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WINTER OF DISCONTENT

By Will Cornell

At long last the powers that be have recognized that the marketplace wants its music digitally—and in different ways, like using a snippet to answer the phone. Proof: The labels are already talking about a wholesale price war, which is historically the way they react to hitting the jackpot.

The labels could have gotten to this point sooner if they had paid attention to perhaps the greatest sales and marketing book of all time. Theodore (Dr.) Seuss Geisel’s “Green Eggs and Ham.”

Don’t laugh. There are a lot of simple lessons in there on how to sell (persist-ence, persistence) and how to market (package/position the product differently—on a boat, with a goar, in the rain, on a train . . .). The book also preaches optimism on the salesman’s part.

The increase in unit sales for legitimate downloads is outpacing the decline of traditional albums. At least where those jobs who its music has figured out ways to make it work. Sell an iPod already loaded with everything U2 or Madonna ever recorded. Make deals with cell-phone carriers. While you are at it, about how doorbell manufacturers? Put downloads in a promotional package to help retailers sell more whatever it is they sell. (Yes, that includes you music retailers. Your customers will love you for it . . .). In a car, in a boat, in the rain, on a train. If your business is down, think of how those increases should be working for you!

But downloading digital music is not new—not by a long shot. Apple Computer brilliantly showed up at the right time to catch the towel the industry was fixing to throw into the ring. Apple said: “Wait a minute, it’s not over. We have a few moves for your fighter to try out.”

However, others have extended their boxing expertise. Two retailers offered downloadable music to their customers as much as 15 years ago: Super Club’s Rhythm & Views store in Garland, Texas, and later some of the Blockbuster Music Stores. The methods—allowing a customer to use a kiosk to put songs (at about $1 each) on cassettes or recordable CDs—were primitive by today’s standards. But really, there is not a lot of difference.

Record labels shot both those retailers down with threats of legal action, instead of working with the technology and figuring out a way to make it work for all, make it grow—where they could get the customer to admit he liked green eggs and ham.

Sam-I-Am (the pesky hero of “Green Eggs and Ham”) would have had a tough time working at a major label in the last 15 years. It is OK for the customer to have the initial reaction of not liking Sam-I-Am.

After all, that comes with being a salesman, and being innovative. But for someone else who sells green eggs and ham to want Sam-I-Am around, that is a bit puzzling.

Because there were plenty of other Sam-I-Am out there (think Napster), the industry got caught napping. Lawyers were called in to straighten it out. (Notice there is no legal counsel in the Dr. Seuss book.) Eventually, after much pain and suffering all around, we get to where we are today.

The customer has proved he does like his music “on a boat, with a goar, in the rain, on a train,” but he could have done so a lot sooner!

Let’s prepare ourselves for the next technological breakthrough, and instead of fighting it out between fellow salesmen, let’s figure out ways to win over that customer before someone else does.

Keep a copy of “Green Eggs and Ham” in your office right there with “The Art of War” or whatever other business reference library you keep. Next time technology presents a new challenge, ask yourself: What would Sam-I-Am do?

Will Cornell is a sales and marketing consultant in Dallas.

Downloads And Ringtones: Green Eggs And Ham?

As downloads and ring tones have come to a head, music sales have dropped. Perhaps the answer is to simply sell. But wholesale pricing is one thing that the labels still control. Universal Music Group has proved that reducing the cost of goods (combined with great A&R) can help build market share.

Walk into any music specialist today, and you will still find rows of new releases priced as high as $18.98. In an age of 99 cent downloads, the industry needs to act quickly to eliminate such anachronistic pricing.

Getting back to Mr. Dickens: We all remember Christmas. For a good idea how Christmas present is going to pan out. It is time to focus on putting the cheer back into Christmas future.
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ROCKER CORNELL SUES FORMER MANAGER
Audioslave frontman Chris Cornell has sued his ex-wife and one-time manager Susan J. Silver, seeking more than $1 million in damages. The suit, filed Nov. 28 in California Superior Court in Los Angeles, alleges that Silver, among other things, "conspired with other representatives of Soundgarden to direct funds owed to [Cornell] to other members of his former band. Cornell is seeking a sum to be determined by the court, but not less than $1 million. In an official statement in response to the lawsuit filed, Silver called the allegations "absurd" and said, "I find it necessary to state that at no time have there been any wrongdoing on my part, nor any withholding of his property."

MUSICLAND CEO STEPS DOWN
The Musicland Group has lost another CEO as Jack Chadsey, who assumed the post Oct. 3, has left the company. Musicland president Michael Madden has been named interim CEO. Company insiders say that Chadsey decided to leave on his own.

D.C. SUES SONY BMG OVER CDs
The District of Columbia on Nov. 29 became the latest to sue Sony BMG over the release of music CDs that installed spyware on users' computers. D.C. resident Nicholas Xanthakos sued the music company under the district's Consumer Protection and Procedures Act.

Simon Says
Cornell will remain 'Idol'

Multimedia 50
Marketing 50 Cent's film across platforms

Justin Time For Xmas
Timberlake launches clothing line

U2 Can Text
Text messaging big at live shows

American Icon
Bon Jovi enters touring pantheon

RETAIL
BY ED CHRISTMAN

A Turkey Of A Weekend
NEW YORK—Black Thanksgiving weekend music sales have sent a chill through much of the music industry, leaving merchants increasingly nervous about what the future will hold.

Nielsen SoundScan reports that for the week containing Thanksgiving and Black Friday, overall music sales were down about 12.7%—a record decline for the holiday week in the Nielsen SoundScan era.

But a survey of music accounts and top distribution executives paints a more dire picture. Excluding Wal-Mart, U.S. music sales for Nov 23-27 were down 20% or more on a comparable-store basis from last year's numbers, these sources say.

With the disappointing kickoff to the holiday selling season, weak prospects for the remainder of the year and U.S. album sales already down nearly 10% for 2005, some industry executives fear that full-year sales could wind up down as much as 12%.

"It's astonishing how the business is unfolding right now in front of us," one music merchandise executive says. Further, with the market trending against music, merchants are pleading with labels for lower CD pricing or more added value packages.

"There has to be a fundamental restructuring of CD pricing," Newbury Comics CEO Mike Deese says. "The whole model is changing very quickly and it cries out for a $9.99 CD."

If the labels do not want to address pricing, then Value Music president Rob Perini suggests salvation lies in the industry embracing the DualDisc or packaging CDs with DVDs.

But label executives appear to be resistant to such overtures. Nonetheless, they acknowledge that significant shifts in the dynamics of the marketplace are a cause for soul searching about where the music busi-

continues on >>p6

LABELS
BY TAMARA CONNIFF

Anthony, Barnett, Walk
Take New SMLG Roles
Sony Music Label Group U.S. has a new executive structure in place, effective immediately. Michele Anthony has been named president of SMLG, in addition to continuing her role as COO of the group and executive VP of Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

Additionally, Will Botwin has stepped down as chairman of Columbia Records Group. He is replaced by Steve Barnett, who was president of Epic Records.

Don Ienner, CEO of SMLG, who also previously held the title of president, tells Billboard, "Michele and I are true partners. Giving her the president title really reinforces that."

Anthony adds that taking on Ienner's president duties will allow him to further focus on artist development and the creative efforts of the company.

continues on >>p6

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which allows a resident to act as a private attorney general and seek relief on behalf of the general public.

>>Senator Wants Ratings System
Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, wants to develop a "national ratings system" that would grade the level of decent or indecent material in video or audio content delivered through virtually every media platform.

>>BMI Fetes Hollis at London Awards
Singer/Songwriter Mark Knopfler was the big winner at the 2005 BMI London Awards, presented Nov. 29 at the Dorchester Hotel. Hollis "It's My Life" received the Robert S. Mussel Award for the most performed song by a member of BMI or its affiliates in Europe or the United Kingdom.

Additionally, Steve Winwood was honored as a BMI Icon.

>>Real, Nokia Get on the Radio
The European arm of RealNetworks has launched five online radio stations devoted to Nokia's U.K. live-music events in 2005.

In what is billed as the first initiative of its kind in Europe, each of the new Nokia radio stations is dedicated to five participating events: the Nokia Urban Music Festival, the Nokia Isle of Wight Festival, the Nokia Unleashed Music Festival, the Carling Weekend (Reading and Leeds Festivals), and the Nokia Rock Tour. The songs for four of the five radio services are selected from the festivals' artists; the fifth station, the Nokia Rock Tour service, is devoted to emerging and breakthrough acts such as El Presidente and the Heeds. Those acts played on the Nokia Rock Tour.

>>Stones Add European Leg to World Tour
The Rolling Stones will launch a European leg

from >p5

sales figures for the boxed set other than to say that it went gold on Nov. 22, its first day of availability. For a six-disc set, that would mean at least 83,000 units. But industry sources say Walmart bought 2 million-2.5 million units of the set and sold 100,000-400,000 units through the opening weekend.

Walmart is believed to be one of the few merchants to post strong positive sales numbers for music. That helps to explain the discrepancy between the consensus 20% comparable-sales figures for the boxed set and the 12.7% decline counted by Nielsen SoundScan.

