses fingerprinting technology from Mediaguide, which it co-owns.

By the Numbers: BMI reported revenue of more than $728 million, an increase of about 8.3%, for the fiscal year 2004-2005.

More than 500 new digital music providers were licensed, with new-media revenue increasing by 114% to $11.4 million. Royalties to members increased by nearly $51 million.
Radio Puts Up Bucks For Jack

After years of pulling back on external advertising, radio is throwing down big marketing bucks to stimulate tune-in for new station launches.

Leading the charge is the eclectic "playing what we want" Jack-FM format—and its similarly named brethren—that have dominated radio-trade headlines all year.

Infinity, Entercom and other owners bullish on the new format are funnelling dollars not spent on air talent (the format shuns DJs) into TV, outdoor, transit and other advertising.

Such ad expenditures buck a nearly 10-year post-consolidation trend of hobbled marketing budgets. "We have pulled away all of those marketing dollars and thrown them to Wall Street," Greater Media president/CEO Peter Smyth says. "Then Wall Street turns around, kicks us in the teeth and says, 'Radio's not cool.' It's not cool because we're not investing in making it cool."

Greater Media's WBEN-FM (Ben FM) Philadelphia spent roughly $700,000 on marketing in the five months since it launched, according to Smyth. He expects to hit the $1 million mark before year's end.

Greater Media is not alone.

- Entercom spent $506,729 in spot TV advertising in the first 11 weeks after the April 14 launch of WMKX (Mike) Boston, according to Nielsen Monitor-Plus.

- Bonneville shelved out $667,797 for TV spots in May and June with the May 11 launch of KZBZ (Max) San Francisco.

- Infinity sunk $689,986 into outdoor and $89,559 in spot TV from March to June for KCBS (Jack FM) Los Angeles, which debuted March 17.

Nielsen Monitor-Plus data is not yet available for Infinity's New York and Chicago Jacks, which launched June 3. Infinity will not disclose its media spend, but market observers peg the current ad campaign for WCMX Chicago in the area of $1 million, encompassing TV, outdoor and transit.

Infinity claims it had ads for WCBS-FM on the front of every Metropolitan Transportation Authority bus in New York. The company has dealt seven Jacks to date, beginning with KJKK Dallas, now in its 13th month without air talent.

Large-scale marketing is especially critical for adult hits because of the way listeners use the format. Like AM Top 40 in the '60s and all-news radio today, Jack is a "cume" format, relying on large audiences listening in short bursts.

Time spent listening is shorter than for any other format except top 40 and adult top 40, according to Arbitron and Edison Media Research.

The format's unique music mix and attitude require more marketing power than overhauling an airing rock or AC station because "people know how to consume those formats," Infinity VP of Jack programming Kurt Johnson says.

Entercom VP of programming Pat Paxton concurs.

"These are mass-appeal radio stations and, at least initially, more cume-generating stations," he says. "We need to introduce them via mass mediums like TV or billboards."

Despite the absence of DJs, Jack has no shortage of attitude. Howard Cogan, the irrepressible, deadpan voice of Jack, dishes out such smartass one-liners as, "It's a give-and-take world. You give us your opinions, and we take no requests," smoothing the otherwise jagged line between the Vapors' "Turning Japanese" and Tom Jones' "She's a Lady."

According to Johnson, band registration was up nearly 500% for this third annual Zippo Hot Tour. "The enthusiasm and excitement surrounding this year's contest has exceeded our expectations," he says.

Fans vote on the bands at zippohottour.com. The Zippo Hot Tour tag line, "Where the fans choose the bands," captures the grassroots spirit of the competition.

Fuse linked with online music community Sonichords to power the Zippo Hot Tour Web site and provide other support. Sonichords opened its database of bands to us," Stephan says.

Zippo has a longstanding, accidental connection with the touring business.

"You know," Stephan says, "it's not often that people create trends from a consumer brand. But that's precisely what people did when they began holding their Zippoos in the air at concerts. With the Zippo Hot Tour, Zippo has leveraged that organic use.

Capitol Country Artist Teams With 600-Store Chain For Promo Campaign

Capitol Country artist Chris Cagle is gearing up for the Oct. 4 release of his third Capitol Nashville album, "Anywhere but Here." The street date coincides with the kick-off of a three-month Cagle-fronted promotion with Rent to Own stores.

Beginning Oct. 1, the Texas singer/songwriter will come "face to face" with his ardent fans—as well as new ones—who frequent the more than 600 Rent to Own stores nationwide.

The Cagle-RTO campaign encompasses point-of-purchase displays, "Anywhere but Here" CD images in circulars and in-store video programming. The promotion also includes a contest, with two winners from each store receiving an autographed CD. One grand-prize winner will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to see Cagle in concert.

Capitol Nashville senior VP of marketing Fletcher Foster says the partnership is an ideal way to help launch the album and raise national awareness for the artist.

For Foster, it was important to make the most of the retailer's and label's assets. "RTO wanted an October promotion; we had a new album from Chris," he says. "My asset is Chris and the value he has in the marketplace."

Rick Linton, a partner in St. Louis-based Imagery Marketing Consultants, an ad agency that counts RTO as a client, was instrumental in making the deal happen. He worked closely with Foster, Cagle's manager Doc McGhee and Craig Bann, senior VP of marketing and publicity at video promotion company Aristo Media. Bann acted as the liaison between IMC and Capitol.

The demographics of a Cagle fan and an RTO customer are parallel, Foster says. "They are hard workers who know the value of a dollar."

Linton concurs, adding, 'RTO is the perfect profile for Chris, who is a blue-collar, working person's musician. It's a perfect fit.'

This partnership is certain to make for a more engaging and entertaining shopping experience for RTO customers. Whether people spend more money remains to be seen. But it is safe to say that Cagle's participation brings a certain cachet to the chain.

Cagle and his team are hoping the partnership will help "Anywhere but Here" surpass sales of its predecessors. Cagle's previous albums, "Play It Loud" (2000) and "Chris Cagle" (2003), have combined sales of 1.2 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"Many people don't buy new albums because they don't know they're available," Foster says. "A promotion like this makes sure people are aware. And with RTO circulars reaching up to 20 million people, that is a lot of awareness."

HOT STUFF: More than 1,000 unsigned rock bands registered earlier this year for the 2005 edition of the Zippo Hot Tour competition. Nearly 290 made the first cut. This list has been whittled down to eight bands in each of 10 cities. By the end of September, each city will have one finalist.

Each band surely has an eye to the grand prize: a showcase for Capitol Records A&R execs, $85,000 in tech gear and the opening slot on a major act's tour.

While the winning band will not be announced until next month, we have learned that it will open for the All-American Rejects on an 11-date trek that commences in November.

Jeremy Stephan, president of Los Angeles-based marketing company Fuse—which worked closely with Zippo director of global marketing Mark Paup to quarterback the initiative—calls the Zippo Hot Tour a massive success.

According to Stephan, band registration was up nearly 500% for this third annual Zippo Hot Tour. "The enthusiasm and excitement surrounding this year's contest has exceeded our expectations," he says.

Fans vote on the bands at zippohottour.com. The Zippo Hot Tour tag line, "Where the fans choose the bands," captures the grassroots spirit of the competition.

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TOUCHDOWN: ABC's "Monday Night Football" and country music superstar Tim McGraw have entered a season-long partnership. For the 36th season of the NFL series, McGraw's 10-year-old chart-topping single "I Like It, I Love It" will be the soundtrack to the halftime highlight reel from the previous weekend's games. But the NFL version of the popular track has been rewritten to fit the highlights. And do not be surprised to see the singer himself—having the time of his life—in the spot.
Canada’s Reggaetón Brew
Domestic Acts Gain Traction Alongside Genre’s Heavyweights

TORONTO—Reggaetón may hold U.S. radio in its sway, but north of the border the genre is only starting to get mainstream attention. That is not stopping a home-grown blast of Great White North reggaetón acts.

‘This is a movement of music much like hip-hop over a decade ago.’
—JENNIFER LARRY, MRP MUSIC GROUP

For the past two years, the genre has been edging its way out of Canada’s underground music culture, championed primarily by Spanish-speaking teenagers. The government estimates that there are as many as 700,000 Spanish-speaking people in Canada. Only one year ago, reggaetón shows were drawing predominantly Latin crowds at clubs in Montreal and Toronto, the cities with the largest Latin populations. Today, the music is heard in clubs throughout the country.

Several major artists, including Daddy Yankee, Don Omar, Ivy Queen and Pitbull, have made headway in Canada via club exposure. But the scene has also developed such domestic reggaetón-flavored acts as Criollo, Los Playaz, Black Caco, Viejo Oeste, Convoy Cubano, Billy One Play and DJ Medy in Montreal, and Toronto’s Fito Blanko.

"Reggaetón was brewing underground in Montreal two or three years ago, before anywhere else in the country," says Jennifer Larry, label manager at MRP Music Group, a Toronto-based label and distributor that oversees marketing and promotion of Latin product for Universal Music Canada.

"Montreal is a party city," says Blanko, a Panamanian who grew up in Montreal and Toronto. "The club parties there don’t end until 6 a.m. You hear the same music there as you hear in [Miami’s] South Beach.” Blanko says he struggled underground for years before MRP signed him and released his debut album, “Higher Level,” in June 2004. The album arrived in the United States last October from Miami-based Perfect Image Records.

"Right now, reggaetón continued on >>p14

And the award goes to...Holland!

Within Temptation
Golden Earring

Buma/Stemra congratulates
Within Temptation and
Golden Earring on their
winning achievements
Mercury Winner’s Sales Taking Wing

Retail, Label See Antony & The Johnsons ‘I Am A Bird Now’ Making Impact Following Victory

LONDON—The latest winner of the United Kingdom’s Nationwide Mercury Prize has already received a huge raft of media attention here. Now the challenge is for Antony & the Johnsons’ U.K. label, Rough Trade, to maintain the commercial benefits the prize brings.

The act’s second album, “I Am a Bird Now,” took the title No. 6 in London (Billboard, Sept. 17). The award honors the best British or Irish album of the preceding 12 months.

The market-leading HMV chain reports a twentyfold increase in week-on-week sales of “I Am a Bird Now.”

Other specialist retailers confirm that the album was “flying off the shelf” during the week-end after the ceremony. “Most other artists that have won the Mercury have had a massive upswing and then dropped off,” like Gomez [in 1998] and Ms. Dynamite [in 2001],” one retail source says. “With this one I’d expect more longevity.”

“The [award] has an ever-increasing impact in Europe,” London-based Rough Trade managing director Geoff Travis says. “As it’s gone on, the prize has acquired a level of respect.”

The album is licensed from U.S. label Secretly Canadian to the British indie for European release.

The victory’s effect on domestic sales was immediate. The album, released in February, rose from No. 135 to No. 16 on the Sept. 11 sales chart published by the Official U.K. Charts Co. Weekly U.K. sales were close to 16,000, according to OCC data, for a running total of 57,000. Travis confirms that in a few hours on the morning after the act’s win, the label received 40,000 new orders from retail.

Rough Trade international label manager Colin Wallace says he is confident the win will be a springboard to European success for Antony & the Johnsons. He claims European shipments of 12,000 in France. 10,000 in Spain and 9,000 in Sweden.

The 2004 Mercury winner, Franz Ferdinand’s self-titled Domino release, was an established U.K. success before taking the award. The victory pushed the album to double-platinum status (600,000 shipped) the week following the ceremony.

However, comparison between Antony & the Johnsons and the 2003 Mercury winner, rapper Dizzee Rascal’s self-titled album “Boy in Da Corner” (XL Recordings), arguably produces more relevant sales parallels.

Both were indie discoveries regarded as specialists before their success and, insiders agree, remain too “edgy” for extensive daytime exposure afterward.

“Boy in Da Corner” moved 44,234 on the OCC chart in the week following its win, earning silver certification from trade body the British Phonographic Industry for shipments of 60,000. Three weeks later, it went gold (100,000 shipments).

In both cases, the win occurred when the album in question had shipped some 40,000 copies, and the victory generated an immediate sales spurt of around 40%.

Wallace admits that the Mercury effect is “probably just (for) this album. It raises everyone’s awareness.”

Rough Trade is talking to Seattle Canadian about extending its Antony & the Johnsons deal beyond the current album, Wallace adds. “The Mercury effect will help in the U.K. next [album].” he says, “but whether that would pertain to Germany or Poland? I’m not sure.”

When Dizzee Rascal’s sophomore album “Showtime” was released in September 2004 in the United Kingdom, it debuted on the OCC chart at No. 8, turning silver the following week. However, the album failed to match the longevity of its predecessor.

It is harder to plot what the Mercury prize did for Franz Ferdinand or Ms. Dynamite. Each act has been embraced by the mainstream and neither has released a follow-up.

“The long-term effect of the Mercurys depends on the commitment of the label,” HMV U.K. & Ireland product director Steve Gallant says. “In the case of Ms. Dynamite, she’s coming back now with a new album and a huge marketing spend by Polydor/Universal. There’s great awareness of her, and they’ve been able to use the Mercury thing.”

Even acts that failed to take home the prize garnered sales. Sri Lankan-born, London-based rapper M.I.A.’s “Arular” (XL) raked in close to 10,000 sales in the two months following its nomination in July, according to the label.

Scottish singer/songwriter KT Tunstall’s “Eye to the Telescope” (Relentless/Virgin) also benefited from her Mercury nomination and live performance at the ceremony. The album, already certified platinum by BPI for 300,000 shipments, climbed to a new peak of No. 5 on the Sept. 11 OCC chart.

National newspapers gave this year’s show widespread attention, while top 40 station BBC Radio 1, digital TV channel BBC 4 and terrestrial TV network BBC 2 broadcast highlights or live coverage nationally.

REGGAETÓN (cont.)

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is a catchphrase,” Blanko says. “But with more artists creating reggaetón tracks for the mainstream, it will eventually become a sub-genre of urban music.”

Blanko has performed alongside leading Latin names as Casab, Amarlis, Ivy Queen, Adassa, Lito and Polaco. In addition, his single “By My Side” has aired extensively on national music TV channels MuchMusic and MuchVibe.

At Canadian radio, reggaetón was initially heard on Montreal community stations CIJB and CISM and Toronto’s VOCM. Latinos, Webcasters Reggaetone and Sound Beat Radio also back up the music’s club exposure.

Montreal-based video channel MusiquePlus championed Daddy Yankee’s “Gasolina” (Universal) throughout the summer, and artists like Daddy Yankee, Don Omar and Blanko are now appearing on playlists at such powerhouses as Montreal’s CKOI and CKMF and Toronto’s CIQC.

“We tried out Daddy Yan-keek and Don Omar’s and got a huge response,” CICF music director/year-round drive announcer Matt Wreggitt says. “We’ve kept with it because there’s nobody [else] in this market playing it.”

CKOI music director Guy Brouillard adds, “We first played ‘Gasolina’ on our specialized dance show. Now people are asking for reggaetón and asking for reggaetón remixes.”

Daddy Yankee is the genre’s first major crossover artist in Canada, but sales are still modest. His current Universal album, “Barrio Fino,” has sold only 9,300 units since its March release, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

MRP’s Larry concides that reggaetón is only now being embraced by Canada’s mainstream music retailers. “As well as trying to break reggaetón at radio, our big challenge has been breaking it at retail,” she says.

“Nobody understood that the word is not reggea; it’s reggaetón,” Larry adds. “This is a movement of music much like hip-hop over a decade ago.”

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Global Newsline

Jail for Taiwan P2P Execs

The international music industry is claiming a key victory in its legal battle against peer-to-peer file-sharing networks after a Taiwan court sentenced executives from the Kuro service to prison terms for criminal copyright infringement.

On Sept. 9, the Taipei District Court sentenced Kuro CEO James Chen and his brother, GM Victor Chen, to three years in prison. Kuro chairman Chen Shou-ting received a two-year sentence. The company was also fined $3 million Taiwan ($90,000).

The London-based International Federation of the Phonographic Industry says the Taiwan decision is the world’s first prison sentence involving a P2P service. Taipei prosecutors filed the case in August 2003 on behalf of IFPI Taiwan and domestic major record companies. Kuro’s P2P service in Taiwan has 400,000 subscribers.

IFPI Taiwan has urged Kuro to immediately cease unauthorized activities. The Kuro executives remain free on bond and are expected to appeal. —Tim Cuppan

Australian Biz Slumps

The trade value of the Australian recorded-music market fell by 11.8% year-on-year during first-half for each 2003 to $209 million Australian ($161 million), according to the Australian Record Industry Assn.

The market fell in volume 7.5% to 22.7 million units in the six months ending June 30. The drop was registered across all formats. Digital sales, including master ringtones, are not included in the figures. ARIA says it does not yet have comprehensive information regarding the value and volume of the digital music market.

Labels expect more-positive results for the second half of the year, with stronger releases from international and domestic acts. July and August sales showed an upturn, ARIA reports. —Christie Eliezer

Faulder Joins Biem/Cisac

Sarah Faulder, CEO of the United Kingdom’s Music Publishers Assn., is relocating to Paris to assume the linked role of director of music at the International Bureau of Mechanical Rights Societies (BIEM) and senior consultant with the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC).

Faulder will leave the MPA in November after nearly nine years in London. Her replacement has not been named. In her new role, she will report to Biem secretary general Ronald Moolij and CISAC director general Eric Baptiste.

Faulder came to the MPA after 16 years at London law firm Taylor Wessing, where she was a partner specializing in intellectual property law. —Lars Brandle

Napster U.K. at 55 Million Mark

Napster U.K. says it has sold more than 55 million downloaded or streamed full-length tracks since its May 2004 launch. It claims 750,000 registered members. VP/GM Leanne Sharnar says a poll of 5,000 registrants shows that 80% of members are more than 25 years old. One-fifth of those questioned said they no longer buy physical CDs.

Napster charges £9.95 ($18.33) per month for unlimited downloading and streaming from a catalog of 1.6 million tracks. The songs expire when subscription payments cease. The service charges £0.79 ($1.45) for each permanent download. —Juliana Koranteng

Caldas’ Shock Departure

Charles Caldas is stepping down after six years as CEO of Shock Entertainment Group. He has been with the leading Australian independent music company since it started in Melbourne 15 years ago.

Caldas was recently recovering from a serious spinal infection. He says he plans to spend more time with his family and develop his interest in photography, but may retain an ongoing strategic role with Shock.

The company does not plan to appoint a new CEO. Group chairman David Williams is assuming most of Caldas’ responsibilities. —Christie Eliezer

Online Music Store Tarabu Attracts Major Attention

Tarabu, a download store owned by media giant Televisa through its esmus.com portal, has been granted rights to sell tracks from Universal Music’s worldwide digital catalog — some half-million songs. It is Universal’s first all-encompassing digital deal in Latin America.

“We’re working on the last details to also do business with Sony BMG, Warner, Unvision and EMI,” says Eduardo Argil, director of business development for esmus.com.

Tarabu will become Mexico’s second digital store. The first, beon.com, had a soft launch earlier this year and carries more limited catalog, mostly from EMI. Brazil is the only other Latin American country with a download store. But its enuncis.com site is mostly dedicated to domestic catalog.

Tarabu is staking a claim to become the most comprehensive digital store in all of Latin America. It is being heavily marketed in advance of its launch date with ads on TV and in magazines.

Raul Vazquez, regional director for the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry Latin America, says that if the Tarabu model proves successful, it will be the key to making Latin America a viable digital music market. “This will give the market a big boost,” he says. The site has a big company with plenty of promotional muscle behind it.

“The fact that (Mexico) has two Web sites with international repertoire demonstrates to the rest of the region that the majors are willing to license their catalogs. They are, if the platforms are adequate. In Mexico, Tarabu’s digital rights management protocol is in what sold Universal on the deal.

“Now in Mexico has had the platform, the infrastructure or the necessary controls we found with Tarabu,” Universal Music Mexico GM Fabio Alvarez says.

Tracks on Tarabu, like tracks on Beon, can be purchased with a credit or debit card or with prepaid cards.

The $1 price tag is substantial for the Latin market. But, Alvarez says, Mexicans have been willing to pay in the neighborhood of $1.30 for master ringtones as cell-phone technology has improved.

With MP3 player popularity and availability increasing in Mexico, the expectations are also high for legal downloads. “It’s part of the whole movement in Latin America going digital,” Vazquez says.

The growth of downloads will also be helped by the spread of broadband. Though penetration remains low, it is improving.

“The good thing is a lot of people can access broadband through their offices,” Vazquez says. “Even though the number of connections are still low, they reach a lot of people with purchasing power.”

A glance at Latin America’s digital piracy figures shows that there is a demand for downloads. According to a 2004 study commissioned by the IFPI, some 70 million tracks were illegally downloaded in Mexico in 2004. In Argentina and Brazil, respectively, some 300 million songs were illegally downloaded in 2004. Now the only question that remains is if people will pay.

Alvarez is optimistic about Tarabu’s prospects, adding, “We are giving the Mexican market the possibility to legally download music.”

Higgins Promises Turnaround At Trans World Confab

Saratoga Springs, N.Y.—After a tough first half, Trans World Entertainment’s field management staff converged here Sept. 12-10 to hear about marketing and merchandising plans aimed at turning around the year.

In his opening keynote address, introducing the convention theme, “Winners Take All,” Trans World chairman/CEO Bob Higgins said, “This year, our challenge—and opportunity—is to reverse the negative trends we’ve experienced in the first half of the year and deliver the best second half ever.”

The company’s six-month numbers for the period ended July 30 show how tough the first half was. The company reported a $7.9 million loss, or 24 cents per diluted share, on revenue of $53.8 million. Some store sales were down 3.1%.

“It wasn’t too long ago that we were in a similar, if not worse, position,” Higgins reminded the staff. “In the second quarter of 2003 our comp sales were down 5% and we had gone three years without delivering a positive quarterly comp.