A reager bit of good news: Digital album sales increased for 367,000 for the Thanksgiving week, compared to 208,000 last year. And online stores like Amazon are believed to have enjoyed a 20% sales increase over the same weekend last year.

As for the much ballyhooed Cyber Monday—a newly coined term for the Monday after Thanksgiving, which is said to be the strongest day of the year for online sales in many categories—music seems to have its own sales pattern.

According to Alan Tuchman, president of Alliance Entertainment Distribution—which fulfills orders for hundreds of online stores and is the second-largest shipper of CDs to consumers after Amazon—the big day for Web music sales was Thanksgiving day itself, when most brick-and-mortar stores were closed.

"As soon as the Black Friday circulars came out that day in newspapers, we saw a pickup in business," he says. "On Cyber Thursday, we were very busy." Meanwhile, in the traditional account sector, Hasting Entertainment claims to have received a 5.1% increase in retail sales over its typical Thursday.

For the year through Nov. 27, Columbia has a 6.6% share of the total U.S. albums market, with Epic garnering a 4.8% share, according to Nielsen SoundScan. That performance is down slightly from the 6.7% and 4.9% the two labels respectively enjoyed in the corresponding time period.

Columbia's top acts include Destiny's Child, Beyoncé, Bruce Springsteen and System of a Down, whose "Hypnotize" debuts this week at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Key Epic acts include Ginuwine, Gretchin Wilson, Celine Dion, Shakira and Audioslave.

In a statement, Botwin says, "I've had a great ride over my last 10 years at Columbia Records. To be a big part of, and then to oversee the world's premier record label has been a tremendous experience."

Botwin says the new structure is key to further the success of SMLG. The current power struggle between Sony BMG CEO Andrew Lack and BMG parent company Bertelsmann has no bearing on this new structure, he says, adding that SMLG "is moving ahead as normal. This is a great way to start the new year."
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VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR

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VOCAL DUO OF THE YEAR

BYRON GALLIMORE
PRODUCER
SINGLE OF THE YEAR
ALBUM OF THE YEAR

JERRY DOUGLAS
MUSCIAN OF THE YEAR

BILL ANDERSON
SONG OF THE YEAR
"WHISKEY LULLABY"
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**Digital by Antony Bruno**

**Control Issues**

Struggle To Regulate Content Slowing Digital Advances

Old media brands and new technology startups could agree on one thing at the 2006 Digital Entertainment & Media Expo conference—the digital entertainment industry has a long way to go before it attains mainstream success.

More than 1,000 attendees representing the music, movie, TV, and gaming fields gathered at the DEMXPO conference and awards, held Nov. 30-Dec. 1 in Los Angeles, to discuss their strategies for attaining that goal.

What emerged as the biggest barrier holding up mass adoption of various digital platforms is the struggle for control. Content owners— their heads full of piracy fears—want to control how their content is accessed, used, and delivered. Consumers, and the technology companies creating applications for them, want the freedom to control their digital files.

The air in the conference hall was thick with the ongoing flap over Sony BMG’s “rootkit” CD digital rights management as an example of how content owners’ control can be taken too far.

“Just to give the general philosophy as to the methods that exist to combat privacy,” a member of the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s What’s the Downlight advisory board said during “The Kids Are Alright,” a round table that included college-aged end users. “There's this idea that it's the consumer versus the industry. There should be ways for them to work together.”

Based on the keynote and breakout sessions, it is clear that a new consumer rights debate is under way.

During the Ad Week Q&A TiVo CEO Tom Rogers said, “When the consumer is in control, they’re doing something that causes them to seek more information and be more active with their content. So to reach a breakthrough with them in some way is becoming increasingly important.”

In her Nov. 30 keynote address, Playboy Enterprises CEO Christy Hefner encouraged the old media world to remain open to new technologies and adapt to the rapidly changing landscape.

“Part of what each of us has to do to be successful is to be humble,” she advised. “It’s not about putting a strategy in a drawer and blindly executing on it.”

The challenge to the old media guard, however, is that emerging technologies revolve around still-maturing business models and content-licensing rates that seem almost impossible to negotiate.

This was perhaps most clearly illustrated in the discussions concerning podcasting. EMI senior VP of digital development and distribution Ted Cohen, in the audience for Billboard’s Q&A session, asked Clear Channel Communications executive VP Evan Harrison what business model he envisioned for getting major-label music into podcasts. Harrison demurred, saying, “We're not really thinking about labels yet. I'm still watching to see how podcasting develops.”

XM Satellite Radio CEO Hugh Panero, in a keynote speech provided to Billboard in advance, turned up this risk vs. opportunity question that new technology provides.

“A traditional business with out a few dreamers has problems,” he said. “They are late to innovate, because the innovators have gone elsewhere. Businesses without dreamers don’t age well.”

**Complete List Of DEMXPO Winners**

**LOS ANGELES—**The winners of the second annual Digital Entertainment & Media Expo Awards were honored Dec. 1 at the Century Plaza Hotel here. The awards ceremony closed the two-day DEMXPO conference, co-sponsored by Billboard. The winners were selected by a panel of jurors representing all elements of the new-media industry. Honors were given for innovation, entrepreneurship and brand development in music, video, games, TV, film and video. Here is a list of winners:

**GENERAL AWARDS**

Visionary of the year: Jon Miller, chairman/CEO, America Online

Innovator of the year: Microsoft for Xbox Live Arcade

Brand of the year: Yahoo

**MUSIC AWARDS**

Digital music innovation of the year: Sonos Digital Music System

Best use of technology by an artist: LL Cool J

Best radio service: Motorola iRadio

Best downloadable or subscription music service: Yahoo Music Unlimited

Music video of the year: “Paul McCartney Live in Red Square,” Blink Digital

**GAME AWARD**

Game innovation of the year: Microsoft for Xbox Live Arcade

Adobe game of the year: “HALO 2,” MS Game Studios and Bungie Software

Mobile phone game of the year: “Doom,” Jamat Mobile

Casual game of the year: “Chuzzle Deluxe,” PopCap Multiplayer game of the year: “World of Warcraft,” Blizzard Entertainment

Advergame of the year: “America’s Army,” U.S. Army

Best use of sound in a game: “SSX on Tour,” Electronic Arts

**FILM, TV AND VIDEO AWARDS**

DVD of the year: “The Lord of the rings: The Return of the King” (Extended Edition), New Line

Television technology of the year: GoldPocket’s Event Matrix iTV System, GoldPocket Interactive

Best interactive television programming: AOL’s “Who Wants to be a Millionaire” (AIM) integration

Best use of technology for educational programming: “Inside 9/11” DVD set, National Geographic

Most innovative use of technology for advertising: Atom Films’ Mobile Movie Theatre PSP

Best video-on-demand service: Live 8 on aolmusic.com, AOL

**Retail by Ed Christman**

**Retail Complying With Sony BMG’S CD Recall**

**NEW YORK—**While New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer claims merchants are not pulling Sony BMG’s copy-protected CDs off the shelves quick enough, most chain executives say they have been diligent in returning the controversial inventory.

Spitzer’s staff found some copies of the 52 Sony BMG titles using XCP digital-rights management technology still on record store shelves. Some tech consulting firms have labeled the DRM software as spyware. Spitzer urged stores to pull the inventory immediately.

His office did not return a call for comment.

In a statement, Sony BMG said, “We appreciate the attorney general’s reinforcement of our efforts.” Sony BMG had already sent a product recall letter on Nov. 16 to accounts, telling them they could return all titles with the copy protection free of charge. It also began a consumer exchange program.

On the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving (Nov. 23), as merchants were preparing for Black Friday, Sony BMG issued yet another product recall letter.

Trans World Entertainment executive VP/CFO John Sullivan says his chain had already pulled the inventory, as did the Newbury Comics and Bull Moose chains.

At the wholesale level, Alliance Entertainment president Alan Tuchman says that its large accounts pulled the product as soon as the BMG letter arrived. He also says that independent stores have been active in returning the product.

As Newbury Comics buyer Car Mello puts it, “There is no point in passing on customers.”

Some merchants believe the Sony BMG copy-protection issue reached the extremely weak Thanksgiving weekend sales.

Although the media made a big deal of the issue, stores report virtually no returns from customers upset about copy protection. Consequently, some chains appear to have taken their time about pulling inventory, apparently waiting for replacement product so they would not lose any more sales during an already depressed sales period.

“We are in the process of returning the product,” a buyer at one large chain says, pointing out the unwanted bureaucracy that must be followed for the return process during a retailer’s busiest time of the year.

At least one regional chain says it does not have any plans to pull inventory, because whatever possible it only carried the DualDisc versions of albums, which are not affected by the software problems. So only has a small amount of product, and since its customers do not appear to be worried about the issue, it did not feel the need to pull those titles.
Warner Music Group Scores In 4th Quarter

NEW YORK—With the Warner Music Group’s fourth-quarter results exceeding analyst expectations and digital sales outpacing the decline of physical goods sales, the company increased Wall Street investors’ bet heavily on the new management team.