At that time, Higgins predicted that management plans would turn the results around. In the second half of 2003, the chain went on to produce a 4% comparable sales growth and continued to deliver increases in five of the next six quarters.

Despite this year’s down numbers, there is some cause for optimism. Fred Fox, executive VP of marketing, pointed out that Trans World “continues to outperform the music industry.” The chain’s CD sales were down 5% in the first half while the overall U.S. industry was down 8%.

Higgins said that the quality of upcoming releases is up to the labels, but his company can do its part to increase sales. “Our challenge is to deliver value to our customers,” he said.

The best way to do that is having associates help customers interact with the chain’s listening and viewing stations (LVS), Higgins said. “This powerful and unique tool can help all of our associates shine if they know how to fully exploit all of the data contained in the system during the selling process.”

Higgins said Trans World is rolling out LVS 3 in 200 stores that fall, with full coverage set for 2006. In addition to sampling music, movies and videogames, customers can search and browse the company’s full product catalog offering, and then place orders. Continued on >>p16

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LONDON — Richard Branson’s London-based independent firm V2 Music will roll out a new licensing network this month that provides indie labels a platform to bring their acts to European markets outside of their home territories.

The Cooperative Music venture will tap V2’s resources in sales and distribution while functioning as a separate and independent business unit. V2 Music will also provide “substantial investment,” according to Vincent Clery-Melin, GM for the new structure.

Some of Europe’s hottest labels have already signed up for the services. They include London-based Wichita Recordings, Berlin-based City Slang and Twickenham, West London-based Bella Union, the label that Robin Guthrie and Simon Raymonde from Cocteau Twins established in 1997.

“It’s very difficult when you’ve got a small label and you’re doing distribution and licensing deals here, there and everywhere, to coordinate releases,” Raymonde explains. “This new setup will hopefully cover all the bases and make centralization a lot easier to do.”

City Slang founder Christof Ellinghaus says he expects that the indie labels will develop power through numbers. “We’re all trying to do the same thing: putting good music out there and selling as [much] as we can,” Ellinghaus says.

The initiative is the brainchild of V2 Music France’s Paris-based managing director Alain Artaud and London-based V2 Music worldwide CEO Tony Harlow. Frenchmen Clery-Melin and Artaud are EMI vets who were crucial to the creation by Virgin France of its Labels operation in 1995.

Prior to joining V2 in late 2003, Artaud was Capitol France president. During his tenure at EMI, he devised and launched its Labels division as a Pan-European network for servicing indie labels and developing indie acts. Clery-Melin most recently was VP of marketing at EMI Music Continental Europe.

Clery-Melin says Labels was established with a similar aim as Cooperative: to promote indie artists and labels in Europe.

“I need a push-button operation, because all my bands are making new records next year and I wanted an artist-friendly environment. I don’t think any of the majors are offering this,” Ellinghaus says of his decision to commit to the new entity. “And I needed an environment that works in all of Europe.”

Artaud has overall responsibility for the network while Clery-Melin will run day-to-day operations from V2’s premises in West London. Dedicated Cooperative Music label managers are currently being appointed in France, Germany, the Benelux region of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg; Sweden (for Scandinavia); Italy, and Spain.

The label managers will work with the venture’s partners in each of those territories.

“With the network’s first releases we will include sets from Memphis Industries’ Nationwide Mercury Prize nominee Go! Team and Bella Union’s Australian trio Dirty Three. City Slang is awaiting a new album from Arizona-based alt-country act Calexico, recorded with producer J.D. Foster and due in spring 2006.

“A lot of majors who are developing alternative artists tend to write off continental Europe these days. They tend to only react to a platinum record in the United Kingdom or a major success in the United States,” Clery-Melin notes. “We won’t wait for the major success to come from the usual flagship market.”

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TRANS WORLD (cont.)

orders for out-of-stock product.

“It is extremely important for our associates to bring everyone who walks into our stores to the TVS,” Higgins told the staff.

The customer will also soon be able to “select digital music in the manner of their choosing —whether by downloading to a portable player in the store or delivering digital music to the home,” Higgins said.

Trans World is also expanding the testing of CD burning units, which allow customers to burn out-of-stock titles or produce personalized custom CDs with songs of their choice from a selection of more than 400,000 titles.

Another part of Trans World’s service strategy is to build a large, loyal customer base through its Backstage Pass program. For an annual fee, customers get a percentage discount on every purchase. And Trans World builds a database for highly targeted marketing.

Higgins addressed the DualDisc issue, saying that despite a recent NPD study showing that half of the people who bought a DualDisc did not realize it until they opened the package, the format has great potential. Of those who did not realize what they purchased, 72% said they would definitely or probably buy a DualDisc again, he reported.

Currently, only 25% of music buyers are aware of DualDisc.

“We must educate our customer. So a knowledgeable associate who takes the time to explain to customers what a DualDisc offers will not only increase sales, but will provide value to that customer, which will create a loyal customer,” Higgins said.

He pointed to used product as a way to increase sales and improve margins. “It is an important part of making our stores unique,” he said.

Regarding other product lines, Higgins noted that the weak DVD release schedule in the first half left comparable-store sales for the category down 3.6%. But the release schedule will be stronger in the second half, and catalog sales will allow Trans World “to present the customer with better value as we offer more attractive price points,” he said.

On the bright side, comparable-store sales of videogames were up 18.9% in the first half. Trans World executive VP/CFO John Sullivan noted. And the category will fare even better, thanks to such new platforms coming to market as Xbox 360 and Sony’s PlayStation 3.

Electronics and accessories also produced strong results in the first half. Higgins added that those lines, as well as videogames, “highlight the strength of our FYE brand. It is evident that our plan to become a full-entertainment retailer is working.”

But even as the FYE brand, used mainly in the company’s mall locations, continues to gain awareness, going forward the company’s free-standing brands present the greatest opportunity for store growth. “With 244 stores nationwide there are numerous opportunities to fill out existing markets and enter new markets with multiple locations,” Higgins said.

Despite the consumer press questioning whether brick-and-mortar stores can compete in a growing digital marketplace, Higgins tapped his oft-repeated philosophy that “digital music represents a tremendous opportunity for our company.”

Citing a recent Recording Industry Assn. of America study, Higgins said: “Digital music purchasers spent more than $90 a year on CDs. Customers who [only] bought CDs spent under $50 a year. The customer spends almost twice as much on CDs when they’re a digital customer.” He said.

As Trans World moves to execute its strategic vision for the second half, Higgins told the field staff that “it is important for all of you to understand you are the most crucial part of that vision. You are the face of this company...You deliver our message to our customers and define the brand experience for them.”


As everybody out there knows, Retail Track lists numbers, and some might say I like them a little too much. But I cannot help myself when someone throws something like digital downloads versus physical sales at me, like Nielsen Entertainment executives did during the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers’ annual convention held last month in San Diego.

At NARM, Mark Tindle, senior VP/GM of West Coast operations for Nielsen Entertainment’s music division, reported that digital album sales year-to-date have already surpassed last year’s total, with 9.1 million downloads for this year versus 5.5 million units for all of 2004.

Digital downloads now account for 2.3% of albums sold so far in 2005, compared with 0.8% for all of 2004. But the surge seems even greater for some acts.

For example, Coldplay’s “X&Y” had the highest digital download debut week, with 62,000 units. It currently is the biggest-selling digital album of all time, with nearly 139,000 units, or 6.8% of the 2 million copies sold this summer. Coldplay’s online sales in its debut week made Apple Computer’s iTunes one of the top five accounts selling that title.

The next-biggest one-week sales for digital albums is Jack Johnson’s “In Between Dreams,” which had scanned 24,000 units. It now has digital sales of 103,000, or 7.3% of the 1.4 million units it has moved this year, as of Sept. 4.

The “Garden State” soundtrack was an excellent case study in the impact of digital sales. The CD came out Aug. 15, 2004, and has sold more than 1 million units since then. However, its weekly volume has been low. The best week was at the beginning of this year, when the CD moved 40,000 copies. Without album sales breaking out, “Garden State” might have been stocked a little higher at times at brick-and-mortar retailers.

But 10 weeks after the album’s release it was digital downloads to the rescue. At that point, 44.8% of that week’s 21,000 scans were digital downloads. As of now, total digital scans on the soundtrack exceed 83,000 units, or 8.3% of the total.

And when looking at just digital sales for “Garden State” in 2005, it is apparent that the 63,000 digital scans account for 11.5% of the 549,000 units the soundtrack has tallied since Jan. 3.

Meanwhile, the biggest-selling digital album in 2004 was U2’s “How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb,” which scanned nearly 52,000 digital units that year. Since then, its total has risen to 81,000 units.

The real interesting data is how genre sales differ between digital and physical album sales. According to Tindle, as of Aug. 8 this year, alternative has 36% of the download share versus 21% of physical albums.

R&B/hip-hop experiences the opposite effect, with the genre scoring only 11% of digital album units versus 25% of physical album sales. Country and Latin also fare better in the physical space. Country is 5% of digital album sales versus 11% of physical sales, and Latin is only 1% versus 6%. Classical and jazz each have about 3% market share in both distribution channels.

While R&B/hip-hop’s album sales may be weak in the digital world, it is not so for the digital track configuration. R&B/hip-hop singles scored 26.6 million downloads, or 30% of all digital track scans as of Aug. 8, while modern rock had 25.2 million scans, or 29% of scans, and country had 17.7 million units, or 8% of track scans, according to Tindle.

As of Aug. 8, Nielsen Music reported that 184 million tracks had been downloaded. That number is spread across slightly more than 1.2 million different songs. The interesting point here is how those downloads break out. Of the 1.2 million plus songs that have been downloaded, 1.1 million have sold less than 100 copies. Together they make up only 7% of total track sales for the year.

On the other end of the spectrum, 2,600 tracks, or two-tenths of 1%, represent nearly 50% of total track sales. Since Aug. 8, total digital track scans have grown to 217.4 million.

The three most downloaded tracks this year, according to Nielsen SoundScan, are Gwen Stefani’s “ Hollaback Girl” (with 738,000 scans), Kelly Clarkson’s “Since U Been Gone” (with 681,000), and Green Day’s “Boulevard of Broken Dreams” (with 619,000). At the time of the NARM seminar, 46 different tracks had each sold more than 200,000 units. Only two songs achieved that watermark last year.

By the way, when last year’s download count is added to the total for “Boulevard of Broken Dreams,” the Green Day song becomes the best-selling digital track of all time, with 820,000 units as of Sept. 4. •

Additional reporting by Geoff Mayfield in Los Angeles.

GWEN STEFANI’S Hollaback Girl is the most downloaded song so far this year.
In many respects, Bob Morelli’s appointment to executive VP/GM of RED Distribution does not come at the best of times. The merger of parent company Sony BMG is not yet a year old, and Morelli is taking control of the division just after the June resignation of president Ken Antonelli.

And Antonelli is not the only key executive to leave RED this year. Former CFO Mitch Wolk, VP of sales and marketing Dean Tabacc and head of finance Greg Bell have all recently departed.

Morelli understands that these moves have brought many questions about RED’s future. Yet after he has made seven internal promotions, hired Lynn Hazan-DeVaul to head finance and launched several marketing initiatives, forgive him if he is tired of hearing rumors that RED is being further consolidated into Sony BMG or sold.

“While I have done with the RED staff and existing labels and potential labels is just articulate what is happening,” Morelli says. “This is an independent record company. My mandate is to run the company and take all the staff that’s good and see if there’s anything I can add.”

This month Morelli named former product manager Paul Reitz national director of catalog sales and marketing. It is a new position, and one that will almost exclusively serve RED’s 40-plus third-party labels. “If I can incrementally raise our business 10% just by zeroing in on catalog sales without interfering with our primary goal of artist development,” Morelli says, “everyone will be interested in this.”

He plans to add personnel to RED’s new-media and radio promotion departments. “I’m also reprogramming and mixing and matching some of our existing resources to beef up and address lifestyle and tour support marketing opportunities,” he says.

Additionally, Morelli has formed a college department to assist in grass-roots marketing, which will have a staff of 12 by Nov. 1. He is still looking to add labels, having recently signed Salt Lake City-based metal label The End Records and Studio City, Calif.-based Bandha Records, which is run by former RCA executive Brian Malouf.

Among the labels RED distributes are Metal Blade, Or Music, the Militia Group, New West, Ferret, Equal Vision, Broken Bow and the top-selling Victory. A number of recent successes went through the RED pipeline, including albums from Hawthorne Heights, Craig Morgan, Jason Aldean, Every Time I Die and As I Lay Dying. However, roots label Dualtone recently switched to Navaree, and it is widely known that RED's arrangement with Victory ends this year. All Morelli will say on that topic is: “Victory puts out amazing records and has as good a marketing setup as anyone in the industry. We are currently distributing them, and we are happy to distribute to them.”

Look for RED to work more closely with BMG labels, as RCA recently launched albums from Black Rebel Motorcycle Club and Longwave via the distributor. But RED will not, Morelli says, become a farm club for Sony BMG. “There’s probably somewhere between 1,000 and 4,000 SKU’s. I’m dealing with from third-party labels. I’m probably dealing with eight from Sony BMG. So that gives some perspective on what we are. We are an independent record company.”

CLARIFICATION: A recent column incorrectly identified the distribution for Atlanta-based indie Livewire Recordings. The debut from singer/songwriter Ashton Allen will be released Sept. 20 via Fontana, the independent distribution arm of Universal Music Group, through Fontana’s exclusive distribution agreement with marketing/management firm High Wire Music. Livewire does not have a distribution agreement with Fontana, and is working with High Wire for the Allen release.
According to a recent Ipsos Insight study, about 30 million mobile phone subscribers downloaded a ringtone in the last year. That is four times more than the previous year. The download and represents nearly one-quarter of wireless subscribers nationwide.

Exactly what this number portends is up for debate. However, the use of ringtones is now a pop culture phenomenon, and many people enjoy them for their own entertainment.

"At some point it will become popular culture, and we will have lots of different pet rocks," Xingtones CEO Jonathan Schreiber predicts. "If you want to promote your band, you have to do it on your phone, and then it's a long-term deal. My philosophy is to give people power and deliver against that power. The industry has the opportunity to [either] make something sustainable or piss off music fans to kill it off in its infancy."

A recent report claims that ringtones have become the biggest source of mobile music download revenue. In 2004, the total revenue from ringtones was $2 billion, and it is expected to reach $4.5 billion by 2008.

The market for ring tones is changing rapidly. Master ringtones, which feature short clips of the actual song, are expected to overtake their polyphonic forebears by the end of this year. This transition has redefined the ringtone business. Because music labels hold the rights to master recordings, they are cutting out the middleman, licensing the ringtones directly to wireless operators and reaping a greater share of the revenue.

In addition, companies like Xingtones are selling software that lets users create their own master ringtones by cutting 30-second clips from digital files. They have even started offering a ringtone creation service for $20 for a computer, $25 for a Blackberry, and $30 for an iPhone.

As these "novelty" tones grow in popularity, music-based ringtones will face tougher competition. And the music industry is responding with innovative products of its own. One example is the creation of ringtones for use as a ringtone.

"That's something the artists are really into, especially producers," says Greg Claman, a senior editor at Billboard. "They're participating in the medium." MTV has launched an initiative called Made Here that recruits top producers to create custom ringtones, which are then sold via a Web site and through partner Virgin Mobile, as well as Zingy. The company recently converted the soundtrack to the MTV Video Music Awards into ringtones, featuring original music from Lil Jon and Mike Shinoda of Linkin Park.

"It's time to have your top 20 songs as ringtones, but we're seeing an interest and a desire for a ringtone," Claman says. According to Universal Music Mobile VP/GM Rj Careff, the wireless industry has lit a fire under record labels to keep up with the ever-changing times.

"We have to constantly reinvent ourselves and the business, or we'll have no future in wireless," he says. "The biggest risk is if we don't adapt to the medium. We have to question conventional wisdom. Should we change our product to become more relevant to the marketplace and more relevant to the medium?"

HARMON KARDON ROCKS CARS WITH IPOD DOCK

Apple Computer CEO Steve Jobs says 30% of all cars sold in the United States by the end of 2006 will have stereo systems compatible with the iPod as a dealer-installed option. For the other 70%, audio manufacturer Harmon Kardon has designed the Drive + Play iPod docking system.

Drive + Play lets users browse and select songs stored on any iPod connected to the system and stream the music through the car's speakers. The system connects the iPod to the car speakers in various ways. It includes a wireless FM modulator that streams the signal through a car radio as well as an audio output line for vehicles with an auxiliary port. An audio input connection lets users route other signals (such as satellite radio) through the kit.

Drive + Play also powers the connected iPod, displays customized user menus and shuts off the iPod when not in use. The system costs $250 this month for $200 at various car audio stores.

—Antony Bruno
Like many natives of New Orleans, Allen Toussaint is an old hand when it comes to hurricanes. So, as Hurricane Katrina approached the Gulf Coast Aug. 29, Toussaint, 67, was not one to become too alarmed. He made his usual preparations, shoring up his home against the impending storm, and, as the forecast worsened, sought out the safety of a large downtown hotel.

But after the Crescent City began to flood, Toussaint, like tens of thousands of others, became a refugee, desperate to escape Katrina’s devastation. Thankfully, his story has a happy ending, as he described to Billboard.

For many, Toussaint is the quintessential New Orleans musician. Beginning in the late 1950s, he wrote dozens of hits under his own name and the pen name Naomi Neville (his mother) for artists like Ernie K-Doe (“Mother-in-Law”), Aaron Neville (“Tell It Like It Is”) and Lee Dorsey (“Workin’ in a Coal Mine”).

As he matured, Toussaint scored with hits for Dr. John (“Right Place, Wrong Time”), Glen Campbell (“Southern Nights”), Three Dog Night (“Brickyard Blues”), Bonnie Raitt (“What Do You Want the Girl to Do?”) and many others.

The producer, songwriter, pianist, arranger and singer was elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998.

Now ensconced temporarily in a New York hotel, Toussaint says he has heard from friends and colleagues like Paul Shaffer, who asked him to sit in Sept. 7 as a surprise musical guest on "Late Show With David Letterman."

Toussaint also got a call from Elvis Costello, who invited him to join "Wynton Marsalis and the guys" at a Sept. 17 benefit concert in New York.

Q: You stayed in New Orleans as Katrina approached. Tell us how you fared.
A: Well, Sunday, before the hurricane hit, I was at home. I had planned to ride the storm out, although I knew it was going to be a biggie. I’ve been through all of the hurricanes, and I’ve seen the usual damage, the lesser and the more. But this time I knew by the reports that I shouldn’t stay in my residence [near the fairgrounds], so I boarded up the windows as usual with numbered boards—because we’ve been through so many of these. I have boards stored in places and store them till the next time.

So, on Sunday the 28th, I decided to check into the Crowne Plaza Astor Hotel on Canal Street, fourth floor. It thought that would be a safe place to be until the storm would come and go as hurricanes have done before.

And of course, on Monday the 29th, Katrina hit. It immediately resulted in power outages and no running water, but I had brought plenty of water, and the hotel recommended filling up the bathtub just in case, and I did things as advised.

After the storm had passed, outside the hotel, on Canal Street, there was water just a little above the gutter. Which looked a little hopeful—like, once this goes down maybe we can return home. And I was able to go out the back door and walk around the French Quarter, which is the highest land spot in New Orleans, and there was no water into the quarter—not even in the gutters—which I was glad to see. Again, more hopeful.

But I remained at the hotel because I didn’t know the condition at other places, and it was not recommended that anyone try and return home.

But on the 31st was when everything worsened, when there was a break in that levee at the 17th Street canal, which started the water to rising like never before. In fact, when I went out the front door, I could see water seeping through the cement where you wouldn’t ever see water. It was very crudely-looking water, looked almost like crude oil.

Q: What happened next?
A: I knew I wouldn’t be returning home. So I decided I had better consider evacuation, which I had no intentions of doing before then. So I rolled my pants up and waded through the water, which was up to your calf on Canal Street, and walked around the corner to the Monteleone Hotel, which wasn’t nearly as wet, and I purchased a bus ticket to Houston. We waited for four hours, but no buses.

So, I saw a friend of mine who was walking down the street, and he informed me that those buses had been confiscated by some authorities to go over to the Superdome. However, he had a chartered school bus. So I paid a fee and boarded that bus to the Baton Rouge airport, where I spent the night. And of course there I could board a flight out.

And that morning, at 5:55 a.m., due to the kindness of my friend Josh Feigenbaum [of NYNO Records], and his constant message of “come to New York, come to New York,” I boarded a Continental flight, connected in Houston, and here I am.

Q: It must have been hard for you to take it all in.
A: It was almost surreal. But let me say: As bad as it was, and as bad as it is, since it happened in my city and ultimately I was safe, I was glad I was there to witness it firsthand. I’ve seen all the hurricanes that’ve come through, and I saw the biggest.

Q: How about your family? Your band? How are they doing?
A: I’m glad to say my son and daughter and their families are safe. When the weatherman announces anything near “hurricane,” they’re gone! They’re out of there! They left early, and I’m glad they did. They have their children and many more things they have to be responsible for than me just moving on my own. And of course they’re always trying to get me to go, but I stay at home. But this time, it was not a possibility.

I haven’t yet talked personally with my band, but my son and daughter have been in communications, and they got out. They’re movers. My camp also spoke with Irma Thomas. She was [out of town] on a gig, and the Neville Brothers were in Buffalo [N.Y.].

Me and the band are going to do the concert at [Madison Square Garden] on the 20th [of September]. And we’re doing Joe’s Pub [in New York] on the 18th and the 25th.

Q: What does the future of the New Orleans music scene look like to you?
A: As soon as the powers that be say we can return, under any condition, I’ll be back. I’ll be in New Orleans.

Q: How did the Letterman show gig come about?
A: Paul Shaffer called me. I’ve been friends with Paul a very long time. I’d been on the Letterman show before when we were doing the [1987 off-Broadway] play “Staggerlee.”

Paul called and [asked] would I “grace them with my presence,” and I said of course we would. We agreed on the date, and I went over and got with the band.

I love that band. We did a very rapid run-through, but Paul is a master. I don’t know of anyone who’s as fast and alert and who has more history and respect for the music. To be such a scholar and still such a student—he’s everything.

Q: Can you tell me about the phone call from Elvis Costello?
A: We had a good, long conversation. He’s a very dear man. He knows so much about our musical history. I think he knows as much about my songs as I do. Maybe more. He wants me to sing “Freedom for the Stallion” at the concert.

Q: Any new musical ventures we should know about?
A: I did a project June 3-11 out in California that’ll soon come out. The artists were Mavis Staples, Ann Peebles, Billy Preston, Irma Thomas and myself. The album is going to be on Starks/Warner. Joe Henry was the producer, and a fine producer he is. They’ve also requested for me to do a solo album for Starks/Warner.
BY RAY WADDELL

No matter how you measure it—membership numbers or new bookings—ArenaNetwork is on a roll.

Tours by Bruce Springsteen, Dolly Parton and Tony Hawk's Boom Boom HuckJam are among the recent performances ArenaNetwork was able to help bring to members.

An alliance of independent arenas, ArenaNetwork has grown to include 47 arenas since it formed in May 1998. The alliance provides a one-stop shop for promoters seeking to reach the markets the network represents from coast to coast.

"We're not dramatically going to expand from here," ArenaNetwork executive director Brad Parsons says. "We're sort of getting to [what] we think is a manageable level."

Parsons emphasizes that ArenaNetwork is focused on maintaining the best service for its members and promoters working with their buildings. "Does that mean we might grow some more in a couple of years? Sure, anything's possible," he says.

ArenaNetwork membership includes major-market venues like MCI Center in Washington, D.C.; Staples Center in Los Angeles; Philips Arena in Atlanta; and American Airlines Center in Dallas.

The group also represents such smaller-market venues as Ralph Engelstad Arena in Grand Forks, N.D.; Resch Center in Green Bay, Wis.; Idaho Center in Nampa, Idaho; and Qwest Center in Omaha, Neb.

And now more than ever, venues can state unequivocally that they have nailed down valuable bookings because of their involvement in ArenaNetwork.

"There are at least two or three shows a year that we can specifically credit booking to the ArenaNetwork," says Dave Brown, VP/GM of the American Airlines Center. "It may be the opportunity to buy into a tour or just the heads-up that a show is routing. The relationship has definitely paid off in more events for us."

The same goes for arenas in smaller markets. "Yes, we have gotten some shows specifically through the network," says Ken Wachtler, president of the Resch Center. "[This] was true with USA Gymnastics, Dolly Parton and a few others."

The organization's Web site, arenanetwork.net, describes its goals: "To use our collective knowledge, market position, resources and relationships to improve the number and profitability of events we host annually."

ArenaNetwork debuted with the aim of providing information to its members and strengthening networking among them to collectively boost bookings.

And information sharing is still a top priority.

"The major value is dissemination of information," Wachtler says. "I have contact with 40 other managers on a weekly basis. It can be questions about tours, insurance or box office. They are a great resource."

John Meglen and Paul Gongaware... continued on >>p22
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS (cont.)

ware—now co-presidents of Concerts West, a subsidiary of national promoter AEG Live—were major factors in the early development of the group.

For more than six years, industry vet Brad Parsons has served as executive director of ArenaNetwork, overseeing a Los Angeles-based staff of four.

ArenaNetwork seeks to streamline the booking process for agents and venues. The member arenas tout such services as research, marketing, database sales and creative deal-making.

The criteria for membership in ArenaNetwork is straightforward. In addition to paying an annual fee, members must not compete with other members and must have a minimum of 10,000 seats, the willingness to promote shows in-house and the ability to risk capital.

That last stipulation can be tricky, particularly for municipal buildings that often run at a deficit. If a date loses money, ArenaNetwork is not there for a financial bailout.

But ArenaNetwork provides valuable information to make a profitable date more likely. Likewise, the agents know what ArenaNetwork buildings have to offer in terms of availabilities.

"An agent calls, and I can get him avails on more than 40 buildings at one time, and that's very helpful," Parsons says.

Wachtler is one who believes it is helpful. "I get a heads-up on who is going on tour and can start to talk to promoters or agents in the planning stages," he says. "We are one of the smallest markets and smallest buildings in the network, so we have to sometimes work a little harder to get the shows. Brad is very helpful in making sure agents know Green Bay is on the map and doing business."

The fact that ArenaNetwork focuses on providing bookings is invaluable, Brown says. "Being part of an organization in the game every day with the right contacts makes all the difference," he says. "There's just too much going on in our industry to keep track of, and we could never achieve the same results pursuing third-party events on our own. As a member of ArenaNetwork, we know there won't be any missed opportunities."

Multiverse facility-management firms like SMG and Global Comcast, both based in Philadelphia, may have their own internal "networks" but do not find themselves butting heads with ArenaNetwork.

"I don't believe that we compete with ArenaNetwork," says Mike Evans, senior VP of sports and entertainment for SMG. "Both of our organizations are focused on the 'indoor' experience and provide alternatives to the amphitheater tours."

Global Spectrum COO John Page says his company has an internal network of 46 facilities and its own historical relationships with agents and managers. Still, "Global Spectrum has a great relationship with ArenaNetwork," Page says. "We work with them and have booked some shows with them, [such as] Dolly Parton, the tour of Olympic gymnasts and others."

But some promoters find ArenaNetwork superfluous.

"ArenaNetwork hasn't been effective in helping me," says Brad Wavra, VP for Clear Channel Music Group's touring division, producers of half the dates on Paul McCartney's current US tour. "I just make the individual calls to each venue that makes sense for each act I work with."

"Even so, McCartney is playing ArenaNetwork buildings, as are other mega tours. "Between Paul McCartney, the Rolling Stones, U2 and Neil Diamond, the biggest of the touring shows are playing arenas, and hopefully a lot of our arenas, so we're very pleased about that," Parsons says. "Overall, we're pretty happy with what we're getting, and some of the goals we hoped to accomplish are seemingly coming to fruition."

AREANENETWORK MEMBERS

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<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
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<td>ANAHEIM, CALIF.</td>
<td>Arrowhead Pond</td>
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<td>Philips Arena</td>
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<td>Delta Center</td>
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<td>ST. LOUIS</td>
<td>Savvis Center</td>
<td>20,003*</td>
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<td>Xcel Energy Center</td>
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<td>WASHINGTON, D.C.</td>
<td>MCI Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.</td>
<td>LJVM Coliseum Complex</td>
<td>15,272*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Members as of Sept. 1, 2005.

*Full curtain theater and/or lower bowl available.

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Bruce Springsteen (Solo Tour), Dolly Parton, Sting, Duran Duran, Norah Jones, Yanni, Michael W. Smith, Trans Siberian Orchestra & matchbox twenty.
Casino Bookings
Now A Sure Bet

BY JILL KIPNIS

Artists are no longer playing casinos in Las Vegas or Atlantic City, N.J., to live out their twilight years.

Not only are artists taking up residence at casino venues—witness the multiyear stints for Celine Dion and Elton John at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas—but casinos are increasingly being chosen as stops for touring acts.

Booking agents and casino venue operators say that casinos' appeal started shifting about five years ago.

"The only reason entertainment is there is to put people into the casinos; we all know that," says Troy Blakely, a booking agent at APA. "The difference now is that real promoters are running the show and not casino buyers."

Clear Channel, for example, promotes the majority of shows at the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa in Atlantic City, and AEG Live subsidiary Concerts West handles shows at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace.

Blakely says that Las Vegas' Hard Rock Hotel & Casino led the charge by bringing in such popular acts as the Who and the Rolling Stones.

From there, a combination of factors led to today's hot casino market.

For one, casino venues are increasingly seen as clean, no-hassle choices that are desirable for the acts and their fans. In many cases, casino facilities are newer than alternative venues in their respective markets, and can offer easy parking and restroom access.

"Everyone likes the venues. They are in a comfortable environment," says Ron Kaplan, a booking agent for Monterey Peninsula Artists. "We do make sure that the gaming facility is not in view, because we're not validating gambling."

Additionally, casinos are attracting a much younger crowd than in years past. The poker craze is bringing scores of potential music fans in, and offering a range of entertainment options is becoming more important as a retention tool.

"Casinos are looking for talent that attracts an audience that will come to them for the next 20 years," says John Harrington, a booking agent for Variety Artists International. "There's nothing old school about casinos."

It is not just Las Vegas venues that have a youthful reputation today. Casinos in New Jersey, Connecticut and elsewhere are attracting a variety of acts appealing to a range of demographics. (The vibrant Mississippi casino business has been shut down for the foreseeable future by Hurricane Katrina.)

In one week this summer, for example, the Borgata Hotel hosted Tom Petty, Kelly Clarkson, Backstreet Boys, Maroon 5 and the Black Crowes. At Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Conn., concertgoers could choose from Toni Braxton, LeAnn Rimes

continued on >>p26

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CASINO BOOKINGS A SURE BET (cont.)

from >p23

and Ludacris in one three-day span in August. Acts are increasingly seeing casino venues as places to start their careers.

Tom Cantone, VP of marketing and entertainment for Foxwoods, notes that such acts as the Dixie Chicks, Norah Jones and Alicia Keys played at his facility before they got big. The Four Theaters there seats 1,400, and another venue opening in three years will seat more than 4,000.

"Non-gaming revenue is growing faster than gaming revenue," Cantone says. "Concerts and nightlife is consistent with the kind of personality that is driving today's casinos."

He explains that at Foxwoods, the entertainment is "70% fresh new names."

Last year, casino venues in Las Vegas ranked in the top 10 in two-year-end Billboard charts.

The Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas was the No. 7 venue in the 10,001-15,000 capacity range, grossing $10.2 million, according to Billboard Boxscore.

The Colosseum at Caesar's Palace was the No. 1 venue with 5,000 seats or less. It grossed $116.5 million last year.

One practice that may have steered away acts in the past—ticket stripping—appears to have changed dramatically.

Larry Mullin, COO of the Borgata complex, says that only 50-75 tickets are held per show for the casino's use. The Borgata Event Center seats about 2,000. The complex is undergoing a $500 million improvement, which will include such non-gaming amenities as more restaurants and rooms.

"We sell the tickets to the fans," Mullin says. "We're definitely in the higher-priced ticket market, but it's what the acts can demand."

APA's Blakely says that "you know going in that there will be comps. You know what they are holding out for the high rollers. The best seats are held for people buying the tickets. You control that with the promoters and try to regulate where people are sitting."

Phil Shalala, VP of marketing for the Hard Rock in Las Vegas, adds that comping "is an element of Vegas you have to deal with. We need to take care of the players. We set aside a certain number and stick to that. The act is still getting paid." The venue at the Hard Rock—the joint—seats 1,800.

Monterey Peninsula's Kaplan adds that casinos often pay acts more than traditional venues or are willing to negotiate for better deals.

For example, on Las Vegas Boys dates this spring, the Sandia Resort and Casino in Albuquerque, N. M., offered an outdoor concert for 4,000-5,000 fans.

The Sandia "ended up reducing the ticket prices but paid in the fee we needed," Kaplan says.

Indeed, after paying touring acts, casinos are often in the red.

"It's an expensive venture for us to have a band play because of the costs that acts demand and the limited number of seats we have," Shalala says. "We're at a loss off the bat. We have to find other ways to generate additional revenue."

Carnells says that acts are often involved in bringing in that additional money.

Shalala says that for an upcoming Motley Crue show, frontman Vince Neil will take part in a poker tournament at the Hard Rock the night before.

"That will make people stay the whole weekend and you will make an event out of it," he adds. "A lot of acts like to play poker too.

How these casino concerts and events are promoted is also key.

In addition to working on many shows with Larry Mapd, who runs Clear Channel's Philadelphia-based Electric Factory Concerts, the Borgata runs aggressive newspaper and radio ads and has billboards in New York and Philadelphia that promote its shows.

"We don't want to overpromote so it comes off cheesy," Mullin says. "The band doesn't want to be promoted in a way that isn't tasteful to what the tour is about."

Not all acts are a proper fit for casino venues, however:

"I wouldn't put certain artists into casino situations," Kaplan says. "Certain alternative acts would never consider it."

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Devils & Dust Tour Lets Arena Theaters Shine

BY RAY WADDELL

Members of the Arena Network Theatre Group, a spinoff of Arena Network, have hosted perhaps their most high-profile tour yet after securing numerous dates on Bruce Springsteen’s recent Devils & Dust tour.

Like its parent organization, ANTG brings together venue managers to boost their business with shared information and consistent marketing. But it focuses on the theater-configurations that are increasingly set up within existing arenas.

ANTG stresses that these arenas function well as theaters, with such features as wall-to-ceiling curtains, ambient lighting, chandeliers or “clouds” and carpeting.

Longtime Springsteen manager Jon Landau, a known stickler for quality live environs, bought into the theater-in-an-arena concept for Springsteen’s mostly acoustic tour.

“We needed capacities that were bigger than small theaters but not as large as full arena size,” Landau says.

Nailing down the Springsteen tour was a major feather in ANTG’s cap.

“We collectively take pride in the fact we have gotten some traction, because to be perfectly honest, [Springsteen] would have played regular theaters if we hadn’t approached them,” Arena Network executive director Brad Parsons says. “I give Ron VanDeVeen and the gang at Continental a lot of credit.”

VanDeVeen, VP/associate GM of event booking for the Meadowlands complex in East Rutherford, N.J.—which includes Giants Stadium and Continental Airlines Arena—was instrumental in bringing the Springsteen camp onboard for arena theaters.

“When we first created our curtaining systems, we called agents, artists and managers, including Jon Landau, [Springsteen tour manager] George Travis and [Springsteen agent] Barry Bell,” VanDeVeen says.

A high-quality promotional book developed by Arena Network for theaters in arenas was part of the package VanDeVeen sent to the Springsteen camp.

“Apparently, Bruce looked at the book and hadn’t realized this was an option,” VanDeVeen says. “So we set up the theater configuration for him, and he, George Travis, Jon Landau and Barry Bell came up and checked it out, and they liked it.”

Springsteen is one of continued on >>p30
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ARENA THEATERS SHINE (cont.)

from >>28

the most high-profile acts to play ANTG stages. Others include Radiohead, James Taylor, Sarah Brightman, Harry Connick Jr., Sheryl Crow, Enrique Igle-
sias, Mary J. Blige, Martina McBride, Barry Manilow, Bob Dylan, Tori Amos, B.B. King, Incubus, Alanis Morissette, Matchbox Twenty, Cold-
play, Goo Goo Dolls, Nelly, Def Leppard and Crosby, Stills & Nash.

The configuration of a theater within an arena fills a need for a lot of acts, Parsons says.

"If an act goes into the small setup and sells it out at 5,000, it looks great and everybody says it's a big success," he says. "If that same act went in and did 5,000 people in a setup for 10,000 or 11,000, everybody says it's stiff. It's a total perception thing. So if you position it right, you're a sellout and look great; or position it wrong [and] you're a half-house and a stiff."

Springsteen, on the other hand, can easily fill the entire capacity of most arenas. Given the flex-
ibility of these curtaining systems, is it tempting to go beyond an intimate capacity when the al-
lotted seats go clean?

"We have done this show in Europe in front of as many as 9,000, and it worked perfectly," Lan dau says. "Somewhere in that range, maybe slightly larger in some cases, feels like where it should top out."

To maintain "quality control" and consistency for ANTG venues, minimum requirements have been established. ANTG venues must have:

• Proper curtaining from floor to ceiling that also goes into stands, not just behind the stage, and either cuts off lower arena bowl or plays to one end or side.
• A separate name from the arena, either sponsored (Sports Theatre, Pepsi Pavilion, etc.) or generic (Star Theater, Theater of the Clouds, the Theater at Arrow-
head Pond, etc.).
• Black masking to cover rink boards.

Some form of ambient lighting so that when patrons enter it feels different than a normal arena. Some ANTG se-
tups even have chandeliers.

• Carpeting in aisles (at least) for appropriate shows.

Parsons says the Springsteen tour has raised the profile of ANTG considerably.

"The Bruce thing will help us," he says. "We have more and more acts calling all the time about playing in our theater setups. And I can tell you categorically that we have improved the volume of those-sized shows in our arenas by probably 10% over the last two years, maybe even higher."

For his part, Landau feels that Springsteen's solo show has sacrificed nothing in aesthetics by booking arena theaters rather than tradition-
al ones.

"They have worked beautifully," he says. "The crowds have been totally responsive. The build-
ings have all worked extremely well to meet the special needs of a show like this, and the more modern, new arenas are a generally more comfortable place for our audience to see a show."

ARENANETWORK THEATRE GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Capacity</th>
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<td>ANAHEIM, CALIF.</td>
<td>The Theatre at the Pond</td>
<td>7,500-8,400</td>
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<td>ATLANTA</td>
<td>The Theatre at Philips Arena</td>
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<td>BIRMINGHAM, ILL.</td>
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<td>BRIDGEPORT, CONN.</td>
<td>Magic City Theatre</td>
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<td>CHAMPAIGN, ILL.</td>
<td>Assembly Hall Star Theatre</td>
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<td>CHARLOTTE, N.C.</td>
<td>The Theatre at the New Charlotte Arena</td>
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<td>CLEVELAND</td>
<td>The Theatre at Gund Arena</td>
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<tr>
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<td>GREENVILLE, S.C.</td>
<td>Pepsi Pavilion</td>
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<td>The Theatre at Toyota Center</td>
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<td>The Theatre at Air Canada Centre</td>
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<td>Joel Coliseum Theatre</td>
<td>5,839</td>
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This fall is shaping up as the most star-laden touring season for arenas in recent memory.

In fact, with so many high-ticket tours playing arenas, it would not be much of a stretch to suggest that this autumn could be the top-grossing one in the history of the concert business.

"I don't know if it's the busiest fall in terms of volume, but it certainly will be one of the busiest, if not the busiest, in terms of overall gross potential and dollars that are going to be brought in at the box office," says Brad Parsons, executive director of ArenaNetwork.

"I don't necessarily think that the attendance numbers will be the best ever, but we'll certainly be on the high end of what's going to be taken in. Hopefully, it will continue in the winter and the spring."

Among the many acts crisscrossing North America to play arenas this fall are U2, the Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Diamond, the Eagles, Bon Jovi, Green Day, Mötley Crüe, Elton John, Gwen Stefani and Nine Inch Nails.

Some dates for such acts as U2, the Stones, McCartney, Diamond and the Eagles (who are touring only in California) are sold out or close to it.

Whether other bookings will meet resistance remains to be seen. Some acts are, to use an industry term, bulletproof.

"The legendary acts are going to do sellout business no matter when or where they play," says Dave Brown, VP/GM of the American Airlines Center in Dallas.

Sales seem to bear that out.

"I don't think ticket sales would validate that these tours are cannibalizing each other," says Brad Wavra, VP for Clear Channel continued on >>p34
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PINK • ALAN JACKSON • TOM JONES • INCUBUS • DIANA KRALL
STEVIE NICKS • SHERYL CROW • JANET JACKSON • ALICIA KEYS
CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG • NORAH JONES • STONE TEMPLE PILOTS
MATCHBOX TWENTY • GOO GOO DOLLS • HOWARD STERN SHOW
ENRIQUE IGLESIAS • TOBY KEITH • SARAH BRIGHTMAN • KEITH
URBAN • MARY J. BLIGE • GLORIA ESTEFAN • AMERICAN IDOLS
LIVE • LENNY KRAVITZ • BROOKS & DUNN • MARIAN CARRIE TEARS
FOR FEARS • PUDDLE OF MUDD
JAMES BROWN • MACY GRAY • GEORGE CARLIN • FUEL • EVERCLEAR
BLONDIE • BILLY IDOL • BARENAKED LADIES
BUDDY GUY • SEAL • LIVE • AL GREEN • BRYAN ADAMS • SEX PISTOLS
ASHANTI • JESSICA SIMPSON • NEIL YOUNG & CRAZY HORSE • BLACK
CROWES • DON HENLEY • TIM MCGRAW • ALICE COOPER • JACKSON
BROWNE • 3 DOORS DOWN • BELA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES • SUGAR
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BOX-OFFICE BONANZA (cont.)

Music Group's touring division. "McCartney is completely sold out, and the demand for tickets is stronger this year than last time."

SMG senior VP of sports and entertainment Mike Evans adds, "It can't be too much [activity], since the majority of the shows you are talking about are already sold out and sold out, and more dates are being negotiated for some of the artists mentioned."

'This fall... will certainly be one of the busiest in terms of overall gross potential at the box office.'

—BRAD PARSONS, ARENANETWORK

But for those that go on sale later in the year, given the millions of dollars that have already been removed from many markets, the going may be tougher.

"I wouldn't want to be last on sale," Wavra notes.

"There may be some effect on the next tier of acts in some markets, but we haven't seen any lag in Dallas," Brown says. "So far we have 10 shows on sale for the fall and expect at least three more major bookings before year's end. Our expectation is for all these shows to perform extremely well, with most selling out."

Still, everyone is aware of potentially crowded markets.

"I don't think they will cannibalize each other, but less compelling artists in similar genres need to be cautious in their routing," says Peter Grosslight, worldwide head of music for the William Morris Agency.

But sales do not seem to be suffering, at least not yet. "So far, I am not seeing any resistance," Evans continued on >>p36

U2 will be among the superstar acts on the road this fall.
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counters. "Nine Inch Nails, Gwen Stefani, System of a Down all seem strong. A few months ago, I would have said somebody was going to be hurt, but it didn't work out that way."