For the three-month period ended Sept. 30, WMG reported a net loss of $30 million, or 21 cents per diluted share, on sales of $905 million. That was a dramatic improvement over the $1.37 million loss ($1.27 per diluted share) the company posted in last year’s fiscal fourth quarter, when revenue was $798 million.

In a statement, company chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. said, “This report demonstrates that the Warner Music Group is translating its vision and marketplace momentum into results.” Moreover, he said, the company’s digital music business yielded dramatic growth and represented 6% of fourth-quarter revenue. More importantly, he said, the company’s
digital sales outpaced the decline of revenue from physical goods, which lags U.S. industry trends.

For the full year, WMG reported a loss of $169 million, or $1.40 per diluted share, on revenue of $3.5 billion. While that too is a dramatic improvement over the $1.4 billion loss reported in the previous year when sales were $3.44 billion, the red ink then was associated with costs from the acquisition of the company from Time Warner in February 2004 and charges related to the subsequent restructuring implemented by the new management team.

In looking at revenue by company operations, the recorded music component generated $2.86 billion for the year, while publishing produced $601 million.

At its year-end fiscal, the company’s balance sheet shows shareholder equity at $89 million, with long-term debt standing at $2.23 billion.

Wall Street reacted positively to the news. WMG shares closed Dec. 1 at $19.05, up $1.

Billboard Awards Set To Shine

Green Day, Toby Keith, Daddy Yankee Among Performers For Dec. 6 Event

SO Cent, Mariah Carey and Green Day are the top finalists for the 2005 Billboard Music Awards, which will be presented Dec. 6 live on Fox from Las Vegas’ MGM Grand Garden Arena.

Rap legend LL Cool J will host the event, which will boast performances by Gwen Stefani, Green Day, Toby Keith, R. Kelly, Carrie Underwood and Daddy Yankee with Pharrell.

SO Cent is a finalist in eight categories, followed by Carey with seven and Green Day with six. All three will vie for artist of the year. Additionally, SO Cent’s “The Massacre,” Carey’s “The Emancipation of Mimi” and Green Day’s “American Idiot” are album of the year finalists along with Eminem’s “Encore.”

Kelly Clarkson is the fourth artist of the year finalist. She is a finalist in two other categories, including digital song of the year for “Since U Been Gone.”

Green Day is also a finalist for group of the year, along with the Black Eyed Peas, Destiny’s Child and the Killers. In the new artist of the year category, the finalists are Stefani, Fantasia, the Game and Rob Thomas.

Fantasia and the Game are finalists in four categories, as is Lil Jon & the East Side Boyz. As previously reported, Tom Petty will receive the Century Award and Kanye West will be given the Artist Achievement Award at the ceremony.

A number of surprise collaborations are also expected onstage. Executive producer Bob Bain says that as many as three performances will feature multiple artists.

The presenters’ area onstage will resemble a cross between CNN’s “Situation Room” with Wolf Blitzer and the NASDAQ stock market, according to producer Paul Flattery. Screens behind this area will display Billboard charts from throughout the year for the award category being presented. Once the winner is announced, the year-end chart in that category will then be shown in select cases.

The Billboard Music Awards recognize the year’s leading artists and songs as determined by actual performance on Billboard’s weekly charts from December 2004 through November 2005.

For a list of finalists, go to billboard.com/awards.
Kazaa Wins Reprieve
Court Gives Sharman Networks An Extension

Peer-to-peer file trading service Kazaa on Nov. 24 won yet another stay of execution. An Australian court gave it until late February to implement a filtering system that will block unauthorized music sharing.

The stay is predicated on Kazaa’s Australia-based parent company Sharman Networks blocking a list of search terms—such as artist and song names—by Dec. 5. This interim step is an attempt to reduce unauthorized file sharing through the service, not stop it outright.

Both sides claimed victory following the ruling. The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry hailed it as a “final warning” for Kazaa.

Sharman Networks, meanwhile, expressed satisfaction that the ruling allows it to continue operating over the objection of record companies who have sought its immediate closure. The court also declined to force the company to pay a security deposit for the damages sought by the music industry, thought to be around $200 million.

The late-February extension coincides with Sharman Networks’ scheduled appeal of the original Sept. 5 verdict, which found the company liable for knowingly violating music copyrights. It is the second time the court has extended the deadline for Sharman Networks to significantly alter Kazaa or face shutdown.

The original ruling gave the company two months to implement the keyword-filtering system to block unauthorized trading. The company did not win itself any points March to implement it. But because the Audible Magic software was not mentioned in any of the earlier proceedings, the judge mandated the original keyword-blocking solution be put in place for the time being, defining it as an interim solution.

The recording industry has accused Sharman Networks of employing delay tactics to update the list every two weeks, and Sharman Networks would have two days after receipt to update the filter accordingly.

Even the music industry, which wanted the list to reflect 10,000 terms, feels the keyword-search system is incapable of fully protecting its copyrights. But the industry did not win itself any points when its technical representatives skipped a court-ordered technology round table between the labels and Sharman Networks to discuss alternative technical solutions.

Audible Magic’s audio fingerprinting technology is used by several formerly open P2P services that have built or are in the process of building authorized systems. They include iMesh, currently in a public beta phase.

The IFPI hailed the court ruling as a ‘final warning’ for Kazaa, which continues to operate.

COWELL, FULLER SETTLE ‘X FACTOR’

LONDON—Having patched up their differences, British music entrepreneurs Simon Fuller and Simon Cowell have forged an agreement that binds the pair in business until at least the end of the decade.

Fuller, creator of the “Pop Idol” TV property, has reached an out-of-court settlement in a copyright litigation case over Cowell’s “X Factor” series. At the same time, Fox Broadcasting has struck a multipartal deal to keep the “American Idol” series running on the network through at least 2009.

As part of the settlement, Fuller will become a part owner of “X Factor,” retroactive to the first series. Separately, Fox has inked the U.S. rights to “X Factor.”

While many details of the settlement—announced Nov. 29—remained confidential, a joint statement confirmed 19 Entertainment “will receive a minority interest in certain intellectual property and programming related to the ‘X Factor’ as well as other specified rights with respect to the show.”

19 Entertainment was given an “American Idol” and versions of the program in 32 markets, 19 Entertainment comprises a record label, 19 Recordings, and a management company.

The settlement paved the way for Fox to renegotiate its pact for “American Idol,” which is co-produced by Fremantle Media, a unit of European broadcaster RTL Group. Under the terms of the new agreement, Cowell will appear in at least five more seasons of “American Idol.” He also takes an executive producer title on the series.

According to a Securities and Exchange Commission filing by 19 Entertainment parent CKX, Fox will pay 19 and Fremantle an additional $18 million for the 2006 edition of “American Idol.” The fee will rise each year until it reaches $35.5 million for the 2011 edition, should the show continue that long.

In September 2004, 19 Entertainment sued Cowell, his production firms Simco and Syco and co-producer Fremantle for copyright infringement and breach of contract over the then-new “X Factor” program.

In a statement, Cowell commented, “I am happy that we have been able to sort out our differences and find an amicable solution to our problems,” adding that the pact “means we can go forward and concentrate on... developing other successful projects.”

A longtime A&R executive at Sony BMG in the United Kingdom, Cowell’s celebrity has soared thanks to his appearances on “Pop Idol” and “American Idol.” He also plays a focal role on “X Factor” as one of its talent judges. Winners in both U.K. series receive a recording contract with Sony BMG.

Sony BMG continues as the designated record label for winning contestants in “American Idol.” The U.S. deal also sees 19 Recordings receive $5 million each season from Fox for the next five years for allowing Sony BMG to release recordings from the series. The imprint’s cut of royalties from Sony BMG sales of “Idol”-related records in the United Kingdom and United States is also being increased.

NewsCorp-owned Fox Broadcasting has also committed to at least four additional seasons of “American Idol,” starting with the fifth incarnation, which is due to go live in January. The network has an option to pick up two further seasons, providing “American Idol” hits preset ratings targets during its 2009 run.

The new deal also calls for the network to commission at least two additional non-“Idol” series co-produced by 19 and Fremantle. Fox has agreed to build a Web site for “American Idol,” for which 19, Fremantle and Fox will jointly develop content.

Billboard Contest Seeks Top Teen Songwriters

The competition is open to full-time students ages 13-18. Lyrics are to be crafted around the themes “Come Together” and “Partnering with USA Weekend” for a grand prize package offered by Billboard magazine and billboard.com.

The winner will receive a trip to New York City to attend a performance at the Radio City Music Hall during USA Weekend. The grand prize includes round-trip airfare, hotel accommodations, tickets to the show and other expenses. The winner will also receive a $1,000 gift card and other prizes.

The contest runs Dec. 2, 2005-March 9, 2006, with the winning lyrics to be selected by the panel in early May. Entries will be evaluated for originality and creativity, songwriting ability and appropriateness of song lyrics for recording.

To give budding songsmiths even more guidance toward what makes a hit song, the Billboard editorial staff is choosing its favorite lyrics from a list of the top 100 pop songs of the Nielsen Music era (1992-present). Fans will get to vote for their favorite lyrics online.

Full details, official rules and an entry form can be found at usaweekend.com.
Handling The Legal Hurdles For ‘Hurricane Relief’

It is a wonderful thing when the music industry unites for a common charitable cause. "Hurricane Relief: Come Together Now," a double-CD with 10 tracks by more than 80 artists, was issued Nov. 22. Net proceeds benefit victims of Hurricane Katrina through the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity and the MusiCares Hurricane Relief Fund.

Initially, there were two separate projects, one by the Recording Industry Assn. of America and the other by Concord Music Group. They merged efforts, with Rush Communications’ Hip-Hop Summit Action Network later joining the mix.

Even with good intentions, completing the legal clearance process with the desired fast turn-around was no small task for the teams of lawyers involved. RIAA director of strategic communications Paige Ralston coordinated the creative and legal sides of the project. While A&R reps from the label worked through their wish lists of tracks to acquire, several lawyers dovied up the work to handle the legal hurdles.

One team leader was Larry Blake, who splits his time between Concord—as its general counsel/senior VP of business and legal affairs—and Manatt Phelps & Phillips. The law firm graciously provided the legal services of several lawyers pro bono.

Another leader was Joe Salvo, Sony BMG Music Entertainment VP of the law department. Nahshon Craig, Rush director of business and legal affairs, jumped in for the four tracks from the Hip-Hop Summit.

"The key challenges are to limit the scope of what you really need to make the process cleaner," Blake says. His team prepared simple, straightforward release forms.

The RIAA, which would hold the copyright to the compilation, did not ask copyright holders for the right to release tracks as singles or downloads. It limited rights to album sales in the United States for one year. Everyone was asked to provide their work gratis.

An extremely difficult part of the process involved the charities, Blake adds. All states have laws regulating the sale of products that generate money for charities. The American Red Cross was particularly sensitive to ensure that all the t's were crossed and the i's dotted after experiencing problems following donations people made in response to the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

As a result, the RIAA had to guarantee a minimum amount that would be paid to the charities. This was difficult since manufacturing and shipping costs would have to be recouped, and a per-unit amount would only cover that expense if a certain number of units are sold.

Still, they crunched numbers so that the deal promised to generate at least $15 per unit based on a $17.99 wholesale price for the double-CD package. Blake says, "Larry quickly put together agreements with the charities, then had to get them filed with the states and get bonds posted." Salvo says.

Addressing a most-favored-nations request from participating parties was particularly sensitive. Some contributors were victims of the hurricane. It was hard to ask them for a gratis license, Blake says, but it was felt that the project could not and should not make exceptions.

Then there were union contributions to address—American Federation of Musicians per-unit payments and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists session fees. Both unions waived the fees so that more money would go into the charitable pot.

Clearing rights for more than 80 artists plus publishers and labels within a short time frame was also an enormous task. The set includes new recordings from such acts as Coldplay, Elton John and Bonnie Raitt, as well as classic cuts from such New Orleans legends as Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino and Dr. John.

Craig says that tracks by Kanye West and Diddy were the most challenging for him to clear. West’s track included samples—one of which had two copyright owners—and four “side artists” who each had their own record deals with multiple labels. It had not been released domestically, and the songwriters’ splits had never been finally settled. Even though the licenses were gratis, the publishers wanted to clear up the splits first. Diddy’s track had never been released. The legal team had to figure out who owned the rights. Then they learned that a rhyme was written by someone, but no one could immediately remember who.

Yet Craig says that Rush founder Russell Simmons gave him a simple instruction: “Get it done.” After working around the clock, they did...
Japan's New Golden Oldie
Nearing Its Centennial, Columbia Music Entertainment Enjoys A Profitable Turnaround

TOKYO—Japan's oldest label, Columbia Music Entertainment, has a new spring in its step after years of crippling losses.

On Nov. 17 Tokyo-based CME announced consolidated first-half net profits of 78 million yen ($15.8 million) for April 1–Sept. 30, up from 8 million yen ($75,800) in the same period last year.

In May, CME's figures for the year ending March 31 showed a 157 million yen ($1.5 million) net profit—its first in 14 years—following a 745 million yen ($6.5 million) loss in 2003/2004.

The company expects to maintain its turnaround, predicting a net profit of 100 million yen ($840,000) for the year to March 31, 2006.

"CME has now shown sustained profitability," New York-based CME chairman Strauss Zelnick says. "We are pleased by the company's progress and fully intend to accelerate it."

CME reported a 9.7% first-half sales rise to 16.2 billion yen ($315.8 million), boosted by revenue from third-party distribution and digital sales.

"In the first half, we cleared our accumulated loss and paid off our bank loans," CME president/CEO Sadahiko Hirose says. "The second half will be our investment phase."

The company entered this financial year carrying an accumulated loss of 34.2 billion yen ($287.4 million) and bank loans of 4.4 billion yen ($37 million). Those were cleared through an internal transfer of capital and July's $55 million sale of CME's CD/DVD manufacturing operation, Columbia Digital Media.

"We have completed restructuring as a record company," Hirose says. The next step, he says, is to move from a "CME in its step..." to fully "Columbia in its step..."

Kiyoshi Hikawa, left, and Noriko Minami

Controversial Law Could Scuttle Italian Anti-Piracy Prosecutions

MILAN—Italy's war on music piracy has suffered a devastating blow following the Italian Senate's approval on Nov. 9 of a controversial change to the country's statute of limitations on "white collar crime."

Italian labels body FIMI estimates that 80% of the 471 pending prosecutions launched prior to the end of 2004 will have to be dropped because of the Ex-Cirilli Law. A similar number of 2005 cases may also be scrapped.

The bill, No. 3247, is named for Edmondo Cirilli, a member of Parliament who introduced it in November 2004. A key part of the government-backed bill reduces the statute of limitations from 7 ½ years to six in a range of cases that carry maximum terms of four years or less—including intellectual-property violation and some corruption cases.

Under Italy's notoriously convoluted legal system, it often takes many years to reach a definitive verdict in a case. Many cases already fail to get to that stage, and music industry insiders fear the new rules will scuttle many trials before they start.

"If prosecutors know a piracy trial will fizzle out before a verdict is reached, they are [now] likely to tell law enforcement officers who present them with cases, 'Look, stop wasting my time,' " says Luca Vespignani, secretary-general of FIMI's anti-piracy unit IPE.

FIMI estimates illegal sales in Italy were worth 150 million euros ($176 million) at retail in 2004. The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry estimates the legitimate Italian music market was worth $652.6 million last year.

IfPI chairman/CEO John Kennedy says the body is already tackling legislators about the bill's consequences.

"It's just astonishing that something like this can happen in a developed country in a central part of Europe in 2005," Kennedy says. "We have complained to the Italian government, and we're also lobbying Brussels and Washington to put pressure on the Italians."

The bill has been attacked by parliamentary opposition to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's ruling coalition. Politicians and the media claim its original purpose was to assist former Defense Minister Cesar Previti, a personal friend of Berlusconi, and have nicknamed it the "Save Previti" bill.

Previti is currently appealing two corruption convictions.

In Italy, a first sentence can be appealed, leading to a second sentence. A sentence from that can also be appealed, leading to a third trial, before a final sentence is handed down.

The opposition initially claimed the government introduced the legislation to help Previti walk free when his case is "timed out."

The new legislation is expected to take effect in early 2006, following its Nov. 29 approval by the Senate, where Berlusconi has a majority. The bill is scheduled to be signed into law before the end of this year by Italy's president Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

Italy's IP industry had been lobbying to avoid the worst-case scenario. "With representatives of the country's film, software and fashion industries, we wrote to all of the senators and the President of the Republic," FIMI president Enzo Mazza says.

"We proposed three possible changes, namely: that the [new] law be dropped; that the maximum sentence in copyright cases be extended to five years, thereby increasing the statute of limitations to a more feasible period; or that the law not be applied to copyright cases."

Mazza admits the bill could mean "the end of Italy's war on musical piracy."

However, he says, "there is still a possibility that the president won't sign the bill into law. He has sent other pieces of Berlusconi legislation back for 'correction' in the past."

Nevertheless the Italian music industry's general mood is gloomy. "All the excellent legislative work that has been done in Italy in recent years—the passage of the copyright law in 2000, the introduction of the [European Union] copyright directive—will be undone," says Paolo Corsi, managing director of EMI Publishing Italy and president of publishers association FEM.

Universal Musical Publishing Italy managing director Claudio Buja adds: "There is great concern, and not only in Italy."
a traditional label model to build a music company for a multichannel digital environment.

Industry observers here are cautiously optimistic about CME’s revival. “I am not quite sure if it’s finally over the hump, but it’s on the right track,” thanks to Hisa and other good new managers,” one industry source says. “CME’s future will depend on whether the management can give domestic A&R and marketing staff the motivation and support to produce more hits like [female vocalists] Kaera Kimura and Yo Hitoto Yo,” the source adds.