The fall lineup for the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia is indicative of what some major markets have in store: McCartney (Sept. 22-23), Pearl Jam (Oct. 3), the Rolling Stones (Oct. 10-12), U2 (Oct. 16-17), Nine Inch Nails (Nov. 5) and Stefani (Nov. 6).

"We're very excited with the high level of talent already scheduled to perform at Wachovia Center this fall," Global Spectrum COO John Page says. "In our market—a very strong concert market—we believe there is plenty to go around, and this fall we literally have something for everyone."

Page says the Philly market is responding. "The demand has been hot. On many of these shows we actually wish we had more dates for them to play," he says. "In fact, in Philadelphia, when the concert scene is as hot as we have it this fall, people are excited to go to concerts, and it actually accentuates the market and helps all of our shows."

The Meadowlands complex in East Rutherford, N.J., which includes Continental Airlines Arena, has some 10 concerts set for this fall, including two Giants Stadium shows for Green Day and the Rolling Stones. Is that market tapped out?

Ron VanDeVeen, VP of Continental Airlines Arena, says no, and he sees a lot of sellouts or potential sellouts on his books.

John Page, right, COO of Global Spectrum, which operates the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, says fall tours will have 'something for everyone.'

"Can cannibalization happen? Sure, but it depends on the act and the market," VanDeVeen says. "We wouldn't do two country shows back to back in this market, for example. But everybody pays a lot of attention to what we book and when, and all of our shows are doing fine."

What is even more encouraging is that some newer acts are experiencing growth.

"It's very pleasing that some of these bands like Coldplay, Green Day, etc., are growing," Parsons says, "because who's kidding who—some day the Rolling Stones, McCartney and some others are going to stop."

"I'm frankly surprised sometimes—though pleased, obviously—that they're going as long as they've gone," he adds. "We as a group have to find new acts to replace all this stuff, and it's very encouraging that it's happening."
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IAAM Arena Conference Focuses On Bottom Line

BY RAY WADDELL

This year's Arena Management Conference will have a decidedly Texas flair, but the issues will not be geographically limited.

Produced by the International Assn. of Assembly Managers, AMC targets topics of interest to managers of these largest of indoor concert venues.

Scheduled for Sept. 24-27 at the expansive Gaylord Texan Resort & Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas, near Dallas, the 2005 AMC could draw record attendance.

Randy L. Brown, GM of the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum in Fort Wayne, Ind., and chairman of the IAAM's AMC committee, says the event typically draws about 300 attendees.

One month before the AMC, Brown says, registrations were already within two-thirds of projections.

"Considering the conference is held in Dallas, the events that we have planned,\n\n\n‘One of the nice things about the conference is that there are so many producers and promoters who attend.’\n\nthe property we're staying on and the ease of getting in and out of Dallas, I think we'll do very well," he says. "I predict record numbers for this meeting."

The AMC's program committee, headed by AMC vice chairman Darius Dunn, associate director of the O'Connell Center at the University of Florida in Gainesville, touches a wide range of topics.

"I think the committee has done an excellent job of putting together great programming," Brown says. "It certainly has a little Texas flavor, but there's something for everyone and some things people haven't done before."

When Brown cites "Texas flavor," he is likely referring to the titles of some of the panels. For example, there is "You Kin Always Tell A Manager but You Can't Tell 'Em Much—Show Biz Folks Paint The Pitcher," This particular panel, moderated by Kim Bedier, GM of the Everett (Wash.) Events Center, features such producers as Harlem Globetrotters director of booking Steve Lucci and Feld Entertainment booking director Mark Hennen.

A promoters session—moderated by Michael Marion, GM of Alltel Arena in North Little Rock, Ark.—is titled "Think The Quickest Way To Double Yer Money Is To Fold It Over And Put It Back In Yer Pocket?" It features promoter Danny Eaton of AEG Live in Dallas and PACE Concerts president Bob Roux.

Both should help arena managers prepare for what looks like one of the busiest fall touring schedules in several years.

"One of the nice things about the Arena Management Conference is there are so many producers and promoters who attend, so it's an excellent opportunity to interact with the people producing these events," Brown says.

Also of interest is a Sept. 27 reception at American Airlines Center in Dallas, which Brown calls "one of the premier arenas in the country." And a Sept. 25 opening reception will be held at IAAM World Headquarters in Coppell, Texas.

"There are a lot of IAAM members..."
who have never been to the world headquarters and a lot of people who donated to the brick [fund-raising] campaign that have never had a chance to see their brick," Brown says.

As online ticketing becomes more popular, one panel is billed as a talk with the technology experts. Hosted by Michael J. Cerha, director of facility services at the FedExForum in Memphis, the panel will include representatives from tickets.com; Wrightson, Johnson, Haddon & Williams; Cisco Systems; Daktronics; and Ticketmaster.

Other topics that will be addressed at the AMC include dealing with minor- and major-league tenants, capacity-specific town hall meetings, security issues and the next generation of arena design and construction.

"Security is an issue that everyone is still talking about," Brown says, adding that technical security issues for new buildings will be addressed. Also important is the discussion of relations with sports tenants.

"Whether it's indoor football, hockey or lacrosse, what do you do to fill the dates? And what [are the] details of the deals related to that, whether with promoters or working with franchises?" Brown asks. "Everyone wants a win-win situation, but how do you get there?"

Brown believes that being an arena manager today is much more stressful than in the past.

"Margins are slimmer, and the demands from municipalities to, worst case, break even or ideally make money put pressure on facility management that several years ago wasn't there," he says. "It's not just enough to have activity anymore. The days of subsidy from the city or county are gone. We all have to look not only at the revenue streams but also at the expense side of things."

On the expense side, costs for such necessities as power or housekeeping can, and should be, shared by public facilities, Brown says. "You have to think outside the box. This is not the same business it was a few years ago."
Roadwork ’05 Confab To Spotlight Venues

Billboard Conference Offers Plenty For Arena Managers

Roadwork ’05, set for Oct. 25-26 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, will include two days of topical panels and keynote sessions, as well as a series of round tables that cover musical genres and specific industry topics ranging from sponsorships and ticketing to production and security.

The most venue-oriented panel, “Rock This Town,” takes place on day two. The panel will explore how agents and managers, when routing a tour, can choose the right venue in each market, which is always a crucial decision. Representatives from clubs, theaters, amphitheaters, stadiums, arenas and other venues will discuss the state of their business and the current deal structures.

On board for this panel are: Jay Marciano; Concerts West president; Marty North; Promotions; Bob Boilen, Managing Editor, Pollstar; Mike Markalunas, GM, PlayStation Home Center; and Alex Duff, GM, High Times Hemp Fest.

Jay Marciano of Radio City Entertainment, above, and Concerts West's John Meglen, below left, will join conference discussions.

The art of the deal today and what makes a show is the only consideration. On board for this panel are Dennis Larsen, president of Artists Group International; Billy Joel, Metallica; Charles Attil, president of Charles Attill Presents (LaPalooza, Austin City Limits Festival); Chip Hooper, senior agent at Monterey Peninsula Artists; Dave Matthews Band, Trey Anastasio; Doc McGhee, president of McGhee Entertainment (Kiss, Chris Cagle); Simon Benshaw, president of Strategic Artist Management (Dixie Chicks, Miranda Lambert); and PACE Concerts president Bob Roux.

Roadwork ’05 will close with an awards reception that recognizes the concert industry’s top artists, venues and professionals for the year, based on the Billboard Boxscore chart. Recognition for finalists and awards is based on actual box office performance from Nov. 20, 2004, through Oct. 1, 2005.

Venue awards will go to those that grossed the most from concerts in such venues as arenas, venues with a capacity of 5,600 or less (in resident bookings and nonresident categories), amphitheaters, clubs and festivals.

With the heavy slate of major-league artists touring in August and September, venues and artists are advised to report their numbers in a timely manner so they can get all the box office credit that is coming to them. Even report the stiffs, as every dollar counts.

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**BOXSCORE Concert Grosses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST(S)</th>
<th>GROSS/AMPH/DATE</th>
<th>VENUE/LOCATION</th>
<th>ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>PROMOTER</th>
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<tr>
<td>JIMMY BUFFETT</td>
<td>$6,826,906/10/15</td>
<td>Cashman Field, Las Vegas, NV</td>
<td>8,275</td>
<td>Electric Factory Concerts</td>
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<td>COLDPLAY/LARK FLYLEY</td>
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<td>Alpine Valley, Wisconsin</td>
<td>10,804</td>
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<td>Madison Square Garden, NYC</td>
<td>14,488</td>
<td>Concerts West/AEG Live</td>
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<td>BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN &amp; THE E STREET BAND</td>
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<td>Air Canada Centre, Toronto, ON</td>
<td>11,953</td>
<td>Ron Delsener Presents</td>
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<td>GREEN DAY, JIMMY EAT WORLD, AGAINST ME</td>
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<td>Cross Insurance Arena, Portland, ME</td>
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<td>22,503</td>
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<td>Air Canada Centre, Toronto, ON</td>
<td>18,900</td>
<td>Chuck Morris Presents, Kroq Spotsilbte, Republic/Poly/Earring/Planet Entertainment</td>
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<td>Verizon Wireless Pavilion, Hartford, CT</td>
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<td>JON BON JOVI</td>
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<td>Air Canada Centre, Toronto, ON</td>
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<td>Belkin Productions</td>
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<td>DESTINY'S CHILD, MARIO, AMERICA, TYRE</td>
<td>$542,781/10/15</td>
<td>Center Stage, Atlanta, GA</td>
<td>12,619</td>
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<td>Bill Graham Presents</td>
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<td>檀香山, HI</td>
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<td>DESTINY'S CHILD, MARIO, AMERICA, TYRE</td>
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<td>American Airlines Center, Dallas, TX</td>
<td>9,306</td>
<td>PACE Concerts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New York promoter/talent buyer John Moore, who books such rooms as Webster Hall and the Bowery Ballroom; and Charlie Walker, COO of North American music for Clear Channel Music Group, who oversees CCMG’s amphitheater operation.

Another entertaining and informative panel will be “Take the Money and Run,” which opens the conference Oct. 25. The session will address whether today’s concert environment has become strictly a “checkbook business.” Promotes, managers and agents will discuss...
From 8-track to iPod. With those words, Earth, Wind & Fire co-founding member Verdine White succinctly distills the generation-spanning love affair between the band and its legion of fans. And after 35 years and more than 20 million albums sold, the group shows no signs of slowing down.

With six consecutive double-platinum albums to its credit, EWF will release its 23rd set, “Illumination,” Sept. 20 through Sanctuary Records Group. Two days prior to that, the group will open the 57th annual Emmy Awards on CBS with the equally colorful Black Eyed Peas. That pairing reflects EWF’s ongoing influence on contemporary music.

Meanwhile, “Illumination” finds the collective collaborating with a diverse lineup of acts and producers from the R&B/hip-hop world, including Raphael Saadiq, Black Eyed Peas frontman Will.i.am, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Floetry and Organized Noize. Hip-hop wunderkind Kanye West and R&B newcomer Raheem DeVaughn are the latest to embrace what each describes as EWF’s timeless legacy.

West’s new album, “Late Registration,” features the song “Celebration,” whose horn accents call to mind EWF’s signature sound. “So many hip-hop artists have been influenced by them,” West notes.

“What better steps to follow in?” asks DeVaughn, whose first single, “Guess Who Loves You More,” from his Jive Records album “The Love Experience,” inte-
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- Lifetime Achievement Honors from ASCAP
- Lifetime Achievement Honors from BET

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ILLUMINATION is EARTH, WIND AND FIRE'S 23rd album, featuring collaborations with Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, will.i.am, Raphael Saadiq, Big Boi, Kelly Rowland, Brian McKnight, Kenny G, Organized Noize, Sleepy Brown, Floetry and more.

The first single, "Show Me the Way" featuring Raphael Saadiq, was nominated for a 2005 Grammy for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals and reached Top 15 at Urban AC.

The second single, "Pure Gold," was the #1 most added single at Urban AC two weeks in a row and #2 most added at AC. It currently sits in the Top 15 at UAC.

12/31/04 — Performed on “Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve”
01/19/05 — “Tonight Show” performance with Kenny G
02/06/05 — Super Bowl Pre-Game Show with Black-Eyed Peas
02/08/05 — Hitch soundtrack in-stores featuring EWF's “This Is How I Feel”
02/11/05 — Tsunami benefit performance with Black-Eyed Peas
02/14/05 — Grammy Awards presenters
03/01/05 — Robots soundtrack in stores featuring EWF's “Love's Dance”
06/24/05 — Summer tour with Chicago starts — last year's tour was one of the summer's top grossers. Tour ran through 9/11
07/01/05 — “Today” show performance with Chicago
07/04/05 — Second “Today” show performance
07/03/05 — “Chicago and Earth, Wind and Fire Live At the Greek” DVD goes platinum
08/17/05 — Pre-release signing at Ft. Hood, America’s largest military base
09/18/05 — Opening performance on the Emmy Awards with Black-Eyed Peas
09/19/05 — Performance on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show”
09/20/05 — ILLUMINATION IN STORES
09/20/05 — Roll Bounce soundtrack in stores featuring EWF's “Pure Gold”
10/20/05 — Performance at City of Hope benefit
10/26/05 — BET Anniversary Tribute
11/15/05 — Target Holiday Campaign featuring EWF runs through 01/01/05
12/06/05 — NBC Tree Lighting Ceremony
12/17/05 — NBC's “Earth, Wind and Fire: A Tribute on Lee’ 2 hour special airs

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ILLUMINATION IN STORES 9/20/05
Their music . . . was food for the soul, with very conscious and self-motivating lyrical content.

—RAHEEM DEVAUGHN

The group EWF, also known as Earth, Wind & Fire, is an iconic band in the world of music, known for their soulful sound and influential music throughout the decades. They have been described as having a "heavy downbeat," which is a term used to describe their music's steady, rhythmic feel that can evoke a sense of depth and emotion.

EWF's music has been characterized as having "the feeling of a revolution," which is fitting given their role in shaping the sound of the 1970s and beyond. Many of their songs have become timeless classics, with hits like "September" and "Mighty Mighty" still being played today.

The band's members, including Maurice White, Verdine White, Al McKay, and Ralph Johnson, have been lauded for their contributions to the genre. Their music has been praised for its ability to transcend time and continue to resonate with new generations of listeners.

In addition to their music, EWF has been recognized for their influence on other artists. Their style and sound have been emulated by countless musicians, and their legacy continues to inspire new generations of performers.

EWF's music has been described as "a symphony for the soul," a fitting tribute to their impact on the world of music. Their contributions to the genre have been celebrated, and their music continues to be celebrated today.
Earth Wind and Fire

For 30 years you've been shining stars.

All of us at CAA congratulate you and wish you 30 more years of continued success.
Earth, wind and fire. These are some of the strongest elements in nature, and also one of the most influential acts in R&B music. Even those with a mere inkling of the group's musical legacy can rattle off a laundry list of Earth, Wind & Fire songs that have endured through the years. Whether it is the philosophical "That's the Way of the World" or the inspirational "Keep Your Head to the Sky" or the infectious "September," there has been an EWF song for every occasion.

Now the group—still manned by core members Verdine White, Maurice White, Philip Bailey and Ralph Johnson—returns with "Illusion," its 23rd album. Bassist Verdine talks with Billboard about the group's legacy and unending mission to inspire and entertain.

You have been on the road since June. How has the response been?
To the new generation we're like a new group, so they really are taking everything firsthand. [Older fans] have more history with the group, so you might wonder, "Does Philip still sing as great? Can Verdine still play as great? Let me check it out." And then when you check it out you say, "Wow!"

Which set of fans is more awe-inspiring for you—those that know you already and want to see if you've still got it or those new fans who want to get to know you?
It's a little bit of both. What happens is, at the end of the show both generations meet up and are excited about us in different ways. For one generation, it's a reaffirmation of the things you always liked about us, and it gives you hope to carry on with your lives. With the other generation, it's a little shot of them saying, "They're just flying, because they've discovered something that was really musical and they discover that their parents were right:

So many legendary R&B acts are no longer together. How have you survived?
The original intention was to make great music and, in our little way, to enlighten the world and raise consciousness. Playing great music and the passion for the work has kept it together. That's always the common denominator. That's really the glue that holds it together, and it's probably bigger than any of us.

Has there been a moment that stands out to you as one of your most precious or one of your most challenging?
We've had so many moments of accomplishment, as well as challenges. They're all different, and the more we go on they're almost one and the same.

There's sort of a flip side to it. On one side of the coin there's an opportunity or an accomplishment, and on the other side there are challenges. They sort of run together, and it's good, because it keeps you humble. It's like playing great music. Playing great music is not really easy to do all the time.

What makes it hard?
A big part of it is that you have to always challenge yourself and live up to the music that's presented to you and do it in a way that people can actually feel it. You have to actively keep yourself together to meet that challenge.

On your new album, you worked with people like Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Raphael Saadiq and Floetry. Why do you think these people are a good fit for Earth, Wind & Fire?
Raphael is a die-hard Earth, Wind & Fire fan, so he understood what was going on with us. Floetry kind of reminded me of the '70s, when urban music was really at its infancy. And Jimmy and Terry, in terms of typecasting, you'd never think of them with us because of their work with Janet [Jackson], but you have to remember they were in the Time, so they understood the dynamics of the band. So we were all not that far away from each other.

Was anyone concerned about where you should fall on the scale between old and new? Maybe five years ago—

continued on >>p48
WHITE (cont.)
from P46
most definitely 10—but not now, because
we've had a lot of building blocks and a lot of
confirmation of our work. In the last five years
we've [been inducted into] the Rock and Roll
Hall of Fame, [received] a BET Award and done
the Super Bowl. These things have really en-
abled us to turn the page. We can really be
ourselves.

It seems that there has always been a phi-
losophical and spiritual standard that EWF has
had to live up to. Has that ever become
burdensome?
At times we've had to look at ourselves and say,
"Wow, this is almost too big for us." The '80s
were an interesting and challenging time for
Earth, Wind & Fire. The world has changed
quite a bit since then. People are now asking
themselves different questions. We've had 9-
11, and we're trying to get deeper now. And
when people get deeper, they're thinking, "What
does that mean to you along with the questions
that we're asking?"

And that's where EWF comes in. Do you look
at this as a ministry of sorts?
Yeah, most definitely. We talk about that in the
dressing room all the time, because even after
we do the show I'm signing autographs for at
least two hours. We have 300 people just to
shake hands with after the show, and we can't
even get it all done. People are thanking us for
just making the music.

People from all walks of life?
All colors, all races, all ages. There was a guy
the other night whose sister came to the show
because he had tickets, but he was waiting for
a kidney transplant. She called him from the
autograph line, and we talked to him while he was in the hospital. And when we
played Chastain Park in Atlanta last year, a
lady came to bring her brother's bass that he
always wanted me to sign. He bought two
tickets to see Earth, Wind & Fire, but he wasn't
able to make it because he was killed in a
car accident the week before. So she came
to the show for him. These are the stories
that we get from people.

What accounts for the chemistry among you,
Maurice, Philip and Ralph?
We're brothers. We're joined at the hip. Obvi-
ously it was the right place at the right time.
To work with people and make music with them is
another level. Of course Philip, Ralph and I cut
our teeth on Earth, Wind & Fire under Maurice's
mentorship, so that was big. And we made it
when we were young, too, so our whole adult
lives we've been successful, and that joins you
at the hip, because not very many people have
experienced that together.

What is ahead? What is left for you guys to
conquer?
I never think about it. I think for us the world
is pretty much wide open. I think with African-
American groups, people always want to know
what the next thing is because there aren't re-
ally that many African-American legends, so it
sort of makes us stand out. But we're just doing
what we're doing. We're going to constantly be
bearers of light and be around as long as you
guys like us.

Earth, Wind & Fire have influenced
many of today's soul and hip-hop
artists with such classic songs as
"Keep Your Head to the Sky" and
"Shining Star."

Now, the group has enlisted several of the acts
it has inspired for its new album, "Illuminations,"
due Sept. 20 through Sanctuary Records Group.
It features collaborations with Floetry, Brian Mc-
Knight, Big Boi of OutKast and Kelly Rowland of
Destiny's Child.

Meanwhile, such producers as Organized Noise
(OutKast, Goodie Mob), Darren Henson and Keith
Pelzer (Floetry, Jill Scott) and Jimmy Jam and
Terry Lewis (Janet Jackson, Usher) lent their pro-
duction skills to the mix.

Philip Bailey says the group's approach to the
album was inspired by another legendary artist's
recent successful comeback—Carlos Santana, who
 collaborated with Rob Thomas on "Smooth." The
song, and the album it was from, "Supernatural,"
turned out to be the biggest hit of Santana's career.
"They were able to bring that record to radio,"
Bailey says. "So we decided that the neo-soul
movement would be a believable collaboration
for us, because the music is still intrinsically
rooted from traditional soul music and it's a very
conscious genre, philosophically."

The album was originally meant to be a solo
effort for Bailey but eventually morphed into a
group project.

"As we began to reach out to people, there was
a lot of people interested in coming to the party,"
he says. "I started thinking that this could be an
amazing project for Earth, Wind & Fire."

One of those excited at the opportunity to work
with them was singer/producer Raphael Saadiq.
Best-known for his work with '90s outfit Tony!
"Ton!" Toné! and Lucy Pearl, Saadiq teamed up with
the group on three tracks, including "Show Me
the Way," which received a 2004 Grammy Award
nomination for best R&B vocal by a duo or group.
"It was sort of like a dream come true," Saadiq
says about the experience. "It was just a privilege
and an honor for so many reasons."

Black Eyed Peas frontman Will.I.am—who

Congratulations to
Maurice White and Earth, Wind & Fire!