Besides Kimura and Yo, first-half CME successes included Jiro Kamuri, Kiyoshi Hikawa and, through a V2 licensing deal, the White Stripes. At a recent media/retail presentation, the label showcased its established acts alongside promising newcomers, notably female singer/songwriter Noriko Minami. Zelnick says the company will now “aggressively pursue digital growth, with projected digital sales revenue of 800 million yen ($6.7 million) for the current financial year. But equity analyst John Yang of Standard & Poor’s in Tokyo argues it is too early to evaluate the impact of such sales upon CME’s recovery. “The digital music industry in general still lacks visibility,” he points out. “The price-sets at this moment are not labels but platform owners.”

CME formed as Nippon Columbia in 1910. It has undergone extensive restructuring since New York-based investment firm Ripplewood bought a controlling interest from Japanese electronics company Hitachi in May 2001. That re-structuring has seen CME cut its staff by 25% and its artist roster by 40%. Ripplewood now owns 30% of the shares in CME and manages Hitachi’s remaining 20%.

Former BMG Entertainment CEO Zelnick took the chairman’s role in September 2001. Hirose joined in January 2004: he had been president/CEO at Japanese Internet company @NetHome.

One of Hirose’s first moves was to double CME’s sales force to 80. “CME [now] enjoys one of the largest and strongest sales teams in the industry,” Zelnick says. “[It] will continue to leverage the strength of its distribution network through third-party deals.”

The company’s shares traded at around 95 yen ($0.80) on the Tokyo Stock Exchange when Hirose joined in 2004. On Nov. 22, they closed at 132 yen ($1.12).

NOTICE OF BANKRUPTCY TRUSTEE’S REQUEST FOR OFFERS TO PURCHASE THE MUSIC CATALOG BELONGING TO THE BANKRUPTCY ESTATE OF STANLEY KIRK BURRELL, AKA M.C. HAMMER, AKA HAMMER:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT William H. Broach (“Trustee”), trustee of the Chapter 7 bankruptcy estate of Stanley Kirk Burrell, also known as M. C. Hammer, and also known as Hammer, intends to sell the music publishing, artist’s royalties and copyright assets belonging to the bankruptcy estate, including such assets in the name of the following doers used by Mr. Burrell: Budd II Publishing, Boston Publishing, Rap and More Music, Too Legal Publishing, Proper Publishing, Hammer and M. C. Hammer, together with all associated good will (hereinafter, collectively referred to as the “Burrell Music Catalog”). In connection with such sale, the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of California, Oakland Division, that has jurisdiction over the Burrell Chapter 7 bankruptcy estate in Case No. 96-42564 NR (the “Bankruptcy Court”) has approved the bidding procedures for the sale of the Burrell Music Catalog.

A complete copy of the Bidding Procedures for Sale of Catalog that have previously been approved by the Bankruptcy Court will be attached to the Confidentiality Agreement that potential purchasers will be required to execute in order to obtain additional information with regard to the Burrell Music Catalog. ANY PROPOSALS FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE BURRELL MUSIC CATALOG MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 28, 2006.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, AND IN ORDER TO OBTAIN A COPY OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT AND THE ATTACHED BIDDING PROCEDURES, INTERESTED PARTIES SHOULD CONTACT WIXEN MUSIC PUBLISHING, INC., THE BANKRUPTCY COURT APPOINTED ADMINISTRATOR OF THE BURRELL MUSIC CATALOG, AS FOLLOWS:

Wixen Music Publishing, Inc.
Attn: Randall D. Wixen
24025 Park Sorrento, Suite 130 • Calabasas, CA 91302-4003 • Telephone: (818) 591-7355 • Facsimile: (818) 591-7178
Dated: November 1, 2005
William H. Broach, Trustee

The International Music Publishers Assn. is very worried about the effects of this—everyday overseas colleagues call us and ask what we’re planning to do about it.”

Most despised is Mario Limongelli, president of recently formed independent label association PMI. Instead of the “Save Previ” nickname the bill has been given, he says, “I think that the ‘Kill the Music Industry Law’ would be more appropriate.”

Additional reporting by Lars Brandle in London.
EU WARNS ROMANIA, BULGARIA

The European Parliament has told Romania and Bulgaria that they will not be able to join the European Union as planned unless they improve their records on piracy and border controls.

On Nov. 25, the parliament issued a warning telling the two countries that they would miss their scheduled Jan. 1, 2007, accession date if they fail to fight the corruption and trafficking that has created a significant black market in pirate music and movies. The warning expressed particular concern at Bulgarian organized criminal elements "contempt for the law and challenge to the authority of the state, and their involvement with apparent impunity in a series of audacious, high-profile murders in recent years."

—Leo Cendrowicz

KAURICH RISES AT EMI CLASSICS

Thomas Kaurich has been promoted to head of EMI Classics U.K., effective in January.

London-based Kaurich is currently director of international marketing for EMI International. He will take over responsibilities temporarily held by Angel Label Group senior VP Mark Collem since EMI Classics U.K. managing director Barry McCann stepped down earlier this year to take a consultancy role. Kaurich reports to Collem.


—Lars Brandle

MUSHROOM BUYS FESTIVAL

Melbourne-based Mushroom Music has purchased Australia's Festival Music Publishing from Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. for an undisclosed sum.

The Nov. 22 acquisition is retroactive to Oct. 31. Mushroom is the largest independent publisher in Australia and New Zealand. Its catalog includes works by Tim and Neil Finn, Nick Cave and the Apartments. It also represents 30 international catalogs, including Chrysalis Music and Mute Music. Festival's 24-strong Australasian roster includes Powderfinger, Tim Rogers of You Am I and Josh Abrahams.

When Mushroom founder Michael Gudinski sold his share of the Mushroom Records label to News Corp. in 1998, he retained the publishing company. Festival had four full-time staffers; creative manager Gary Seeger and copyright and royalties administrator Linda Zupan will stay on with Mushroom.

—Christie Eliezer

KONNOV JOINS UNIVERSAL RUSSIA

Moscow-based Universal Music Russia has recruited Dmitry Konnov to become GM, effective immediately.

Until recently, Konnov was VP of marketing, public relations and music industry relations at MTV Russia. He succeeds managing director David Junk, who leaves this month and is expected to return to his native United States.

Konnov will oversee all aspects of the firm's operations, reporting to Vito Antippas, president of central and eastern Europe, at Universal Music Group International.

—Lars Brandle

EMI SPAIN RESTRUCTURES

EMI Music Spain has separated the A&R, marketing and promotion activities of its local Capitol and Virgin labels.

The realigned structure sees marketing director Maria Cruz Laguna appointed director of Capitol Spain, and Virgin A&R director Javier Liñan becomes director of Virgin Spain. They both report to EMI Music Spain GM Simone Bosé.

Bosé says that he and EMI Spain president Manolo Diaz "decided to re-create the separate structure that had existed from the late '90s until Virgin and Capitol were brought under the same roof." The labels remain in the same central Madrid building.

The labels' A&R, international and local marketing and promotion functions now report directly to the Virgin and Capitol directors.

—Howell Llewellyn

Sony BMG Links With Nettwerk

Independent Music Group Will Provide International A&R For Major's Canadian Arm

TORONTO—Sony BMG Music Entertainment is ready to pay Vancouver-based Nettwerk Management for its expertise in turning up new talent around the globe.

A new deal sees the Nettwerk Music Group’s artist management affiliate effectively become an international A&R arm of Sony BMG Canada.

Nettwerk Management currently represents Canadian acts Avril Lavigne, Barneyskies, Chantal Kreviazuk, Swollen Members, Billy Talent and Gob, plus international acts Dido and Sixpence None the Richer.

The seed of the unprecedented deal was planted in Vancouver two years ago during a breakfast meeting between now departing Sony BMG Music Entertainment COO Michael Smellie and NMG CEO Terry McBride.

Sony BMG corporate policies and budgets dictated that the final deal would be concluded with Sony BMG Music Canada. The major has had a relationship with Nettwerk Management for several years through Arista acts Lavigne and Dido.

Sony BMG Music Canada president Lisa Zhitniew says the deal will broaden her company’s A&R reach in international territories. "This relationship allows Sony BMG Canada to have tentacles around the world with people that both know music and talent, that understand artist development and are connected in a global way," she says.

Under the deal, Nettwerk Management will bring Sony BMG Canada new acts discovered around the globe by its managers. Sony BMG Canada will then have first option of signing the act for an undisclosed fee.

McBride praises the A&R savvy of his firm’s team of 16-18 artist managers. "They are always being chased by young artists for management, by agents seeking support slots for new bands and by promoters trying to get current hit bands on shows," he says.

Sony BMG continues to operate its own Canadian A&R departments in Toronto and Montreal. Its current domestic roster consists of Kreviazuk, Celine Dion, Kalan Porter, Our Lady Peace, Garou, Chante and Jacksoul.

Nettwerk Productions’ roster includes leading Canadian acts Sarah McLachlan, Delerium, Swollen Members, the Be Good Tanyas and Gob.

NMG started in Vancouver in 1984 as a production company. It is now a label/publishing/management operation, with offices in Vancouver, Los Angeles, Nashville, New York and London.

The A&R pact was announced alongside confirmation that Sony BMG will exclusively distribute NMG’s record label Nettwerk Productions in Canada, effective Jan. 1 (Billboard, Dec. 3). EMI Music Canada currently handles the label.

Nettwerk Productions’ own focus is on artists that write, record and perform their own material, label president Ric Arbour notes. "There have been artists we passed on that could have been commercially successful but weren't right for Nettwerk," he says.

Arbour cites the example of Lavigne, who sent demos to Nettwerk Productions in 2000. The company gave her a development deal, but backed away after then-Arista president/CEO Antonio “L.A.” Reid also showed interest. Reid then signed Lavigne but asked Nettwerk Management to represent her.

"As a label, we found that we don't have the clout or money to play the [commercial] radio game," Arbour says.

SARAH McLACHLAN is part of Nettwerk Productions’ talent roster.
The Indies

TODD MARTENS tmartens@billboard.com

L.A. Retail Fixture Aron's Shutsters

After 40 years, a staple of the independent music community in Los Angeles is closing its doors. Retailer Aron's Records will phase out its current inventory during the next two to three months before relinquishing its lease, citing increased competition from local retailers and a loss of customers to the Web.

Aron's opened June 25, 1965, on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood, a few blocks from its current location near the intersection of Highland Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard. Owner Jessie Kempler says business took a turn for the worse when independent megastore Amoeba Records opened a few blocks away in 2001.

Soon after, a Best Buy and Target complex popped down in Hollywood, and Aron's saw its new-release business further erode. Kempler says that even Aron's loyalists started to find a new outlet.

"One particular customer who used to spend between $2,000 and $3,000 per year with us just disappeared," Kempler says. "He wandered in one day, and I said, 'Where the hell have you been?'. He said he hadn't bought a single CD in the last three years, and that everything he bought was digital. He's the guy who you think loves music and is here forever."

As more and more consumers turn to the Web for all of their music needs, even a thriving independent store such as Amoeba is considering launching some sort of download store (Billboard, Nov 25). Amoeba co-manager Karen Pearson says plans are still being outlined as to exactly what form the Web shop will take. Yet after years of believing that "the energy of the stores" would be nearly impossible to duplicate in a virtual world, she now acknowledges that retailers must change as delivery systems change.

For his part, Kempler says developing a stronger online presence would not have saved his store. Instead, he says, Aron's should have cut back on stocking new releases, as it became impossible to compete with the pricing of outlets like Best Buy and Target, a common indie retail complaint.

Kempler says the demise of Aron's will be drawn out over a few months, and he is targeting late January/early February as an official closing date. He has yet to map out future plans. "Let me know if there's anyone out there who needs someone who knows how to sort used CDs faster than the speed of light," he says. Since the store's closing was announced, Kempler says there has been an outpouring of good will, and a number of artists and labels have come forth to stage benefit shows. "A benefit would work for a month, but I can't have a benefit every month," he says. "It's a nice idea and it might be a whole lot of fun, but it's not a way to run a business... Any normal businessman probably would have shut down a couple years ago, but I'm tenacious."

REDEYE SIGNING: Redeye Distribution in Haw River, N. C., has added New York-based indie Gern Blandsten to its exclusive distribution roster. The nearly 15-year-old indie has released albums from Ted Leo, the Movies and Dalek, among others.

The label was previously distributed by the Lumberjack Mordam Music Group. Its first releases through Redeye will be new material from Victory at Sea and the Little Killers in February.

In other Redeye news, the distributor has added Kristin Attaway to its sales force. Attaway is based in Los Angeles, and brings Redeye's number of domestic sales staff to 10. She was previously with the sales staff of Lumberjack Mordam.
Maximizing A 50 Cent Investment
Brand Partners Want To Get Rich Or Die Tryin’ In Tie-Ins With Rapper’s Multimedia Projects

Curtis “50 Cent” Jackson’s “Get Rich Or Die Tryin’” — the film and accompanying soundtrack — arrived amid much buzz and fanfare. Although the film and soundtrack might not be the immediate blockbusters everyone had hoped for — particularly when compared to mentor/labelmate Eminem’s “8 Mile” — 50 Cent’s multimillion-dollar G-Unit empire remains as vital as ever.

In fact, G-Unit—which encompasses clothing, shoes and watches—recently entered into a partnership with Pocket/MTV Books, which is scheduled to launch in 2007. Indeed, the branding of 50 Cent continues to grow and evolve. And for good reason. His name resonates with today’s youth.

Todd Krinsky, VP of RBK, calls the Reebok/G-Unit partnership “one of the hottest and top-selling franchises in [Reebok’s] last three years.” In a special promotion with Foot Locker, sneaker enthusiasts who purchase the newest G-Unit model (G6111), which retails for $80.50, receive a complimentary “Get Rich Or Die Tryin” movie poster. Further in-store signage at Foot Locker stores promotes the film and soundtrack.

But there are more branded tie-ins and cross-promotions surrounding “Get Rich Or Die Tryin” and its star. We had one fluid message for the film and soundtrack,” says 50 Cent’s manager Chris Lighty, CEO of Violator Management & Records.

To illustrate, Lighty points to “50 Cent: Bulletproof” (Vivendi Universal Games), a videogame that has a trailer for the “Get Rich” film; stand-ups in cinematics that reference the videogame and “Get Rich” soundtrack; the Foot Locker campaign; and promotional spots across MTV’s numerous platforms.

“All partners pointed to 50 and the two projects,” Lighty adds. “They were not separate pieces of a puzzle.”

Steve Berman, head of marketing and sales at Interscope, agrees, adding, “Every effort was about making noise, with each partner enhancing the credibility of the others.”

That said, Berman believes it is too early to judge the overall effect such synergy is having on “Get Rich Or Die Tryin.”

It is safe to say, though, that — along with a Nov. 9 shooting death in Pennsylvania after a screening of the film—a little chicken and a guy named Chesney ate into early returns of the film and CD.

A production of Interscope/Shady/Aftermath Films and MTV Films, the Paramount film’s opening weekend box-office receipts came in at $12.5 million (in 1,652 theaters), which put it at No. 4, behind “Chicken Little,” “Zathura” and “Derailed.”

It took a 6.6% drop in its second weekend, coming in at No. 7 and grossing $4.4 million. To date, the film, which had a budget of $40 million, has taken in $28.4 million.

In the Nov. 26 issue, the Shady/Aftermath/Interscope soundtrack debuted at No. 2 on The Billboard 200, with 317,000 copies sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Country hot shot Kenny Chesney’s BNA disc, “The Road and the Radio,” sold 469,000 units, putting it firmly in the chart’s top spot.

In comparison, in 2002, Eminem’s “8 Mile” opened in 2,470 theaters and took in $51.2 million in its first weekend. The top grossing film of the week, “8 Mile” was also the biggest opening for a film starring a musical performer.

Similarly, in its first week, the “8 Mile” soundtrack sold 702,000 copies, easily entering The Billboard 200 at No. 1. To date, it has sold 4.7 million units.

In this issue, “Get Rich Or Die Tryin” is No. 5 on The Billboard 200 and No. 3 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart. Its total sales are 693,000.

50 Cent is the top finalist for the 2005 Billboard Music Awards with eight nominations. The awards air live from Las Vegas on Fox Dec. 6.

Copy Protection Hubbub: Mountain Or Molehill?

Talk about your media events. If I ever saw a trend that made a mountain out of a molehill, it was the press coverage of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales’ use of copy-protected CDs featuring XCP digital rights management technology.

The issue began when some technoid types labeled First 4 Internet’s copy-protection technology — employed by Sony BMG on 52 of its titles — as spyware. They also said the technology renders computers vulnerable to viruses.

Astronously, this was one of the most visible music events of the year. You had to be a hermit not to have heard about this issue. As Don VanCleave, president of the Coalition of Independent Music Stores, put it in the e-mail intro to the Nov. 16 CMS chart that he sends out to the sales side of the music industry: “Store owners are telling me [this] is the national business story that all of the local papers are running. I have counted at least four stories in the past week in The Birmingham [Ala.] News alone.”

The upshot of all the coverage: several legal actions filed against Sony BMG and a costly product backlash by the major, which also issued a patch to help remedy the vulnerabilities created by the technology.

There is just one thing the media overlooked in their rush to pounce on Sony BMG: the consumer. Before, during and after the media hoopla—which has now run for 29 days and counting—consumers have returned hardly any CDs.

A Retail Track survey finds almost infinitesimal customer returns to stores. That holds true whether you talk to the large chains or small independent stores. The only people who cared about it were the press who ran and ran with the story. I guess they could not resist the chance to not only stick it to a major record label like Sony BMG but to once again paint the music industry in general as “evil.”

On the other hand, this media event looks like it will shoot the general concept of copy protection in the foot. More and more retailers are beginning to ask: “Why are we penalizing the only people who still choose to buy legitimate CDs by placing copy protection on them?”