35 years of excellence
and yet another magical album.
What a privilege to represent such a national treasure!

Ed McPherson
McPherson & Kalmansohn, LLP

NEW ALBUM, FRESH START
FOR EWF
BY IVORY M. JONES

www.americanradiohistory.com
Earth, Wind & Fire and the Black Eyed Peas will perform together at the Emmy Awards.

Wrote, produced and is featured on "Lovely People"—agrees that the chance to work with the group was amazing.

"Earth, Wind & Fire has been the soundtrack to my life," he says. "I listened to them. I danced to them. I dreamed to them. Now, to have worked with them. . . . it just lets you know that your dreams do come true."

While EWF wanted to update its sound, it was important to the members and the label to also maintain the style that many have come to associate with the funk/soul outfit.

"We wanted to make a record that was artistically strong so that people would feel that they needed to own another EWF record," Sanctuary Group CEO Merck Mercuriadis explains. "We wanted to bring the band back into the new millennium and make an album in 2005 that was capable of standing up to their best work."

Mercuriadis is satisfied that Sanctuary is leaving no stone unturned in the marketing arena. "You need to reach people not just via radio or the TV, but via good old-fashioned marketing, which tends to be forgotten these days."

Sanctuary has planned an aggressive approach that is aimed at making the group more viable than it has been in recent years. The largest component pairs EWF with retail chain Target. Madelyn Scarpulla, Sanctuary senior VP of marketing, tells Billboard that in addition to featuring the group in print and TV ads, Target will also carry a limited edition of "Illumination" that will be available exclusively in its stores.

"I think the key to the retail component is the special promo we're doing with Target," Scarpulla says. "It's really huge."

Sanctuary is also releasing another limited edition through Circuit City stores, and has brokered a deal with home-shopping retailer QVC, which will be featured during the holiday season. As for radio, Sanctuary is currently working "Lovely People." Scarpulla says the single is being remixed and worked primarily to clubs and R&B/hip-hop stations.

Marketing and promotion aside, Bailey is hopeful that fans will recognize the effort that EWF put into creating "Illumination."

"For the first time in a long time, it was a magical moment where all the people involved came together," he says. "There was excitement and magic, it just felt good again.

Earth, Wind & Fire’s Top Singles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PEAK POSITION</th>
<th>DEBUT DATE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Let’s Groove</td>
<td>J (8 weeks)</td>
<td>Oct. 10, 1981</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Serpentine Fire</td>
<td>1 (7)</td>
<td>Oct. 15, 1977</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sing a Song</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>Nov. 22, 1975</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Getaway</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>July 10, 1976</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shining Star</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>Feb. 8, 1975</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nov. 19, 1976</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Got To Get You Into My Life</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>July 29, 1975</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>System Of Survival</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oct. 17, 1987</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Boogie Wonderland</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>May 15, 1979</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>After The Love Has Gone</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>July 7, 1979</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Earth, Wind & Fire’s Top Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PEAK POSITION</th>
<th>DEBUT DATE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raise!</td>
<td>1 (11 weeks)</td>
<td>Nov. 14, 1981</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All ‘N All</td>
<td>1 (9)</td>
<td>Dec. 10, 1977</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>Dec. 6, 1975</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>That’s The Way Of The World</td>
<td>1 (5)</td>
<td>March 22, 1975</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I Am</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>June 23, 1979</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Open Our Eyes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>April 13, 1974</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spirit</td>
<td>2 (8)</td>
<td>Oct. 16, 1976</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Faces</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
<td>Nov. 29, 1980</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Head To The Sky</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>June 9, 1973</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Touch The World</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nov. 28, 1987</td>
<td>ARC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Titles on these charts are ordered by peak position on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs charts. If more than one title peaked at the same position, ties were broken by the number of weeks spent at the peak. If ties still remained, they were broken by the number of weeks on the chart, and then in the top 10 and/or the top 40, depending on where the title peaked.
On her new album, Gretchen Wilson sings about being "on the stool side of the bar these days, buying everyone a round."

Like much of the album, "All Jacked Up," that lyric is an autobiographical glimpse into the meteoric career path of this toughie bartender turned country sweetheart who went from obscurity to superstardom in a matter of months.

As it does for all artists, fame came at the price of anonymity. But Wilson, who carved out a niche as country's "redneck woman," proudly boasts that she can still do her own grocery shopping or make a quick trip to Wal-Mart or the Home Depot, albeit in full disguise.

Fame—and a hooky new song called "Skool Ring"—briefly made Wilson the target of the Tennessee attorney general, who objected to what he viewed as Wilson's endorsement of smokeless tobacco products.

In August, Attorney General Paul Summers sent Wilson and Epic Nashville a three-page letter expressing his concerns over what he viewed as her "promotion of smokeless products, particularly as it related to the youth who attend your concerts and listen to your music."

The letter called Wilson "a role model for the youth of this country" and asked her to "avoid glamorizing and normalizing the use of smokeless tobacco products." Ultimately, it asked her to cease holding up a can of Skool while performing the song.

While the issue was front-page news in Tennessee, Wilson and her manager, Dale Morris, quickly quashed the controversy when Morris called Summers' office and said the singer would immediately stop displaying the can in her performances.

"I have a daughter of my own [and] I would never try to push any kind of tobacco or alcohol product or anything that's damaging to anybody's health on anybody," Wilson tells Billboard. "I don't want kids out there to go buy Skool and start dipping because Gretchen Wilson does it."

In fact, she is convinced that fans who really get her and her music understand that her primary message is to "be yourself and be proud of that."

Wilson says she began holding up the can during the song mainly because many people, including Heart's Nancy Wilson, thought Wilson was singing about a "skull ring." Some asked if the song was about a biker.

While Wilson says Summers made a reasonable point, she still defends the song, which she describes as "so Loretta Lynn."

"It's a cute song and it's about a guy. It's not about Skool," she says. "I would never want to apologize for my lyric and my song."

Sony Music Nashville president John Grady says "Skool Ring" is "an educational walk through middle America for the rest of the intelligentsia."

The song refers to the round mark left in the back pocket of those who regularly carry a can of snuff there.

**ONE BUD WISER**

Wilson's sophomore album hits U.S. stores Sept. 27 and will be simultaneously released in Canada and Australia; release dates in other countries will follow. In the United States, the album is expected to be one of the fall's biggest sellers.

On it, Wilson duets with Merle Haggard (on "Politically Uncorrect") pays tribute to George Jones ("One Bud Wiser") takes a shot at Paris Hilton ("California Girls") and even covers a Billie Holiday classic on a hidden track ("Good Morning Heartache").

The new album comes 16 months after the release of her debut, "Here for the Party," which has sold 3.8 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album spent nine weeks at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart and peaked at No. 2 on The Billboard 200. It also spawned the top five singles "Here for the Party," "When I Think About Cheatin'" and "Home wrecker," as well as Wilson's attention-grabbing "Redneck Woman," which spent five weeks at No. 1 on the Hot Country Songs chart.

"Here for the Party" earned Wilson trophies from the Recording Academy, the Country Music Assn., the Academy of Country Music and Billboard. Just a year into her professional career, ACM members elected her female vocalist of the year.

The new album's title track flew into the top 10 on Hot Country Songs in an astonishing seven weeks. The album's second single will be the ballad "I Don't Feel Like Loving You Today."

Jon Anthony, PD of XM Satellite Radio's mainstream country channel, Highway 16, likes the consistency of the two albums.

"Fans obviously loved her 'what you see is what you get' approach to the debut project, so it only makes sense to give them more of what they want," Anthony says. "I doubt that Gretchen's in for the sophomore slump."

Grady thinks Wilson has achieved a new level of confidence as a singer, songwriter and producer on the second album.

"The record is more about her," he says, noting that on the first album she had "a lot of guidance by a lot of other people."

"The first record defined her," he says. "But from songwriting to song selection to musician selecting to producing and sequencing, she has played a far larger role in this one."

Wilson, who is signed to Sony/ATV Music Publishing (ASCAP), co-wrote seven of the album's 12 tracks and co-produced it with Big & Rich's John Rich and Sony Music Nashville.
executive VP of A&R Mark Wright. Rich co-wrote six of the album’s songs.

Wilson agrees that she has found at least a comfort level if not a confidence in her role as co-producer. Having been through the process once, she felt more like she knew what she was doing this time around.

“When you make the first record there’s a lot of little things you realize later on that you wish you’d caught, or that you’d went ahead and spoken up about or that you’d make a different decision on,” she says. “Those little things come back to haunt you every time you [hear] that song on the radio or listen to the CD. On this record I felt like I was a lot more careful. I didn’t hesitate at all. If something didn’t feel right, I just immediately spoke up.

“I wanted it to be as perfect as it could and as natural and as much me as it could be,” she adds.

Anthony believes Wilson has broken the mold for female country artists. Previously, he says, female artists had to be “model-like striking beauties” with “sweet, angelic voices.” Now, he says, “Gretchen’s success has proved that fans can be just as attracted to the girl next door who is just as raw and real as they are.”

UPS AND DOWNS OF FAME

Wilson bought a new house a year ago and estimates that she has spent just two months in it since. On the road, however, she has graduated from bunking with her band on one bus to having four buses, including one that is tricked out exclusively for Wilson and her family, including 5-year-old daughter Grace, the product of Wilson’s relationship with her longtime boyfriend.

While some artists find a quick rise to fame a bit frightening, that was not the case for the 32-year-old Wilson, who has lived a hard-knock life. “I’ve seen my share of craziness so I don’t think I’m too afraid of anything,” says the Pocahontas, Ill., native. “I wouldn’t be scared of [fame] because it’s something I’ve been working for my whole life.”

But she concedes the experience has been “mind-boggling. It definitely moved so fast for me, probably faster than it has for anybody else, at least for a long time.”

For the first year of her career as a major-label artist, Wilson says she was just trying to keep up. “I was constantly second-guessing whether I covered everything, whether everything was done at the end of the day.

“It was such a quick-paced thing, and it still is,” she says. “Being on the road with Kenny Chesney all summer long I can see that it still is for him. I think it’s a process that really just never stops.”

At the same time, she adds, “it’s definitely rewarding, and I think it’s one of those things that you continue to do until the day that either you decide or the fans decide that you don’t do it anymore.”

But while she has wanted it her whole life, Wilson has still found the fame a bit unsettling.

“In my free time I like to just be Gretchen,” Wilson says. “I don’t want to be Gretchen Wilson. I don’t want to be the singer. I just want to be the mom.

“I’m just a real plain Jane regular person.”

For an artist who literally had her vehicle repossessed the day she signed her deal with Sony, financial security has been the biggest upside of success.

In the past, she says, “I’ve had to file bankruptcy . . . [by] myself with no representation. I’ve struggled and fought my whole life just to keep $100 in my bank account. It was always so stressful. And then having a child as I did, the stress got worse and worse wondering how I’m going to provide for my future. I’d have days where I’d sit around thinking, ‘I’m just a demo singer. I’ve got nothing in my future to offer this child.’

Now, Wilson says, she does not have to worry about paying the water bill or affording new clothes for her daughter.

Today, she adds, “my stress has moved into a different place. It’s more about my art. But that’s a good kind of stress to have.”

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK

Wilson, who is managed and booked by Dale Morris & Associates, has been visible all summer opening Chesney’s Somewhere in the Sun tour. In November and December she will hit the road with Big & Rich.

Cingular Wireless has sponsored Wilson’s tour with Chesney, and Cingular customers were the first to hear the single “All Jacked Up,” when it was made available as a ringtone, via the carrier’s Cingular Sounds program, before it was available on radio or at retail.

Key TV appearances scheduled through the end of the year include “Dateline NBC,” “Today,” “Live With Regis and Kelly” and “CMT Home Blitz.” Wilson also performed Sept. 10 on the Hurricane Katrina relief concert telecast on MTV, VH1 and CMT. Print features are planned for Parade magazine, The New York Times Magazine, People, Entertainment Weekly, Blender and Maxim.

Grady says the label’s biggest marketing challenge is “finding the time to do everything that is available right now because when somebody gets this famous this fast, there’s a lot of opportunity.”

But Sony’s primary goal for “All Jacked Up” is strikingly simple: “Get it immediately in front of the people who bought the last one,” Grady says, “and then try to get it in front of [even] more people.”

PHOTO BY ROY HOBBS/WHITEWATER.COM

SEPTEMBER 24, 2005 | www.billboard.biz | 51
Media and content companies are embroiled in a tug of war for a bigger wad from consumers' wallets, but just how far can entertainment spending stretch?

That is the quandary companies are facing as they heap a dizzying array of new subscription offers and digital delivery services upon consumers.

"When you start to add up everything people are spending, the question is, Where does it start to top out?" asks Sean Ryan, CEO of San Francisco-based gaming venture Done-nerwood Media and a veteran music subscription executive. According to Veronis Suhler Stevenson, an investment bank, the top is nowhere in sight when it comes to overall media and entertainment spending.

In its annual communications industry forecast, the investment bank is predicting that in five years the average consumer is going to be forking over more than $1,000 per year for media-related products and services, up from $795 in 2004.

"People have been talking about subscription overload for at least 10 years, ever since cable rates started going up. And it hasn't happened yet," says Dan Sheeran, senior VP of premium consumer services at RealNetworks. "That is not to say it will never happen. But overall, consumers continue to spend more total income on entertainment and a larger share of their income on entertainment."

How big a slice of the total consumer media budget is spent on music is another story. Veronis Suhler Stevenson estimates that spending on physical recorded music will slip to $10.9 billion in five years, down from $12.1 billion in 2004.

In the last five years, average annual consumer spending on CDs and other physical recorded-music formats has dropped by more than $13.50 to $49.39 in 2004; by 2009 that figure is expected to sink another $7 to $42.39, according to Veronis Suhler Stevenson.

New distribution platforms are poised to help the recording industry replace some of its lost ground in CDs. However, it remains to be seen whether they can expand overall consumer music spending.

The outlook for satellite radio during the next five years is more bullish than digital music. Satellite radio subscription spending is expected to reach $2.88 billion by 2009, up from $284 million last year, according to Veronis Suhler Stevenson.

Digital music spending, which totaled $330 million in 2004, is expected to team with online gaming sales to drive Internet content spending during the next five years, though the investment bank is not directly forecasting digital music growth.

Jupiter Research estimates that digital music sales will surpass $1.7 billion by 2009, accounting for 12% of consumer music spending.

These projections could push total music sales beyond the $12 billion mark within five years.

However, in the face of rising gas prices, concerns are surfacing that subscription fatigue may become an issue in the music space as consumers weigh the adoption of competing and sometimes overlapping offerings, including on-demand music, satellite radio, à la carte downloads, ringtones, ringbacks and music video downloads.

Barry Sosnick, president of Earful, an industry research firm, argues that music finds itself on the lower end of an entertainment consumption scale that values videogames and DVDs more highly.

"The music industry has been ignoring its relative spot in the pecking order compared to the competing forms of home entertainment," he says. "Income plays into the way consumers allocate their budget among those various choices."

To be sure, participating in music's digital future is not cheap. A consumer who has Napster to Go for use at home and while exercising, an XM Satellite Radio system in the car and a Verizon Wireless handset that takes advantage of new third-generation network tech-
technology can spend in slightly more than a month on music what the average consumer currently spends in an entire year.

A Napster to Go subscription costs $15 per month. XM is another $12.99. Ringbacks through Verizon Wireless are $1.99 annually per tone, plus a monthly fee of 9 cents; master ringtones are $2.99 apiece. If there are music-related games and images being offered, a game costs $2.99 per month and wallpaper images are another $1.99 each. Downloadable music videos cost $5.99, after a $15 per-month access fee to Verizon’s Vcast network.

That sort of proposition has many label executives salivating, but how many such digital music hyper-consumers really exist?

Digital music executives acknowledge that the industry is still attempting to effectively educate the market about subscriptions.

“No one has done a good enough job yet of articulating what the value of these services are,” says Zack Zalon, president of Virgin Digital.

Shifts in the music spending landscape come at a time when consumer spending on other media products is growing dramatically.

Music and its new array of digital choices are facing stiff competition from movies on demand, digital video recorders, online movie services, DVD and videogame rental subscriptions and online gaming subscriptions.

In the last five years, annual per-person spending on DVDs and home video is up more than $45 to $125 per year, cable TV spending is up $76 to $255 per year and Internet spending (including access fees and content) has risen $79 to $135 annually.

In five years, Veronis Suhler Stevenson expects the average consumer to be spending more than $320 per year on cable and/or satellite TV (an increase of $65), more than $180 per year on home video (up $55) and $177 on the Internet (up $44).

Likewise, spending on wireless content and videogames—categories that, when combined, accounted for less than $30 of the average consumer’s total annual media budget five years ago—are expected to top $86 per person per year by 2009, Veronis Suhler Stevenson reports.

To grab their share of the spending, digital music services are pursuing multiproduct strategies and strategic partnerships with other companies. For example, RealNetworks offers a combined music, gaming and streaming video package called SuperPass for $13 per month.

Looking to address the growing convergence with satellite radio, Napster and XM announced plans to develop an integrated music service that will allow downloadable music and satellite programming on a single device.

Napster is also pushing aggressively into the mobile space: partnering with Ericsson for a planned mobile music service, touting its current compatibility with a number of other Windows Media-enabled mobile phones and offering Napster-branded ringtones.

Music subscription services are also teaming with Internet service providers on bundled offers. RealNetworks has partnered with Comcast to make its Rhapsody service free to the latter’s broadband Internet customers.

Napster recently announced a pact with BellSouth to offer a free three-month trial subscription to Napster to Go to the telecommunications giant’s new DSL subscribers.

Meanwhile, Yahoo Music Unlimited is attempting to address the crowded marketplace through aggressive pricing. The service costs $60 for an annual subscription or $6.99 per month—half of what Rhapsody and Napster are charging.

A recent study from Parks Associates suggests that Yahoo may be on the right track. Analyst Harry Wang argues that portable music subscription services will have to drop to less than $10 per month to attract a significant clientele.

“All the data suggests anything over $10 is a killer,” a subscription executive acknowledges. “When presented with a subscription offer, $10 and below are still the magic price points.”
300,000 SPINS
Naughty Girl/ Beyonce Knowles /COLUMBIA/SONY URBAN
Slow Motion/ Juvenile Feat. Soulja Slim /UNIVERSAL
Freak-A-Leek/ Petey Pablo /JIVE/Zomba
Differences/ Ginuwine /EPIC
Miss Independent/ Kelly Clarkson /RCA

200,000 SPINS
Scars/ Papa Roach /GEFFEN
Behind These Hazel Eyes/ Kelly Clarkson /RCA
There Goes My Life/ Kenny Chesney /BNA
Drift & Die/ Puddle Of Mudd /FLAWLESS/GEFFEN
No Shoes, No Shirt, No Problems/ Kenny Chesney /BNA
Let's Get It Started/ Black Eyed Peas /A&M
I Go Back/ Kenny Chesney /BNA

100,000 SPINS
Pon De Replay/ Rihanna /DEF JAM/IDJMG
Don't Cha/ Pussycat Dolls /A&M
Let Me Hold You/ Bow Wow Feat. Omarion /SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA
Lose Control/ Missy Elliot /VIOLATOR/ATLANTIC
Get It Poppin'/ Fat Joe Feat. Neely /ATLANTIC
Beverly Hills/ Weezer /GEFFEN
Fast Cars And Freedom/ Rascal Flatts /LYRIC STREET
The Hand That Feeds/ Nine Inch Nails /INTERSCOPE
Best Of You/ Foo Fighters /RCA
Making Memories Of Us/ Keith Urban /CAPITOL
Charity/ Gavin DeGraw /J
Listen To Your Heart/ D.H.T. /ROBBINS
Something More/ Sugarland /MERCURY
Pimpin' All Over The World/ Ludacris Feat. Bobby Valentino /DTLP/DEF JAM/SOUTH/IDJMG
Breathin' (2 AM)/ Anna Nalick /COLUMBIA
Save A Horse (Ride A Cowboy)/ Big & Rich /WARNER BROS.
Songs About Me/ Trace Adkins /CAPITOL
As Good As I Once Was/ Toby Keith /DREAMWORKS
Home/ Three Days Grace /JIVE/Zomba
1 Thing/ Amerie /RICH CRAFT/SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA
Ordinary People/ John Legend /Q'O.D./SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA
Deny/ Default /TVT

50,000 SPINS
Shake It Off/ Mariah Carey /ISLAND/IDJMG
Alcohol/ Brad Paisley /ARISTA
Play Something Country/ Brooks & Dunn /ARISTA
Help Somebody/ Van Zandt /COLUMBIA
These Words/ Natasha Bedingfield /EPIC
Must Be Nice/ Lyfe Jennings /SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA
Back Then/ Mike Jones /SWISHAHOUSE/ASYLUM
Feel Good Inc./ Gorillaz /VIRGIN
Right Here/ Staind /ATLANTIC
Make Her Feel Good/ Teairra Mari /MUSICLINE/ROC-A-FELLA/IDJMG
Cool/ Gwen Stefani /INTERSCOPE
Do You Want Fries With That/ Tim McGraw /Curb
Summer Nights/ Lil Rob /UPSTAIRS
A Real Fine Place To Start/ Sara Evans /Curb
Badd/ Ying Yang Twins /TVT
Dem Boyz/ Boys N Da Hood /BAD BOY/ATLANTIC
Wake Me Up When September Ends/ Green Day /REPRISE
This Is Your Life/ Switchfoot /COLUMBIA
Outta Control (Remix)/ 50 Cent Feat. Mobb Deep /INTERSCOPE
U Will Make Me Wanna/ Jadakiss Feat. Mariah Carey /INTERSCOPE
Creatures (For A While)/ 311 /VOLCANO/Zomba
Que Me Quedas Tu/ Shakira /SONY DISCO5
Everything To Me/ Avalon /SPARRROW
Play/ David Banner /SRC/UNIVERSAL
Dreams/ Game /INTERSCOPE

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NEW 'DAY' DAWNS FOR BON JOVI

To Jon Bon Jovi, each new Bon Jovi album is a musical diary chronicling moments in time. But for the Island Def Jam set “Have a Nice Day” (out Sept. 20), the veteran rocker says he looked further within himself and at the world than he has in the band’s 20-year history.