NEXT BUSINESS: Speaking of Sony BMG, the company issued a new policy letter, effective Jan. 1, that covers developing-artist programs, DualDiscs and returns. The letter represents a further rationalization of the business policies employed previously by Sony Music Distribution and BMG Distribution.

According to the letter, signed by executive VP/GM of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales Jim Lucas, for developing artists the company has chosen to go with a $12.98 list price, which will carry a $7.93 booklot price, and come with a 5% buy-in discount and 30 days of additional dating beyond the standard 60-day terms. Such titles are exempt from minimum orders, return handling charges and loose-pick fees.

Also, Sony BMG said it may issue some developing artists at a $15.98 list price/$10.21 booklot cost. Meanwhile, the elimination of the 5% catalog best seller discount—which was offered one week every month—is perceived as a price increase.

In an unusual move that breaks industry tradition, Sony BMG will now allow returns for new releases — unless specified during a title’s solicitation — at any time, instead of the 90 days that the majors require them to be held.

The new return policy issued by the company is generating the most debate, and eliciting praise, in the trenches.

The once industrywide standard of employing an incentive/disincentive policy to keep re-
Making The Brand

MICHAEL PAOLETTA mpaolletta@billboard.com

Timberlake’s Clothing Line
In Sync With Success

Justin Timberlake and his friends/business partners Trace Ayala and Danny Guez last month introduced their fashion line, William Rast Clothing. Focusing on men’s and women’s vintage T-shirts, polos, jeans and hats, William Rast prides itself on being a little bit country, a little bit rock ‘n’ roll—Timberlake does half from Tennessee, after all.

Though the brand is in its infancy, fashion insiders are optimistic about its future. “As long as the clothes look good and are trend-right and with the right retailers, they’ll sell,” says Tim Bess, a fashion/retail consultant for the Doneger Group, a company that forecasts fashion trends for the retail market. “Right now, it’s all about the item and not so much about the (celebrity) name.”

The initial collection, which emphasizes denim and corduroy, is available at Bloomingdale’s and lifestyle boutiques like Kitson in Beverly Hills, Calif., and Solis in San Francisco. Prices range from $23 to $225. William Rast is distributed by Paul Guez’s Blue Concepts denim empire. (Yes, he is Danny’s father.)

Solis founder Steve Haas says early sales are healthy. “People are impressed with this very credible line,” he adds. “We’re already asking for more product.”

For a trend-oriented and upscale collection like William Rast, it is important to be embraced by such fashion-forward retailers, Bess says. “That’s the first step for Justin in becoming a successful clothing maven.”

Proper marketing is also crucial. An approach that relies less on the fact that this is “Timberlake’s line” will resonate more with consumers, Bess believes. The customer buying premium fashions like William Rast is being viewed as a credible fashion line. Haas attributes this to Timberlake’s “silent partner” approach. “People like to know he’s involved, but they don’t want to be hit over the head with it.”

Haas says. Even if Timberlake’s name was not attached to the line, Haas says Solis would still carry the brand. “Justin’s association is icing on the cake.”

In fact, the biggest setback would be if Timberlake “jumps into all the advertising and promotion,” Bess says. We tend to think Timberlake is too business-savvy to make such a clichéd move.

As for the William Rast name, it is a combination of Timberlake’s and Ayala’s grandfathers’ first and last names, respectively.

HOLIDAY CHEER: Country superstar Garth Brooks looks like he is having the time of his life in the TV spot for Wal-Mart’s new Home for the Holidays campaign.

Teen sensation Jesse McCartney also has his own Home for the Holidays spot. But while Brooks is all child-like and playful, McCartney is simply looking to chill out—away from the screaming fans, who are right outside his front door.

Also appearing in the festive campaign are Destiny’s Child, Martina McBride and Queen Latifah, each with a unique ad in which they brightly shine.

In addition to appearing in the 30-second clips, the acts can be heard in their ads singing the “Home for the Holidays” theme. Complementing the TV spots (on network and national cable and in national syndication) are print and online components, as well as in-store signage.

The Bernstein-Rein agency in Kansas City, Mo., created the musically spirited and visually vibrant campaign.

Sticking with Wal-Mart, “Precious Jewelry by Ashanti” is available exclusively at the mass retailer. The perfume line—shimmer stick, eau de toilette and fragrance mist—retails for $12.98/50. With Precious Jewel, Ashanti follows in the footsteps of Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez, Britney Spears and Hilary Duff, who each have delivered scented goods.
Acts, Audience Connect Via Text Messaging

About an hour into a typical show on U2’s Vertigo tour, Bono tells the crowd to hold up their mobile phones, in what has become the modern-day equivalent of flicking on a lighter, instantly thousands of blue tinted screens illuminate the darkness as he marvels at the spectacle.

"Is that a 21st-century moment or what?" Bono asks.

Soon the video screen atop the stage flashes a five-digit number above the word "UNITE."

"Time to do a magic trick," he says. "These little devices—they can do all sorts of things."

Then the band launches into the song "One," and Bono encourages the audience to use their phones to send a text message (also known as an SMS) to the one.org Web site, a sort of digital petition voicing support for poverty relief in Africa. Later, during the encore, the names of all who did so are scrolled on the same screen, and each receive a message of thanks from Bono on their phones.

This is one of the most visible examples of how the mobile phone is being used as a communication tool between artist and audience, turning the concert event into a much more interactive experience.

"It’s the perfect intersection of pop culture and technology," says Andy Sheldon, a senior director at Sun Microsystems who implemented the system that manages the U2 SMS campaign.

The one.org SMS initiative began at the worldwide Live 8 concerts in July, where fans at each show were asked to text their support of Live 8’s anti-poverty message to the one.org petition. More than 26 million responded. (Sun also implemented that campaign.)

U2 then picked up the concept for its Vertigo tour. The U.S. leg of the trek averages about 100,000 responses per night, totaling more than 250,000 so far.

While Bono and U2 are using wireless text messaging for altruistic purposes, other efforts are more profit-oriented.

"This year was definitely the year of mobile at concerts and live events," says Niral Mehta, founder and CEO of iPsh, another company facilitating interactive text-messaging campaigns. "This is the year that we’ve felt the most traction."

iPsh powered the SMS messaging campaigns of more than two dozen events this year, including the Austin City Limits music festival in September, Lollapalooza in July and Henneken’s Amsterjam in August.

Lollapalooza mastermind Perry Farrell used SMS to engage concertgoers to join in a massive scavenger hunt, awarding successful participants with tickets to an exclusive after-party.

During the Amsterjam concert, organizers used SMS messages to direct fan attention to unfolding events, such as the arrival of Spoon Dogg’s helicopter. Fans were even asked to text in the song they wanted to hear for the encore.

Simon Renshaw’s Strategic Artist Management earlier this year tapped Boomerang Mobile Media to manage SMS campaigns for several of its clients’ events, including Ghostface, Clay Aiken and Anastacia.

Like the U2 show, fans attending these concerts were invited to text messages to a pre-set code that let them post messages to large screens near the stage, as well as compete in trivia contests for the chance to win better seats, VIP backstage passes and even buy concert merchandise.

For artists and their management, this new capability adds yet another layer of potential revenue to the concert tour. They often charge up to $2 for fans to send their messages during the show. Fans are notified of the fee in advance and given the option to continue. Revenue is split with the company managing the service.

U2, however, charges nothing. SMS airline charges will always apply, and vary by carrier and subscription plan.

Rather than waiting in line to buy a concert T-shirt, fans could simply text in the code for the shirt they want, with the charge billed to the mobile phone and the product delivered by mail.

Next year, expect to see acts offering fans ringtones or full song downloads of live performances, or pre-order discounts.

One proposal would send fans an SMS with a digital coupon worth $2 off the cost of the artist’s CD, redeemable at participating retailers.

Kevin Wall, CEO of Network Live and executive producer of the Live 8 concerts, says interactive text messaging will soon become as commonplace at concerts as T-shirt sales.

Network Live early next year will allow concertgoers to text in songs they want to hear most each night, influencing the artist’s set list.

"The location-based SMS business is at a primitive stage, but will be incorporated into shows in a lot of different ways," Wall says. "There’s a lot of interesting things being talked about now that people are calling mobile devices that have interactive capabilities into venues. Two years from now, it’ll just be a standard thing to do."

HEADSET GETS WIRELESS

Apple Computer accessory manufacturer Macally is developing a cordless stereo headset designed for the iPod Nano called the mTUNE-N. Users can plug their Nano into an exclusively designed slot in one of the headphone ears, which can then be controlled with a scroll wheel on the outside of the device.

The mTUNE-N does not need any batteries, as it draws power from the Nano itself.

For non-Nano owners, the headset sports a 3.5mm jack to hook into other devices, portable CD players or even computers. The collapsible headphones feature leather earpads.

Macally has set a retail price of $50. No word yet on when it will be available.