“There are songs that are socially conscious, especially in light of what happened both [in the] pre- and post-election period in our country, when I witnessed polarization that I have never seen before,” Bon Jovi says. On a personal level, he says, “songs like ‘I Wanna Be Loved’ are more introspective than I’ve ever been.”

It is that combination of personal revelations and universal themes that has attracted a global audience and spurred record sales past the 100 million mark worldwide for the quartet.

And now, the band that has always been a lot rock ’n’ roll may even be a little bit country. In addition to the title track, which is No. 17 on the Billboard Adult Top 40 chart and No. 12 on the Heritage Rock chart, there are plans for IDJ’s sister label, Mercury Records Nashville, to work the song “Who Says You Can’t Go Home?” to country radio. The song is a duet with Jennifer Nettles, frontwoman for hot country group Sugarland.

Bon Jovi and bandmates Richie Sambora, David Bryan and Tico Torres taped an episode of “CMT Crossroads” with Sugarland that is airing repeatedly on CMT in September. The album will include versions of the song with and without Nettles, who Bon Jovi calls “an incredible talent.”

In part, via the country exposure, Bon Jovi hopes the new CD will find a wide audience, but says he does not create music with that goal in mind. “The magic is, we don’t gun for anybody,” he says. “‘What happens, happens naturally . . . . We were as surprised as anyone when ‘It’s My Life’ found a whole other generation of people, really young kids. Who knew?’

He sees such new songs as “Welcome to Wherever You Are” and “Last Man Standing” (a tribute to Bob Dylan) appealing to adult listeners while Bon Jovi’s 10-year-old son “and his friends on their surfboards are cranking ‘Have a Nice Day’ and will play that next to a Green Day record.”

Eight of the 12 tracks on “Have a Nice Day” were produced by Bon Jovi with songwriting partner Sambora and John Shanks (who also wrote four tracks with Bon Jovi and Sambora). Rick Parashar also produced four tracks with Bon Jovi. 

continued on pg 58

FACT FILE

Label: Island Def Jam
Management: Paul Korzilus, Irene Schreibman, Bon Jovi Management; Jack Rovner, Ken Levitan, Vector Management
Booking: Creative Artists Agency
Publishing: Universal Music Publishing (Bon Jovi), Sony/ATV Music (Richie Sambora) (ASCAP)
Best-selling album: “Slippery When Wet” (1986), certified 12 million by the Recording Industry Assn. of America
Last studio album: “Bounce” (2002), 714,000
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CeCe Winans’ Family Affair

NASHVILLE—For CeCe Winans, music, family and faith have always been closely intertwined. So it continues on “Purified,” which came out Sept. 11. The follow-up to her successful “Throne Room” is a diverse collection featuring contributions from sisters Angie and Debbie Winans as well as a track helmed by her nephew Mario Winans.

“I’ve never worked with a producer who called me ‘Auntie’ before,” says CeCe, who began her career as part of a Grammy Award-winning duo with brother BeBe before launching a solo career. “I love Mario, and he’s turned out to be an incredible producer and writer. We had a lot of fun. I look forward to working with him more.”

Mario co-wrote and produced the energetic anthem “Pray” while Angie and Debbie join CeCe on “Always Sisters.” “I think this CD makes you smile,” CeCe says. “It’s inspiring and has great messages about love and relationships.”

Mark Beyer, music buyer for the Nashville-based LifeWay Christian chain, expects CeCe’s project to be a brisk seller based on her track record at Christian retail.

Radio should further fuel sales. “Pray” is No. 4 on the Billboard Hot Gospel Songs chart, and “All That I Need” is being worked to AC radio.

“If a song gets to be a pretty big hit, it makes the whole boat rise,” Beyer says of the impact a mainstream hit can have on a Christian artist’s career.

CeCe is no stranger to mainstream audiences, having enjoyed crossovers: success with BeBe. Most of the tracks on “Purified” reunite her with producer Keith Thomas, who was instrumental in the duo’s early career.

“Keith is incredible, but he will drive you crazy,” CeCe says with a laugh. “He wants everything to be right and he works me really hard, but you have to appreciate him for his perfectionism after you hear the whole project.”

CeCe and Thomas co-wrote six songs, including the title track, “Purified.”

FACT FILE

Label: Pure Springs Gospel/INO Records/Epic Records/Sony Urban Music
Management: Demetrij Stewart, Wellspring Entertainment
Booking: Wellspring Entertainment
Publishing: Little Pookys Music (BMI)

Best-selling album: “Alabaster Box” (1999), 560,000
Last album: “Throne Room” (2003), 446,000

Colorful World,” “All That I Need” and “I Promise.” “All That I Need” shares a message particularly close to her heart.

“The only thing that matters at the end of the day [is], Do you love God? Do you have the love of God in your life, and do you love your brothers and sisters? Because that’s the only thing that’s going to stand through the test of time,” she says.

On the business side, CeCe has her own company, Wellspring Entertainment, which includes her Pure Springs Gospel label. Pure Springs partners with INO Records in the Christian market and with Sony Urban Music. She anticipates a broad audience for the record that includes “Christian consumers [and] traditional gospel consumers as well as R&B consumers.”

With “Pray” already a hit at gospel radio, Ellis says there are plans to work it to adult R&B stations. The next gospel single will be “He’s Concerned.” To increase exposure, CeCe will visit “The Oprah Winfrey Show,” “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno,” and other TV outlets.

A DualDisc will be released in October with exclusive interview footage and a live performance recently filmed in Nashville.

CeCe will do select concert dates this fall, and plans to launch a major tour in the spring. In the meantime, she is gearing up for a girls conference in October called Always Sisters.

“Kirk Franklin is coming in,” she says of the Nashville event. “Mary Mary is coming in. We have quite a few people coming. I feel an awesome responsibility to pour into the next generation. We want to equip our girls with strength, purpose and remind them of who they are, who God is and how God sees them.”
Changing Stations

Radio Formats Flip While Top Execs Split

It has been a month of changes at Spanish-language radio, with key top executives leaving and stations flipping formats.

The latest news comes from Puerto Rico, where Spanish Broadcasting System's WCMA flipped from an English-language AC format to a mostly Spanish-language station playing primarily hits of the '80s and '90s. The new WCMA debuted Sept. 15, playing new and old music from established acts. The new format accommodates everyone from José José to Chayanne.

The format change is the second flip that SBS has implemented since Carlos "Topy" Mamery took over as senior VP of operations for SBS Puerto Rico in April. Mamery is working alongside veteran programmer Felix Bonnet, VP of programming/GM of SBS Puerto Rico.

In June, SBS flipped merengue WOND to reggaetón.

While the WOND change was drastic, the WCMA switch aligns the station closely with SBS' WIOB, another pop station that will now focus more on contemporary ballads and such acts as La Oreja De Van Gogh and Janabo De Palo.

"Puerto Rico is a very segmented radio market," Mamery says. In contrast, Spanish-language radio in the United States tends to play an extremely wide variety of music, covering old and new artists in a broader variety of genres.

Unlike WOND, which targets a younger male demographic, Mamery says WIOB and WCMA will appeal to women, albeit of different ages and tastes.

All of these moves come on top of a number of executive departures (Billboard, Sept. 17), including SBS programming VP Bill Tanner and Univision Radio execs Sergio Rozenblat and Tony Campos. Rozenblat was VP of FM programming operations for the U.S. Southeastern region, while Campos was PD at Spanish-language AC WMAM Miami.

GOING HOLLYWOOD: "El Vacilón De La Mañana," the top-rated morning show on tropical WSKQ New York, will hit the big screen in October. "El Vacilón—The Movie" will premiere Oct. 21 and will be shown in 150 theaters in the Northeastern United States, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo.

The film, distributed by Televisa Pictures, was directed by Agustín de Baby Legs Entertainment and produced by Alma Entertainment and Baby Legs. The script was written by "El Vacilón De La Mañana" host Luis Jiménez, who stars along-side co-host Moonshadow. The film received an R rating, which is in line with the show's often raunchy humor.

Starting Oct. 1, "El Vacilón De La Mañana" will be syndicated through ABC Radio in Boston, Hartford, Conn.; Philadelphia; Tampa, Fla.; and Orlando, Fla. In addition to New York, the show is heard in New Jersey and Puerto Rico.

DEAL FOR 'LIFE': Ricky Martin and Puerto Rican producer/promoter Tony Mojena have reached an agreement for the latter's TM Entertainment to help promote and market Martin's new album, "Life," in Puerto Rico. The album will be released Oct. 10.

A LOTTA LATIN: Literally thousands of Spanish-language tracks are now available digitally, thanks to new licensing deals between Ecast and Latin music's main U.S. labels—including Univision, Fonovisa and Sony BMG. Ecast will feature the tracks in its network of more than 4,200 broadband-enabled digital jukeboxes.

In addition, Ecast has added a Spanish-language user interface that provides Spanish speakers with easier access to the music. New additions will also be displayed in Spanish.

El USA de La Mañana hosts LUIS JIMÉNEZ left and MOONSHADOW head for the big screen.
One of jazz’s pre-eminent vocalists, Dee Dee Bridgewater, moved to France in 1986 and used her adopted home as the launching pad for her spunky and diverse stylings. She is a Grammy and Tony Award winner, the first American jazz singer to be inducted into the Haut Conseil de la Francophonie, host of NPR’s “JazzSet” and honorary ambassador to the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization. With her latest CD, the enchanting “J’ai Deux Amours” (which came out Sept. 13 on DDB/Sovereign) Bridgewater, who splits her time between Paris and Las Vegas, celebrates her dual cultural identity.

**Q:** What inspired “J’ai Deux Amours?”
**A:** For years I didn’t have the nerve to record an album of French songs. Ten years ago I began working on one until Ella Fitzgerald died in [1996]. I ended up recording my “Dear Ella” tribute to her. Last year I revisited the idea when I was invited to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., to perform two Valentine’s Day concerts celebrating French culture. I sang French songs I thought Americans would be familiar with.

**Q:** What was the response?
**A:** I got standing ovations. People screamed and told me to record an album of French songs. So, I figured, now’s the time. I put together a collection of songs, most of which had also been English-language hits, so I knew listeners would recognize the melodies.

**Q:** The title track is strongly associated with Josephine Baker, who had such a huge success in France. Was she an inspiration?
**A:** I wouldn’t have had the success I’ve enjoyed in France if it hadn’t been for Josephine. But this album isn’t a tribute to her. I chose songs that express my love for France and the U.S. In that way, “J’ai Deux Amours” symbolizes the album: I have two loves.

**Q:** Why did you release this on Sovereign Records?
**A:** Universal France dropped me a few years ago, which is why I started my own label, DDB Records. But then the international Universal office in London signed me as a priority artist, so ironically Universal France has to distribute my albums. Universal distributes worldwide except for the U.S. Concord and Telarc were interested, but they both wanted me to rerecord the songs in English. So I went with Sovereign, a small label run by musicians my own age.

**Q:** How have listeners responded to “J’ai Deux Amours” in France, where it came out in February?
**A:** The jazz people hate it. They think it’s pop. I’ve fallen out of grace with the French jazz community, but I don’t care. I’m an artist first, and I want to keep exploring. I can always go back to swing, but for now I’m having fun with new projects like this.

**Q:** What’s next?
**A:** I’ve always wanted to combine jazz with African music, so I went to Mali last summer and fell in love with the country. It was like a spiritual journey, looking for my roots. An old man came up to me and told me through my guide that I looked like I was from the Mali tribe Peul. So I feel like I’m embracing my heritage as well as delving into world rhythms. It’s opening my mind.

**Global Pulse**

**ROCK** by Michael Paoloetta

**CALLA STEPS UP ON INDIE LADDER**

With the Sept. 27 release of “Collisions,” New York-based trio Calla makes the move from tiny indie label to major indie operation. Indeed, after much interest from majors and indie alike, the modern rock band signed a worldwide deal with Beggars Banquet/Beggars Group.

“Collisions” arrives in February in the United Kingdom. According to Beggars Group North America CEO Lesley Bleakley, who signed Calla, the band and its previous label, Arena Rock, realized that a bigger independent was needed to help the band get to the next level.

This paved the way for Beggars to purchase the completed “Collisions” from Arena Rock.

“Arena Rock helped us in many ways—it’s a great label—but they didn’t have the necessary resources to help us get ahead,” Calla lead singer Aurelio Valle says. “We knew that if we wanted to continue creating as a band, we needed to sign with a big indie.”

A major label would not do, Valle adds, because “majors sign too many bands and then don’t know what to do with them. It was important for us to be high on the list of priorities at our new label.”

When discussing Calla’s deal with Beggars, many people cite the success of Interpol’s 2004 album “Antics,” which debuted at No. 15 on The Billboard 200. The disc, released by Matador—a member of the Beggars Group family—sold 375,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Aaron Axelsen, music director/assistant PD of modern rock radio station KITS San Francisco, believes Beggars can succeed with Calla—particularly if the label “takes a page out of the Matador Records handbook on how to break a band.” For Axelsen, this “handbook” includes chapters on artist development, tour support, micro-marketing and patience.

To create pre-release awareness of “Collisions,” Beggars has set up a Calla page on MySpace.com. It has also partnered with several digital music sites, including iTunes and AOL, which are offering free downloads of the album’s lead single. “It Drowned on Me.”

Modern rock and college radio will receive the single the week of Sept. 19. An accompanying video—lensed by Moh Azina of Feature Pictures—has been sent to MTV and regional video outlets.

On Sept. 29, Calla commences a five-week headlining tour at the Brooklyn (N.Y.) Lycenium. This will be followed by a supporting slot on a U.K.-termed tour.

“Beggars is doing its part—the rest is up to us,” Valle says. “Like us, they care about music and stand behind it.”
Dancehall king Sean Paul returns to the scene with "The Trinity," which hits stores Sept. 27 on VP/Atlantic Records. The album is the follow-up to his 2002 release "Dutty Rock," which has sold 2.5 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

While most would be nervous about living up to such success, Paul tells Billboard that words like "pressure" and "worry" are not even in his vocabulary at the moment.

"In school, I felt nervous when I had to deliver a big project or when I used to swim 8,000 meters a day to get ready for a swim meet. That was pressure; this is not," he says.

Though Paul initially teamed up with such mega producers as the Neptunes and reggae hitmakers Sly & Robbie, he chose such lesser-known talents as Black Chiney and the Renaissance Crew, who produced the set's lead single, "We Be Burnin." The track is No. 24 on the Billboard Radio Monitor Rap chart.

"I did a few demos with the Neptunes and Scott Storch," Paul says. "I realized that those records were all good, but I can't do 'Dutty Rock' again. I decided to turn back to Jamaica to feel the vibe of what's going on there. There's a mixture of young producers and entertainers that inspire me every day."

Among the rising artists inspiring Paul is reggae sensation Daddy Yankee. Paul says he is embracing the new genre, which shares much with dancehall.

"Music is supposed to bring people together. I'm not going to be a hypocrite and say I don't love the music. The music is good—I just don't know what dem saying," he jokes.

HIP-HOP'S HONOR ROLL: VH1 pays tribute to the spirit and influence of hip-hop with its second annual "VH1 Hip-Hop Honors" event, hosted by Russell Simmons and his brother, Run-D.M.C. co-founder Rev. Run. Feted this year will be LL Cool J, Big Daddy Kane, Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five, the Notorious B.I.G., Ice T, Salt-N-Pepa and John Singleton's groundbreaking flick "Boyz 'N the Hood."

A number of the performances will pair the honorees with some of today's hottest acts. Rapper Nelly will join forces with R&B sirens Ciara to perform a medley of LL Cool J's classics "Jinglin' Baby" and "Doin' It," before LL performs "Mama Said Knock You Out." Rapper/producer Kanye West will appear with Faith Evans and a mass choir to honor Evans' late husband, the Notorious B.I.G., in the evening's finale.

The show, which will be taped Sept. 22 at New York's Hammerstein Ballroom, is slated to air at 9 p.m. ET Sept. 26 on VH1.
Luckett Fulfills Her Destiny

Former Destiny's Child Member Sets Date For Long-Awaited Solo Set

Destiny's Child may be going away after finishing its world tour, but longtime fans of the group can look forward to the February 2006 release from LeToya Luckett on Capitol Records. The long-anticipated album by Luckett, who was in the group from 1993 to 1999, will be preceded by the single "All Eyes on Me."

She reached out to producers recruited for her self-titled project are Jermaine Dupri, Scott Storch, Sean Garrett, Jazze Pha, J Blaze and Bryan-Michael Cox.

Houston native Luckett is also joined by local rappers Mike Jones, Slim Thug, Paul Wall and Bun B. Luckett describes the sound as "hard R&B."

"I will always be an R&B singer," she says. "However, on this album I'm singing over hip-hop beats—things you would expect rappers to be on."

Luckett, who will shortly shoot the "All" video, is also busy overseeing her Houston clothing store, Lady Elle. The 2-year-old outlet specializes in what Luckett calls "cute, girly stuff" including several denim lines.

MUSICAL NOTES: "Pour a Lil Liquor" at the end of September. That is when the lead single from Jagged Edge's self-titled fifth Columbia album goes to radio. The full-length is due in December, with the group slated to tour this fall.

Speaking of return engagements: Public Announcements drops its third CD, "When the Smoke Clears," Nov. 8. First single from the Boss Entertainment/Fontana Music Set is "Guessing Games."

R. Kelly's former backing group sports a new lineup: Joining original PAers Felony Davis, Earl L.C. and Glenn Mac is new member Mar-K.

Jeffrey Osborne lets his baritone do the talking on "From the Soul." Drawing from the catalogs of such peers as Teddy Pendergrass ("Close the Door") and Brenda Holloway ("Every Little Bit Hurts"), Osborne offers up his versions of various soul classics. The Koch release is due Oct. 6.

In keeping with that covers theme, Freddie Jackson's "Personal Reflections" arrives Nov. 1 via Artemis Records/Media World Entertainment. Highlights include a duet with fellow hitmaker Meli'sa Morgan on a reprisal of Donny Hathaway and Roberta Flack's 1980 R&B Top 10 "Back Together Again."

In the summer, we reported that Anita Baker was recording her first Christmas album. "Christmas Fantasy," due Oct. 4 on Blue Note, sports three originals ("Moonlight Sleighride," "Family of Man" and the title track) by Baker and songwriter/producer Barry Eastmond. They are assisted by a musical who's who that includes guitarist Larry Carlton, bassist Nathan East and jazz quartet the Yellowjackets.

INDUSTRY NOTES: Production duo the Co-Stars ink a publishing deal with Famous Music. . . Atlanta R&B indie Brash Music signs with Fortress Marketing. Fortress head Thorne Jones' first Brash project is singer/songwriter/guitarist Anthony David's "3 Chords & the Truth" . . . R&B legends Luther Vandross, Jerry Butler and Ben E. King, jazz musician Donald Byrd and radio personality Frankie Crocker were inducted into the National Black Sports & Entertainment Hall of Fame. Stevie Wonder and radio pioneer Imhotep Gary Byrd were among those honored with the organization's Paul Robeson Lifetime Achievement Award.

CONDOLENCES: To the family and friends of Roxy Fortune, head of popular Los Angeles retail outlet Fortune Records & Tapes. He died Sept. 2 of emphysema.

The Beat

John Fogerty laughs when he says his next album of new material will be on Fantasy Records. "That's a phrase I never thought I'd say," he notes with glee.

In a turn of events almost impossible to believe, due to Concord Records' acquisition of Fantasy, the singer/songwriter has been reunited with his classic Creedence Clearwater Revival catalog following a more than 30-year battle. And he has signed a long-term deal for his future recordings with the label.

In a well-told tale, Fogerty fought for years with former Fantasy owner Saul Zaentz, who went so far as to sue Fogerty for plagiarizing himself. Fantasy owns the masters to such CCR classics as "Proud Mary," "Bad Moon Rising" and "Fortunate Son."

To buy his freedom from Fantasy, which he says he owes at least 30 more albums, Fogerty struck a deal that meant he would never receive artist royalties from CCR recordings.

For years Fogerty was so embittered by the fight with Zaentz that he refused to perform the hits, live, although he has for several years now.

When Concord first contemplated buying Fantasy late last year, Fogerty and his manager/wife Julie approached the label, initially just to say, "I'm the guy who wrote all the music you're thinking of purchasing," he says.

After the $80 million deal closed early this year, Fogerty's talks with Concord resumed, resulting in not only collaboration on his beloved catalog but on new material. Fogerty was without a label following Universal's purchase of DreamWorks a few years ago.

"The folks at Concord really had respect for my work. That was quite different for me," he says. "For 35 years I've been treated like a hired hand that kind of snuck his way into the dinner table and that wasn't very nice."

The reunion with his babies—his songs—has left him delighted and filled with many emotions. "I just had no reason to even dare hope this could happen," he says. "That's my first emotion, but No. 2 is that it shouldn't have been that way in the first place. But I'm not going to dwell on that one for very long because I spent so many years feeling like it was wrong. I'm just going to accept what it is and lie very, very happy about it."

One of Concord's first moves was to offer to pay Fogerty artist royalties on his CCR material going forward. The checks should start rolling in following the release of his first complete career retrospective, "The Long Road Home," out Nov. 1.

The set also includes material from his Warner Bros. and DreamWorks days: Fogerty owns the masters to those recordings and has licensed them to Universal. Concord in turn has licensed those tracks from Universal.

A live DVD, taped Sept. 15 in Los Angeles, will follow. Then, Fogerty says, he will turn to writing new material.

Concord president Glen Barros says he knows his label cannot fix the past (or Fogerty, but believes it can create a happy future. "A big part of that was reuniting him with what he did with CCR. While we're looking forward to his new music, we also want to make sure we promote the great body of work. Now he can feel good about everything he can do with this music."

SHORT TAKES: Imogen Heap, also known as the lead singer for Frou Frou, has signed a U.S. deal with RCA Victor Records. Her label debut bows Nov. 1 . . . Edwin McCain has signed with Vanguard Records and will release a new album next spring. Comedian/actor Harry Shearer, his wife, singer-songwriter Judith Owen, and her manager Bambi Moe have formed Courgette Records. The first release via Alternative Distribution Alliance is Owen's "Lost and Found," which came out Sept. 13.

LAVA STAFFERS: Following the merger of Lava with Atlantic, a number of staffers are looking for new opportunities. Former GM Lee Trink can be reached at lee.trink@lava-records.com for several more weeks, and VP of publicity Lisa Cassady can be reached at smush2@aol.com. Publicist Amy DeRouen will leave Sept. 30, but until then she can be reached at amy.derouen@lava-records.com.
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Tim Borner, Face The Music Touring
Matthew Burrows, Liquidus & Bell H2
Bart Butler, Rock Solid Security
Susan Butler, Billboard
Ashley Capps, A.C. Entertainment
Mark Cheatham, ICM
Bill Chipp, IES Sponsorship Report
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Peter Conlon, Peter Conlon Fram's
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Marly Diamond, Little Big Star Booking
Rod Essig, Creative Artists Agency
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Loveless’ Sweet ‘Dream’

Almost 15 years, four platinum albums and 20 top 10 singles into her career, Patty Loveless went from making really good albums to making extraordinary ones.

The turning point was 2001’s “Mountain Soul,” where Loveless tapped into the bluegrass and mountain music of her Kentucky heritage and emerged with something compelling and deeply personal.

That musical journey continued on her 2002 bluegrass Christmas album, through 2003’s “On Your Way Home” and on to Loveless’ latest CD, “Dreamin’ My Dreams.”

Loveless says it was the acceptance of “Mountain Soul” by her fans that encouraged her to keep working in that musical vein and “continue to share some of those influences of that form of music I was raised on.”

Released Sept. 13 on Epic Records, “Dreamin’ My Dreams” once again finds Loveless in excellent voice and showcases her gift—and that of her producer/husband Emory Gordy Jr.—for finding songs she can sing the fire out of. They include Richard Thompson’s “Keep Your Distance” and Steve Earle’s “My Old Friend the Blues” as well as “Dreaming My Dreams With You,” a top 10 hit for Waylon Jennings in 1975.

Among the guests on the album are Dwight Yoakam, Emmylou Harris, Lee Roy Parnell, Stuart Duncan and Rob Ickes. Loveless says this album succeeds in mixing all of the genres she was influenced by, including country, rockabilly, bluegrass, blues and rock.

She recorded the album in two batches: an electric session and an acoustic one, and Loveless and her producers—Gordy and his wife, Marty Martens—spent the last months of recording in Nashville, which she thanks in the new album’s liner notes.

Loveless and Gordy are marking the 20th anniversary of their professional collaboration this year. They met in 1985 when Gordy and Tony Brown co-produced Loveless’ first recordings. They wed in 1989.

The 2001 album “Mountain Soul” began a musical journey for Patty Loveless that continues today.

While Loveless says “it doesn’t feel like 20 years,” she is grateful for her unusual longevity. “Some [artists] came up when I did and are not on major labels anymore. I look around and say, ‘What happened?’”

She credits Sony Music Nashville president John Grady for continuing to believe in her and giving her the freedom to express herself.

“He holds very close and dear to his heart the form of music I’ve been doing,” she says. “Heel that’s a lot of the reason I’m still here at Sony.”

>> BIG QUARTERS

When Minneapolis-based hip-hop group Big Quarters self-released its debut album last year, the act went by the name of EPL. Though they say they have sold more than 1,000 copies of the CD, Medium Zach and brother Brandon Bagason felt the designation was too short to get the act noticed. “We decided to change our name because it was small on the flyer,” Medium Zach says. More people are indeed finding out about Big Quarters, as the group recently graced the cover of local alternative weekly City Pages.

A new album is due in the spring, with more of the act’s vintage beats and increasingly socially aware verses. “There’s plenty going on in the world to talk about,” Medium Zach says. “If you’re not talking about it, you’re doing an injustice to your audience.”

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The Sound Of ‘Heaven’

A softly rolling version of the Cure’s classic song “Just Like Heaven” by U.K. songstress Katie Melua headlines an eclectic collection of music featured in the romantic comedy of the same name, opening Sept. 16 in theaters. The Columbia Records/Sony Music Soundtrax effort, released Sept. 13, leads a lineup of soundtracks vying for attention this month.

The 18-track set includes five compositions by Golden Globe-nominated composer Rolfe Kent, who spent five days with a 90-piece orchestra bringing life to the romantic gesture of a score he envisioned alongside director Mark Waters.

“Early on, I wanted something grand and epic, and Mark wanted a strong romantic theme, but not too big,” Kent says. “I wrote this thing and went, ‘My God, it’s huge.’ Having recently completed music for quirky comedies like ‘Sideways’ and ‘Wedding Crashers,’ Kent says he was “very much in the mood for something sweeping and orchestral,” and fortunately Waters went along with the elongated result.

“The length of the cues [on the soundtrack] are actually that long in the movie,” Sony Music Soundtrax president Glen Brunman says. “Mark gave [Kent] the opportunity to stretch out.”

The project also includes newly recorded covers by Kels (“Brass in Pocket”), Bowling for Soup (“Ghostbusters”), Pete Yorn (“Just My Imagination,” “Running Away With Me”), Kay Hanley (“Lust for Life”), Emerson Hart (“Bad Case of Lovin’ You”), and soundtracks darlings Imogen Heap, who delivers a sultry version of “Spooky,” originally a 1968 hit by Classics IV.

The Warmer Sunset Records/Warner Bros. collection, due Sept. 20, includes four new songs with lyrics co-written by John August and performed by Elftman, Carter and others as Bonejangles & His Bone Boys. The Warner Bros. Pictures film hits theaters Sept. 16.

Clark-Cole In Bloom

‘The Rose Of Gospel’ Releases Live Album

The legacy of Dr. Mattie Moss Clark is alive and well these days on Dorinda Clark-Cole’s new album “The Rose Of Gospel” (GospoCentric/Zomba Gospel).

A daughter of the legendary choir director/composer, Clark-Cole learned from her mother how to write a compelling song and move an audience with a spirit-filled performance. She displays those gifts on her new project, recorded live at St. Agnes Church in Houston early this year.

“The last album seemed to fit everybody, every age bracket from the youngest to the oldest,” she says of her self-titled solo debut. On this one, she says, “I didn’t really change that much. If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

“The Rose of Gospel” strethed Aug. 30 and debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Top Gospel Albums chart. It was recorded the night after the annual Stellar Awards with Clark-Cole attracting a celebrity-filled audience that included Donnie McClurkin, Missy Elliott, Mary Mary, Kurt Carr, Richard Smallwood and Israel Houghton.

“They came to support me and embrace me on that night,” she says. “It was a phenomenal experience. Missy Elliott flew in just for the record because she says she grew up on my music. That was such a blessing.”

Many have grown up on the Clark family’s music. Clark-Cole and her sisters Karen Clark Sheard, Jackie Clark-Chisholm and Twinkie Clark are well known for their powerhouse performances as a group, with Clark-Cole earning a reputation as “the jazzy one” based on her signature scats and vocal runs. She has also been dubbed “the Rose of Gospel” for her penchant for handing roses to audience members.

She and her sisters have individual careers, but plan to do “spot dates” together in coming months and are talking about a reunion album.

In the meantime, Clark-Cole is touring solo, working on an upcoming spoken-word preaching album and serving as VP of the music division of the Church of God in Christ, where her mother served for many years.

Produced by Alex Ward, “The Rose of Gospel” showcases Clark-Cole’s versatility on such tracks as the potent “Nobody but God,” the breezy, jazzy “Rest of My Life” and the exuberant “Great Is the Lord.”

“I want to convey that God has so much in store for his people,” she says, “and not just for his people, but those that have yet to know him.”

God has given me a message through song that he still works miracles.”

NEWS NOTES: Vickie Winans has been on the road looking for gospel’s next sensation via the Chrysler Financial-sponsored Vickie Winans’ Rising Star Tour. Ten hopefuls compete in each of the 10 audition cities, with some moving to quarterfinals and later, semifinals. Winners from each city will then travel to the grand finale show on Nov. 4 in Detroit. The winner earns a record deal with Winans’ Destiny Joy Records and a two-year lease on a 2006 Chrysler 300C.

Donnie McClurkin, Kirk Franklin and Mary Mary are among the guests lending their talents to Yolanda Adams’ new project, “Day By Day,” which strethed Aug. 30 and hit No. 1 on the Billboard Top Gospel Albums chart.

Adams will support the set with her Yolanda Today tour, which kicks off on Oct. 4 in Houston, the singer’s hometown. Eddie Levert, Chaka Khan, Kirk Whalum, Ruben Studdard and Mary Mary are slated to join Adams on her tour.

The single “Be Blessed” is at gospel radio while “Someone Watching Over You” is being worked to adult R&B stations.

Lock for Daryl Coley, Calvin Rhone, Carolyn Taylor, Rodnie Bryant, Vashawn Mitchell and the Nu-City Mass Choir at the Integrity Ministry and Arts Conference Sept. 29-Oct. 1 in Chicago. For more information, go to integrityministriesonline.org.
**REVIEW SPOTLIGHTS**

**ALBUMS**

**BARBRA STREISAND**

*Guilty Pleasures*

*Producers: Barry Gibb, John Merchant*

*Columbia*

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

Event records for the 35-plus set come about as often as the locusts, but Barbra Streisand’s reunion record with Barry Gibb is as big as they get. Twenty-five years after Streisand’s best-selling “Guilty,” which paired the two talents, Gibb again elucidates the very best from the diva—not only the sky-high vocal delivery that made her famous, but also a rare, indulgent playfulness. Aside from some creamy MOR love songs and heartbreak serenades, Streisand serves up the dance ditty “Night of My Life,” already remixed into a dancefloor hoot, the doo-wop-lite “Come Tomorrow,” one of two duets with Gibb, and the lovely Bee Gees cover “(Our Love) Don’t Throw It All Away.” But nothing beats Streisand belting a ballad, and “Stranger in a Shawl” and “Golden Dawn” are nothing less than classically worthy. —CT

**EMMYLOU HARRIS**

*Shadows In The Night*

*Producers: Bob Neuwirth, Barry Beckett*

*Columbia*

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

Gibb argues that he and Harris are “the two greatest contemporary country artists,” and here she combines those efforts to stunning effect. Few can match Loveless’ direct connection to the heartstrings when Gibb happens into the right material, and she has it in spades. She cuts loose from the get-go on the stirring Richard Thompson cut “Keep Your Distance,” and brilliantly rehashes Waylon Jennings’ “Dreaming My Dreams With You.” Loveless is delightfully frisky on “Some Kind of Crazy,” a rollicking Big Chance” and a duet with Dwight Yoakam on “Never Ending Song of Love.” Elsewhere, her wordy-worried vocals are without peer on the pitiful “On the Verge of Tears” and the resigned Steve Earle gem “My Old Friend the Blues.” This is country music at its very, very best. —SW

**COLDPLAY**

*Fix You (4:55)*

*Producers: Ken Nelson, Coldplay*

*Writer: Coldplay*

*Publisher: BMG Songs (Capitol/Almo)*

*Breathe In Chris Martin’s dreamy, shout-eyed vocals are engulfed by sublime waves of organ and piano, while the track’s break, Breathe in. “Fix You” from Coldplay’s X&Y—still atop the Billboard Eurocharts albums list after 13 weeks—is a quiet ballad with a floridly rich melody, and deeply human feel. The song begins as a sonic yoga session with builds and breaks, softly stretching to reach catharsis. When the single note guitar explodes the music into full-on stadium gospel, we start believing Coldplay could really be the next U2. However, Martin’s Prozac prosc (“Lights will guide you home/And I will follow where you go.”) is almost too soothing to provide real comfort. But it sure will fix temporary symptoms of early autumn blues.—SP

**ROCK**

**BON JOVI**

*Have a Nice Day*

*Producers: John Shanks, Jon Bon Jovi, Richie Sambora Island*  

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

People like Bon Jovi for its power-chord laden songs and Jon Bon Jovi’s gravelly vocals. But the frontman has been touting “Have a Nice Day” as a new direction, one that is more introspective and soulful. On song by song the group’s songwriting has gotten better over the years, and there are some sentence families like those here (Last Cigarette.” Welcome to Wherever You Are.”). But the lyrics aren’t as shocking as one might think. This is a concept album, continuing a story that will be fleshed out in comic book and radio. This time, the band tempers its sound with better production (a string section, keyboards) and memorable songs that will expand its already ravenous fan base. Welcome Home” meeds Claudio Sanchez’s Geddy Lee-like vocals with metal bombast reminiscent of Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir,” while “Ten Speed (Off God’s Blood & Burial)” and “The Suffering” will keep the emo constituency happy. While the overall album sometimes threatens to bury Coldplay’s own lightness, the bright rush of Jonah’s voice suggests the band is more than capable of breaking into the mainstream.—BT

**DISTURBED**

*Ten Thousand Fists*

*Producer: Johnny K Reprise/Warner Bros*

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

Although there are 14 songs on “Ten Thousand Fists,” it feels like Disturbed recorded only four—it is hard to hear much difference between each cut. This is not bothering Disturbed’s fans or rock programmers, as the singles “Guarded” and “Stricken” are hanging on like Garlic. But the instruments tracks the group pushes a Nine Inch Nails/industrial dance vibe (Deify, “Pain Redefined,” “The Prisoner”). But would not be a problem if they did not keep failing into the same pattern the others do. The instruments constantly follow the same beat, the choppy bass and guitars almost act like mechanical percussion. Disturbed only breaks free of the milieu on the power ballad “Asylum.” Where singer David Draiman shows what a sweet voice he has when he is not firing off jackhammer raps like “Decadence.”—CLT

**GOOD APKO & CBM**

*Good Apollo, I’m Burning Star IV: Volume 1, From Fear Through the Eyes of Madness*

*Producers: Coheed & Cambria, Chris Bittner, Michael Birnbaum*

*Columbia*

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

As could be gleaned from the title, Coheed & Cambria’s prog rock-leaning and pretentious. Fortunately, the band pulls it off extremely well. Like its predecessor, this is a concept album, continuing a story that will be fleshed out in comic book and radio. This time, the band tempers its sound with better production (a string section, keyboards) and memorable songs that will expand its already ravenous fan base. Welcome Home” meeds Claudio Sanchez’s Geddy Lee-like vocals with metal bombast reminiscent of Led Zeppelin’s “Kashmir,” while “Ten Speed (Off God’s Blood & Burial)” and “The Suffering” will keep the emo constituency happy. While the overall album sometimes threatens to bury Coldplay’s own lightness, the bright rush of Jonah’s voice suggests the band is more than capable of breaking into the mainstream.—BT

**R&B**

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**

*So Amazing: An All-Star Tribute to Luther Vandross*

*Producers: various J Records*  

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

Long before Vandross’ passing this year, his standing as one of the great R&B voices of modern times was platinum solid. So “Amazing” gathers friends and contemporaries to cover some of his best, and a number of the performances here would make any jazz wave his hands in the air with praise. Most rousing is buddy Patti LaBelle’s spiritual “Heart,” which puts over Vandross’ voice with soulful sincerity. Celine Dion’s “Dance With My Father,” which she sang at the Grammy Awards after the loss of her own father, and Alicia Keys’ “If This World Were Mine” are graciously understated and emotionally compelling. On the male side, Usher and John Legend give appreciably new dimension to the much-recorded “Superstar” and “Love Won’t Let Me Wait,” respectively. A couple of acts are woefully out of place—namely Wyclef Jean and Faith Evans. These “Issac” and “Boyz II Men” respectively reminds us of Vandross’ everlasting love for timeless melodies.—CT

**POP**

**SHAGGY**

*Clothes Drop*

*Producers: various Geffen*  

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

The title of the sixth record from Mr. “It Wasn’t Me” proves misleading. While Shaggy has suddenly become a prune, but because the undulating basslines of his smooth, rugged dancehall end up supporting strong and grown-up tracks of social injustice and a measured pace of living. The glancing Bob Marley update “Stand Up” finds Shaggy waxing political, while “Repet” seems him proclaiming that a world “two steps away from a real disaster” just needs to “slow down and pray.” Of course, being Shaggy, this all unfolds before a fatherly chat with his troublesome private parts in “Ain’t Living.” Club-oriented guests are brought in judiciously (Will.I.am on “ Shut Up And Dance” and Movita on “ Wild Nite”). But musically and lyrically, “Clothes Drop” is more pop-oriented, melodic and restrained, and is all the brighter for it.—JW

**RAP/HIP-HOP**

**DAVID BANNER**

*Certified*

*Certified: various Universal*

*Release Date: Sept. 20*

Despite being a pretty album, the slab of metallic tinged crunk, “Certified” arrives overshadowed by continued on p68

**SINGLES**

**ALICIA KEYS**

*Unbreakable (4:14)*

*Producers: not listed*  

*Writers: A. Keys, K. West, H. Lilly, G. Glenn*  

*Publishers: various J Records (Def&Promo)*

*Live recordings seldom do more than provide a bridge between albums or allow an artist to add a few covers to his or her repertoire. Alicia Keys’ “Unbreakable” is that rare album where an artist not only capably demonstrates her well-entrenched poise and ease, but reveals more warmth than in the confines of a studio. The soulful and equally playful “Unbreakable,” written with Kanye West and Harold Lilly, talks about couples and how “our love” can sometimes get tired. The song begins as a sonic yoga session with builds and breaks, softly stretching to reach catharsis. When the single note guitar explodes the music into full-on stadium gospel, we start believing Coldplay could really be the next U2. However, Martin’s Prozac prosc (“Lights will guide you home/And I will follow where you go.”) is almost too soothing to provide real comfort. But it sure will fix temporary symptoms of early autumn blues.—SP

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from >>p67
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More Than Ever, Album And Ticket Sales Don't Mix

Despite a handsome media campaign, the Rolling Stones’ opening week for “A Bigger Bang” is lighter than its last two studio albums, while Paul McCartney seems destined for an even slimmer start when he bows next week on The Billboard 200. Yet, both acts will be among the most sought-after draws on the concert circuit for the next several months, with prime Stone tickets going for more than $400 a pop.

Welcome to the latest reminder that the folks who buy concert tickets are not prime album consumers and vice versa. Of the 10 acts who led Billboard’s year-end Boxscore list in 2004, Kenny Chesney (who was eighth in concert revenue) was the only one with a top 10 album in Nielsen SoundScan’s annual tally, when 3.1 million units made “When the Sun Goes Down” the fourth-best seller.

Madonna, queen of the box office in 2004, did not even place among that year’s top 200 SoundScan albums. No shame there, as five other top 10 concert acts—Simon & Garfunkel, Metallica, Bette Midler, Sting and David Bowie—were also absent from the list of the year’s top 200 best-selling sets.

Chesney’s dual placement among top 10 tours and top 10 albums is one better than we saw in the prior two years, as none of either year’s 10 best-grossing concert acts managed a top 10 album in 2003. As they did in 1995, the Stones also led the Boxscore list in 2004, a year after McCartney stood atop the concert list, with each managing strong but not year-topping results for related albums.

The Stones have rung up 2.4 million copies of the 2002 hits arthology “Forty Licks,” which was the catalyst for the tour that started that year. This two-CD set is the band’s best-selling album since SoundScan opened its doors in 1991.

Likewise, in SoundScan’s time, McCartney’s best-selling solo album and his biggest sales week are distinctions owned by “Back in the U.S.” (1992, 974,000 copies to date, $24,000 when it bowed at No. 8), the audio souvenir of that year’s tour.

“Back” was the No. 96 album on SoundScan’s 2002 list, while “Forty” ranked No. 36 in 2002 and No. 116 the following year.

Chesney is in good company. There were three other years among that last 10 when only one act had one of the 10 best-selling albums in the same year as a top 10 tour. ‘N Sync was No. 1 on the year’s former and No. 2 on the latter in 2000; Garth Brooks owned the No. 4 album and No. 6 tour of 1997; and Alana Morissette had the top album and No. 8 tour of 1996.

Concert promoters will likely not be surprised to learn that there was only one year since 1995 when more than two acts ranked top 10 in both tours and albums. In 1998, Celine Dion had the No. 9 tour and a slot in each of the top two albums (the “Titanic” soundtrack and her “Let’s Talk About Love” CD), while Brooks and Shania Twain also made both lists.

Simple conclusions: The kids who buy (or copy) music are less likely to afford $100-plus concert tickets. And, with the exception of country fans and Norah Jones following, the adults who can afford pricey tickets are less likely to shape a year’s best-selling albums.

THREE AND OUT: The Rolling Stones shared two TV slots with Kanye West during the tracking week, as both were featured on ABC’s opening NFL game and the MTV/VH1/CMT ReAct Now: Music & Relief benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina victims. But, while the Stones also made “Today” and “Dateline,” West had a busier media schedule in his album’s second week than most acts rallying in an opening frame.

The rapper’s rounds included visits to Oprah Winfrey’s and Ellen DeGeneres’ talk shows, BET’s “106 & Park” and two more Katrina telecasts: the multinetwork’s “Shelter From the Storm” and BET’s “S.O.S. (Saving Ourselves).” Despite a 67% second-week drop, West’s “Late Registration” easily withstands the DVD-enhanced special edition of 50 Cent’s “The Massacre” (154,000, up 519%) and the Stones’ arrival (129,000).


For week ending Sept. 11, 2005. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail sales and ticket sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.
DATA COMPILED BY Nielsen SoundScan

SEPT 24 2005

THE Billboard 200

**Artist**

1. KANYE WEST
2. THE ROLLING STONES
3. THE BLACK EYED PEAS
4. MARIAN CAYNE
5. TONY YAO
6. VARIOUS ARTISTS
7. GREEN DAY
8. HILARY DUFF
9. JON B.
10. JASON ISBELL & THE 400 UNIT
11. LAURA PONSPERGER
12. STEPHANIE MILLS
13. MILOS DRAKE
14. AARON CAREY
15. NARCO'S
16. RICKY MARTIN & CHARLI
17. EMBASSY STARS
18. QUINTEZ BIDDLE
19. ROYAL TRUANT
20. JOSHUA JAMES
21. PROPRIETERS
22. STEPHEN BROWN
23. KISTEN PACCO
24. RED RAG
25. SYDNEY" THE ROLLING STONES

**Title**

1. Late Registration
2. A Bigger Bang
3. Monkey Business
4. The Emancipation Of Mini
5. Thoughts Of A Predicate Felon
6. No 19
7. American Idol
8. Most Wanted
9. Get It On
10. Breakaway
11. Demon Days
12. Back Home
13. From Under The Cork Tree
14. Music Of The Sun
15. Time Well Spent
16. Wasted
17. Hot Fuss
18. Lifesongs
19. Freestyles
21. Chapter V
22. Possibilities
23. Three Cheers For Sweet Revenge
24. Be Here
25. Who Is Mike Jones?
26. U.S.A., United State Of Atlanta
27. Moving Along
28. In Between Dreams
29. Twice The Speed Of Life
30. The Fool's Game
31. It's Now Or Never
32. In Your Honor
33. The Message
34. Make Believe
35. The Return
36. Crazy Frog Presents Crazy Hits
37. Kidz Bop 8
38. Retaliation
39. Lyle 268-182

**Additional Information**

- See chart data on the website: www.americanradiohistory.com
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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td>ft. Akon</td>
<td>Sarahbright</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>ft. Ludacris</td>
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<td>ft. Young Jeezy</td>
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<td>ft. Wyclef Jean</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

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<td>ft. Young Jeezy</td>
<td>Drake</td>
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<td>ft. Ludacris</td>
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<td>ft. 3L &amp; B.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>Ne-Yo</td>
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<td>ft. Chris Brown</td>
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### ADULT TOP 40

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<td>A Million Miles</td>
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<td>Somebody Like You</td>
<td>Jessica Simpson</td>
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<td>Out of My Head</td>
<td>Whitney Houston</td>
<td>Epic</td>
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<td>Life is a Highway</td>
<td>Alan Jackson</td>
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<td>The One That Got Away</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>The Love You Love Me So</td>
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<td>Epic</td>
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<td>It's Not Right, It's Not Wrong</td>
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<td>A Moment Like This</td>
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<td>When the Sun Comes Out</td>
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### ADULT CONTEMPORARY

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<td>ft. Chris Brown</td>
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### MODERN ROCK

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<td>You Owe Me</td>
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Data for week of September 24, 2005. For chart reprints call 646.654.4633.
TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

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<td>Def Jam</td>
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BETWEEN THE BULLETS - rgeorges@billboard.com

NEW AZ SET ECHOES ‘THE FIRM’

Rapper AZ returns to Top R&B/HIP-HOP Albums promotion and airplay with his fifth solo project, “A-W-O-L” bowing at No. 17. Released on AZ’s own Quiet Money label in conjunction with Fastlife Music, the set sold 11,000 units, also opening at No. 3 on Top Independent Albums, No. 10 on billboard.biz’s Top Rap Albums and No. 73 on The Billboard 200 despite lim-
### R&B/HIP-HOP AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Digger</td>
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<td>IDJMG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play By</td>
<td>Sizzla, Usy, UT-80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay Fly</td>
<td>Dru, The Ladybirds</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Ain't No Way</td>
<td>R. Kelly, Queen B - R. Kelly's Real World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slow Wind</td>
<td>Tony! Sunshine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sittin' Sideway</td>
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### R&B/HIP-HOP SINGLES SALES

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<tr>
<td>Go Crazy</td>
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<td>Run It</td>
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<td>Tired</td>
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<td>T.I.</td>
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<td>Outta Control (Remix)</td>
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<td>Missy Elliott, Missy Elliott, Missy Elliott</td>
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<td>Like Me</td>
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<td>Lighters Up</td>
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<td>TIME I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU</td>
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**HOT COUNTRY SONGS**

- **1.** I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN
- **2.** WE NEVER LOVED AT ALL
- **3.** SOMEBODY ELSE'S MIND
- **4.** WHEN I'M NOT AROUND
- **5.** COMIN' HOME

**Top 10 Country Songs**

- **1.** I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN
- **2.** WE NEVER LOVED AT ALL
- **3.** SOMEBODY ELSE'S MIND
- **4.** WHEN I'M NOT AROUND
- **5.** COMIN' HOME

**Top 10 Country Singles**

- **1.** I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN
- **2.** WE NEVER LOVED AT ALL
- **3.** SOMEBODY ELSE'S MIND
- **4.** WHEN I'M NOT AROUND
- **5.** COMIN' HOME

**Country Music Update**

- Don't miss another important Country Music Update: Visit www.billboardradiohistory.com to sign up for our free Country Music Update.
- **BETWEEN THE BULLETS** since her durable "Suds in the Bucket" ruled in the Oct. 16, 2004, issue and marks her career’s quickest climb. Her first No. 1, “No Place That Far,” had been her prior fastest-climbing song, reaching the top in 28 weeks.

**CHART’S PEAK IS ‘FINE PLACE’ FOR EVANS**

Sara Evans celebrates her fourth No. 1 as “A Real Fine Place to Start” adds 1.9 million audience impressions in its 21st week. The tune is the first No. 1 on Hot Country Songs to post an increase in five weeks. The Aug. 13 issue—when Toby Keith’s “As Good As I Once Was” notched its fourth of six weeks at the summit—was the last time the No. 1 slot showed a gain. Since then, No. 1 by Faith Hill and Brooks & Dunn led declines despite positives.

**FUTURE HITPREDICTOR**

- **Artist:** Jo Dee Messina
- **Title:** Miss Me Baby

**NEW CHARTS**

- **Country Radio Songs:** 
- **Country Music Update:**
- **Country Music Watch:**

**BETWEEN THE BULLETS** since her durable “Suds in the Bucket” ruled in the Oct. 16, 2004, issue and marks her career’s quickest climb. Her first No. 1, “No Place That Far,” had been her prior fastest-climbing song, reaching the top in 28 weeks.

With 31.9 million audience impressions during the tracking week, “Real Fine Place” is the lead single from Evans’ new album, due Oct. 4. Her single is the third No. 1 by a solo female this year, the same number of lone female chart-toppers the chart has seen by this time in 2004. —Wade Jessen
### Latin Airplay

**AIRPLAY CHARTS** 52 Ltd, Latin pop, 13 tropical, 5 regional Mexican stations, respectively, are electronically monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. © 2005 VNU Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved. **R&B CHARTS:** See Chart Legend for sales and explanatory notes. © 2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved. **MEXICAN REGIONAL AIRPLAY:** See Chart Legend for sales and explanatory notes. © 2005, VNU Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.

#### Latin Airplay Pop

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<td>DON OMAR</td>
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<tr>
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<td>WEA</td>
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<td>BOB MARLEY &amp; THE WAILERS</td>
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#### Latin Albums Pop

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#### Rhythm

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#### Latin Airplay Pop

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#### Latin Albums Pop

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#### Regional Mexican

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#### Latin Airplay Pop

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#### Latin Albums Pop

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### HITS OF THE WORLD

#### UNITED KINGDOM

**SINGLES**
- **1.** Don't Cha (MEGA CHARTS) by The Black Eyed Peas
- **2.** Streets of Love/Rough Justice by The Rolling Stones
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#### FRANCE

**SINGLES**
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#### CANADA

**SINGLES**
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#### JAPAN

**SINGLES**
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#### ITALY

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#### SWITZERLAND

**SINGLES**
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#### DENMARK

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#### FLANDERS

**SINGLES**
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#### BRAZIL

**ALBUMS**
- **1.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **2.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **3.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **4.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **5.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **6.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **7.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **8.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **9.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas
- **10.** Back to Back by The Black Eyed Peas

#### FINLAND

**ALBUMS**
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#### GREECE

**SINGLES**
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#### HUNGARY

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#### AUSTRALIA

**SINGLES**
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Data for week of SEPTEMBER 24, 2005 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page B4
ALBUMS

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/hyphy/DJ retail releases is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of record stores that specialize in those genres.

- Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.
- Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart's greatest percentage growth.
- Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart's greatest unit increase.

Selling through this week:

- INDICATES PLATINUM or DIAMOND for sales of 100,000 units or more.
- INDICATES PLATINUM or DIAMOND for sales of 200,000 units or more.
- INDICATES DIAMOND for sales of 300,000 units or more.
- INDICATES DIAMOND for sales of 400,000 units or more.

Selling through this week:

- INDICATES PLATINUM certification for sales of 100,000 units or more.
- INDICATES DIAMOND certification for sales of 200,000 units or more.
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SEPTEMBER 24, 2005 | www.billboard.biz | 87

www.americanradiohistory.com
Guitarist Brown Dead At 81

Grammy Award-winning singer/guitarist Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown died Sept. 10 at his brother’s home in Orange, Texas. Brown, who was 81, had been evacuated from his Slidell, La., home following Hurricane Katrina’s devastation. He had been battling lung cancer, emphysema and heart disease.

The pioneering electric guitarist was born in 1924 in Vinton, La., to a musical family and played guitar, fiddle, mandolin, viola, harmonica and drums while growing up. A music teacher in his youth described his deep voice as a swinging gate, earning him the nickname “Gatemouth.”

Brown got his professional start as a drummer for T-Bone Walker, but when the blues legend got sick at a Houston gig in 1947, Brown filled in on guitar. The impromptu performance caught the attention of club owner and Peacock Records founder Don Robey, who became Brown’s manager and recorded him on Houston-based Peacock for several years.

In 1971, Brown’s performance at Switzerland’s Montreux Jazz Festival led to a recording stint with France’s Barclay label. Brown’s best commercial success came in the United States after he signed with Rounder Records in the 1980s. His “Alright Again!” for the label earned him a best traditional blues recording Grammy Award in 1982.

He absorbed and was comfortable in a range of styles, including blues, jazz, country, big band, R&B and Cajun music. Brown also recorded for Chicago’s Alligator Records and the French division of Verve Records.

Brown toured extensively, performing for audiences in Europe, East Africa, South America, China and the Soviet Union.

He was inducted into the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame in 1999 and won the organization’s W.C. Handy Award eight times. He also received the Rhythm & Blues Foundation’s Pioneer Award in 1997 and, in 2004, became the first Heroes Award honoree at the Memphis chapter of the Recording Academy.

Brown is survived by four children. His funeral is set for Sept. 17 at the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Orange.

—Marge Whitmire
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Bryan Birnai SVP, Creative & GM, AGMobile
David Bluhm CEO, GoTV Networks
Fred Davis Attorney, Shapiro, Shapiro, Montone & Hayes

Mark Desautels VP, Wireless Internet Development, CTIA
Will Griffin President & COO, Simmons Lefehl Media Group
Daniel Krandler Chairman & CEO, M:Metrics
Lucy Hood EVP, Fox Mobile/Ent./Sup Content & Biz, Twentieth Century Fox TV News Corp

Montone

Alberto Horondon Worldwide Director, Eni, Solutions, Mobile Devices, Motorola Inc
Michael Nash SVP, Internet Strategy, Warner Music Group
Jeff Price VP, Chief Marketing Office, Sports Illustrated
Jim Ryan VP, Consumer Data Services, Circular Wireless

Randy Colwell CEO, MobiTV
Ted Marzullo EVP & General Manager, Nextel

Jeff Talley President, CTIA Wireless Forum
Peter Fagnant President, Digital Entertainment Group, RTN

PANEL TOPICS INCLUDE:
- Music: ringtones, ringback tones, full song downloads
- Film/TV: mobisodes, music videos, news
- 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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Singer India.Arie appeared at the premiere of "The Tyra Banks Show" Sept. 6 to perform the show's theme song, "Just for Today" at the CBS Television City studios in Los Angeles. Tyra Banks, left, is pictured with India.Arie wearing a shirt available at theyrashow.com to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. (Photo: Ora Evans/Murrow Bros.)

Singer Tori Amos partied with some friends during an Aug. 10 appearance at the "Rock for Freedom" summer concert series in Virgina's Rockefeller Center. Amos is currently on tour in support of her latest album, "The Beekeeper." (Photo: Chris Eames)

Kristian Bush Automatica was the winner of the Makers Independent Music World Series Southeast Showcase Aug. 9 at the Hard Rock Cafe's Velvet Underground in Orlando, Fla. Pictured performing at the Makers-sponsored event, from left, are Kristian Automatica guitarist Jake Hinkle, Automatica lead singer Jonathan "Johny" Jakobson and Automatica drummer Jordan "Jordy" Johnson. (Photo: Grego Baker)

Rapper Snoop Dogg performed with Ice Cube at Red Hat Amphitheater Aug. 25 in a solo concert to benefit the Tyra Banks Foundation. Pictured, from left, are Snoop Dogg, Chris Baron, Renee Nicole and Tyra Banks. (Photo: Robert Scott)

Maurice Reuben Beach Day: Oscar hosted a pre-HBV VIP's party at the Virgin Mobile Summer BBQ Aug. 27 at the Barenaked Heads in L.A. Pictured are the Black Eyed Pears' William, left, and Damien. (Photo: June Humphreys/WehoMagazine.com)

Plato Jane Automatica won the final Independent Music World Series Southeast Showcase Aug. 9 at the Hard Rock Cafe's Velvet Underground in Orlando, Fla. Pictured performing at the Makers-sponsored event, from left, are Plato Jane Automatica guitarist Jake Hinkle, Automatica lead singer Jonathan "Johny" Jakobson and Automatica drummer Jordan "Jordy" Johnson. (Photo: Grego Baker)

Renaissance: Sam Bush recorded a "soul" version of Hank Williams' "For My Lord" on the Spin Doctors' new, self-titled album. "For My Lord" will be featured on the "Rock It Sonora!" compilation at the Alexa the Great Studio in Nashville. Pictured from left, are Spin Doctors' guitarist Erik Schemkes and bassist Mark White, Bush, and Spin Doctors drummer Aaron Comess and singer Chris Beno. (Photo: Rob Steck)

Backbeat

EDITED BY SARAH HAN
Kanye West attended an August 7 listening party hosted by XM Satellite Radio for West's new album, "Late Registration," at XM studios in Washington, D.C. Pictured from left are: Raw channel's Kay Slay, West.

Gorillaz visited Virgin Records' New York headquarters after its "Feel Good Inc." single from the platinum-certified "Demon Days" won breakthrough video and best special effects in a video Aug. 28 at the MTV Video Music Awards. Pictured with the Gorillaz, from left, are: Virgin Records' Hilary Shaev, Larry Massel, Matt Serletic and Randy Miller.

Nonprofit organization Fight for Children unveiled its new campaign featuring John Legend and Backstreet Boys AJ McLean and Howie Dorough Sept. 3 at its San Tropez Summer Soirée, which took place at the Water Mill, N.Y., estate of Sony BMG exec Charlie Walk. Pictured at the bash, from left, are: Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie, (Run-D.M.C.'s) Darryl McDaniels, Walk, Buzz Marketing Group's Tina Wells, C's Kabab Cake's Sony Urban Music GM Lisa Ellis, attorney LL Londell McMillan and FFC's Joe Roberts. (Photo: Dan Steinberg)

Grammy Award-winning Swiss harpist Andreas Vollenweider, right, performed Aug. 2 at a special event honoring the Dalai Lama’s 70th birthday, at the Einsiedeln monastery in Switzerland. (Photo Courtesy, Kin Kou Recoes).

Representatives of Ray Charles Enterprises and Rhino Records attended the opening of the Ray Charles Post Office Aug. 24 in Los Angeles. RCE and Rhino released two new Ray Charles projects Sept. 20: a duets CD and a boxed set. Pictured, from left, are: Rhino Records' Mike Engstrom, RCE's Joe Adams and Rhino Records' James Austin. (Photo: Dan Steinberg)

Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers celebrated their eighth annual Win A Los Angeles Dodgers Doubleheader Aug. 27 with performances by such acts as Tony Orlando and Dawn and Tico Torres of Bon Jovi. Pictured from left, are: Dodgers president/CEO Stan Kasten, Dodgers director of marketing Drew McCourt, Kiss' Gene Simmons, Nickelback's Chad Kroeger and guitarist Dave Navarro and guitarist Jerry Cantrell.

Universal Music & Video Distribution president Jim Une awarded the staff of the Los Angeles region with the Henry Droz Award for Outstanding Achievement in Artist Development Aug. 30 at UMVD's L.A. regional office in Burbank, Calif. Pictured, from left, are: UMVD's Mike Davis, Cliff O'Sullivan, John Kiernan, Linda Kury and Une.

Major League Baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers celebrated their second annual Vegas Rock Star Poker Tournament and Sommerbergs Aug. 26-27. It was hosted by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority and Clear Channel Entertainment Properties, at the Paris Casino Resort in Las Vegas. Pictured, from left, are: Clear Channel Entertainment's Randy Miller and Navarette. (Photo: Bennett Brown/Invision, courtesy of Clear Channel Entertainment)
ALL HAIL THE QUEEN
“Sometimes you’d come out looking green,” said Queen Latifah, recalling the bad old days when an African-American woman had only one color of makeup to choose from. The rapper-turned-author-turned-actress has done her part to change that through her partnership with Cover Girl, which has expanded to include the new Queen Collection.

Latifah announced the new product line at the close of the Music Upfront 2005, presented Sept. 13 by Billboard and ad-week magazines and Alliance at the B.B. King Blues Club & Grill in New York.

Designed for women of color, the products in the Queen Collection will be “affordable for everyone” and are based on customer input Latifah has received through the years. “People give me hugs like I’m their auntie or niece or daughter,” she said with a huge smile.

In the course of a live interview with your intrepid Inside Track editor, Latifah spoke of her shared philosophy with Cover Girl (“Beauty beginning on the inside and working its way to the outside”) and her responsibilities as a role model (“I think of myself as a child. Who could I see in a magazine that looked like me? I didn’t exist”).

Latifah made it clear that she would not endorse any brand that she would not use. And do not forget: She has also partnered with VF Intimates’ Curvation line and Pizza Hut.

The bulk of the daylong Music Upfront saw labels plying brand marketers with artists and repertoire, and brand marketers sharing their needs and wants with label execs. Peppered between the panel discussions—“upfronts”—were artist showcases from a number of promising newcomers, including Hope (Atlantic Records), Teddy Geiger (Columbia), Rhymefest (J) and Ne-Yo (Island Def Jam).

BRITNEY’S SOPHOMORE SCENT
Prepare yourself for a Britney Spears media blitz surrounding the launch of her new perfume, Fantasy. It is the “follow-up” to the artist’s mega-successful Curious scent, which has amassed $100 million in retail sales since it debuted last year, according to Elizabeth Arden chief marketing officer Ron Rolleston. The hypnotic, electronic sounds of Spears’ own “Breathe on Me” form the musical bed of the Fantasy TV spot, which was created by ad agency Goodby, Silverstein and Partners—specifically creative director Jeff Goodby, art director Nancy King and copywriter Jean Weisman. Bille Woodruff directed.

STREAM ME, BABY
MobiTV, a provider of live TV feeds to wireless phones, will launch a streaming radio service for mobile phones by the end of the month. Inside Track has learned the company is working with Music Choice to deliver MobiRadio: 20 channels of music in various genres for a subscription fee of about $5 per month. No word yet on which wireless carrier will make the service available. MobiTV provides its streaming TV service to such carriers as Sprint and Cingular.

REGROUPED AND READY TO GO
The Rhythm & Blues Foundation welcomes a new executive director Sept. 19. With more than 20 years’ experience in the nonprofit arts world, Kaye Connelly joins the foundation after seven years as executive director of Pennsylvania’s Blue Note Jazz Festival. Connelly, who exited the 16-year-old organization two years ago, Connelly’s appointment marks the latest step in the organization’s regrouping (Billboard, Feb. 12). Now headquartered in Philadelphia, it maintains a satellite office in New York’s Harlem neighborhood.

Looking ahead to 2006, the foundation will bring back its Pioneer Awards June 29 in Philadelphia. The last awards ceremony, held in 2003, was marred by the presentation of partial honorariums. Acknowledging previous cash-flow problems, chairman Kendall Minter tells Inside Track the foundation is on firm financial footing. He also says the board is in preliminary discussions concerning televising the awards show.

RAPHSOETY GOING MOBILE
Inside Track hears that Rhapsody is preparing to announce a significant wireless deal Sept. 19. According to sources, the company is partnering with a major wireless carrier to introduce a Rhapsody-branded mobile music service.
On September 9, help truly was a phone call away.

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Smooth urban jazz hit-maker saxophonist Kim Waters returns with the follow up to last year’s chart-topper “In The Name Of Love.”

Includes the smooth jazz radio smash “Steppin Out” plus “Daydreaming,” a brilliantly updated version of the Aretha Franklin classic featuring the silky guest vocals of R&B songstress Maysa.

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