BITS & BRIEFS

JEEVES SERVES MUSIC

Internet search portal Ask Jeeves has added multimedia file-search capabilities to its ask.com site. The company licensed GoFish Technologies’ system for finding such files as music, video, podcasts, audio books and ringtones. GoFish’s database contains more than 100 million multimedia files. Ask Jeeves says requests for music downloads represent five of the top 50 queries its site regularly receives. The GoFish technology allows users to search for music based on track, album and artist, and by song lyrics. Results feature direct links to such music stores as iTunes and MSN.

FUSE ADDS MORE TEXT

Music video TV network Fuse has added mobile text-messaging to “Daily Download,” the network’s flagship show. Viewers will be able to send text messages from their mobile phones to the live music video countdown show to comment on the videos being played, request messages and dedicate songs. Fuse charges viewers 50 cents for each message, and only mobile-originated messages can be sent—not e-mail.

“Daily Download” becomes the fourth Fuse program to incorporate the technology. In October, the network launched a new series featuring artist-side-dating shows “Perfect Pair,” “Honeymoon Texting” and “Dumbed.”

Fuse also has begun producing an exclusive mobile version of its programming to be aired on Mobile.TV. The content does not include music videos.

50 WINS GAME PRIZE

Hip-hop mogul 50 Cent won best original song at Spike TV’s third annual Video Game Awards. The track appears in the game “50 Cent: Bulletproof,” in which the rapper plays the title role. Best soundtrack, however, went to “Guitar Hero.” The game features a customized, guitar-based controller that gamers use to “play” along to such songs as Boston’s “More Than a Feeling,” Jimi Hendrix’s “Spanish Castle Magic,” Franz Ferdinand’s “Take Me Out,” the Donnas’ “Take It Off!” and 26 other tracks. The award show will air Dec. 10.
Bon Jovi Tour’s Big Payoff

AEG Live Is Having A Whole Lot Of Nice Days With Its First Worldwide Promotion

B on Jovi’s Have a Nice Day world tour is proving to be worth all the fuss. And more than 20 years into its career, the New Jersey band looks to have reached the stature as a live act that could carry it for another two decades.

Since the tour began Nov. 2, Bon Jovi has “without question” put up its strongest numbers ever, according to Rob Light, the band’s agent and managing partner at Creative Artists Agency.

“Sales, attendance, dollars, merchandise; on every level it has been great,” Light tells Billboard. “This is monumentally strong.”

AEG Live nailed down the international promotional rights for the tour after what apparently was a hotly contested competition with rival Clear Channel Entertainment. The outing, which includes at least 75 dates, is AEG Live’s first international touring model.

“Don’t let anyone say differently—it was an active, do-or-die, win-at-all-costs bidding war,” says Randy Phillips, CEO of AEG Live.

“I knew this tour was going to do well, and I felt we were going to make money and get the full promoter profit,” Phillips continues. “But this tour is on steroids, it’s doing so well. It has blown way past our internal projections.”

Last time out in 2003, Bon Jovi grossed $42.4 million and drew 788,607 from dates at U.S. arenas and European stadiums. That was enough to rank the band 11th among all touring acts for the year. Bon Jovi worked with various promoters on that tour, which helped set the stage for the battle to promote Have a Nice Day.

“Every time Jon [Bon Jovi] has toured, there has always been the exploration of what kind of deals are out there,” Light says. “This year, with everybody’s belief that this was going to be one of the biggest tours in the world, the offers were much more aggressive.”

Bon Jovi’s growth in the past few tours has been “exponential,” Light says. “There’s a moment in any artist’s career where you click over from just a touring act to iconic. And I think Bon Jovi made that transition this year, where they’re in the same league as the U2s and the Stones and the Springsteens of the world.

The tours and the live shows are so good they have the ability to sell tickets based on the sheer force of performing ability.”

**HAVE A NICE PAYDAY**

After AEG Live got the nod to promote Bon Jovi worldwide came industry talk that AEG had vastly overpaid for the tour (Billboard, July 9).

“There were so many different stories floated, all of this red herring stuff,” Phillips says. “We got [the tour] basically because we stepped up to the table early. We didn’t hesitate and we came up with the better marketing mousetrap, where they felt we could really help them not only do a tour and sell tickets, but help promulgate the brand that is Bon Jovi.”

Light says marketing was a tool CCE and AEG brought to the table. “Not trying to be politically correct, AEG has been a great partner, but that’s not to say Clear Channel wouldn’t have been,” he says. “The way [AEG] presented their offer and their marketing scheme just felt right this time around, and it has been very, very successful.”

Asked if the profit margin was thin, Phillips says, “The margin was healthy in terms of the risk-to-reward ratio, the investment. But there was risk, and the corridor of risk was larger than it usually is on a tour when you step up to this type of guarantee.

Typically on national or international touring deals, more lucrative dates are cross-collateralized with smaller dates to minimize risk. “The crossing structure of this tour would give a college economics professor room to pause,” Phillips says, adding that each market was set up differently.

So, for the record, is Bon Jovi worth the AEG Live investment? “Beyond,” Phillips says. “So much so that I’m getting my kneepads and flowers ready, and I’m going to pitch the next tour. I want to stay in business with them.”

Phillips may get his chance soon. After Bon Jovi concludes its North American arena tour in January, the band begins a run of European stadium dates, also promoted by AEG Live. When the European leg wraps in June, the band will have moved about 1.3 million tickets and grossed about $100 million.

And, Light says, discussions are under way for “something big” next summer, which could mean a return to North American shores. Ticket prices in the United States range from $50 to $100.

**ALIGNING PLANETS**

Before the band ever hit the road, AEG Live orchestrated a high-profile album showcase Sept. 19 at its new Nokia Theatre in New York’s Times Square. It was broadcast on XM Satellite Radio, webcast on America Online and shown live in Regal Theaters, all as part of AEG’s Network Live venture (billboard.biz, Aug. 17). The group’s “Have a Nice Day” album came out Sept. 20.

“Truthfully, if I ever wanted to create a sales brochure with a textbook example of the integration of touring and the release of a record and what I call brand management of an artist, this was the most ideal,” Phillips says.

At the time, Bon Jovi and the band’s active involvement on every level, the setup would have been fruitless.

“Marketing starts with the artists themselves, and Jovi is probably one of the smartest, most savvy artists in the world in terms of working it,” Light says. “Any time something works this well on any tour, whether it’s Michael Cohl with the Stones or Arthur Fogel doing U2 or AEG doing Bon Jovi, there are a lot of elements to it; it’s never one person or one entity. And I really do believe this all emanated from Jon, who put in so much effort that it made us all look smart.”

Beyond the album showcase and before AEG Live ever came onboard, Light and CAA had helped ensure the tour’s success by holding key dates in key markets. In Chicago, Detroit, Boston and Philadelphia, the band was booked on consecutive Fridays and Saturdays, no easy task in the middle of the hockey and basketball seasons.

“Sixteen months ago we went to all these buildings, before the hockey and basketball schedules were set, and confirmed these dates,” Light says. “This is the first time in multiples in almost every city [the band has played].”

On-sales confirmed Light’s best hopes. “Everywhere we hoped to do multiples we rolled into them, and a lot of places where we had two dates we probably could have done three,” he says. “It has really been as strong as [Bon Jovi] has ever been. And when [the band] goes into these places the shows are so good we feel like we could come back the next week and add another one.”
ON THE ROAD
RAY WADDELL rwaddle@billboard.com

ON TOP DOWN UNDER
Sydney SuperDome Is A Big-Time Stop On Global Tour Circuit

The Sydney SuperDome in Australia may be off the beaten path, but it is certainly on the map after the kind of year the 20,000-seat arena put together in 2005. The SuperDome is one of the top grossing arenas in the world this year, having enjoyed sellouts from acts including Green Day, J!l Baret, Bette Midler (four shows), Eagles, Neil Diamond, the Black Eyed Peas, Rod Stewart, Destiny’s Child, Australian artist Delta Goodrem and Indian artist A.R. Rahman.

The building opened in September 1999, but really hit its stride when it sold out the Rolling Stones for two dates in February 2003, then the Dixie Chicks in October of the same year.

“The Rolling Stones can’t put anyone on the map, really,” says Don Elford, GM of business development for the Sydney SuperDome. “With the Dixie Chicks, one thing we realized was that 40% of the audience came from outside the Sydney metropolitan area. So it proved that people knew how to get here and it was close enough for them to feel comfortable within driving distance.”

Now music fans in Sydney and surrounding areas flock to the Dome. “People have repeat experiences with something they feel comfortable with, and certainly Sydney feels very comfortable with the Sydney SuperDome,” says Elford, adding that convincing acts to tour Down Under takes some effort.

“We had to go to the States and talk to the agents and get ‘round those guys and make them aware of us,” Elford says. U2 is taking its Vertigo tour to Sydney early next year, but the band will not hit the SuperDome. Rather, it will be playing “right next door” at Sydney’s Telstra Stadium.

“The capacity they’re running at over there is something like 65,000,” Elford says of Telstra. “I was watching the Chicago [U2 concert] that just came out on DVD. It would have been a great experience inside, but it’s a long way to come and a lot of equipment to bring, and they’ve got to make that up.”

Elford says U2 has only played indoors once in Australia, on the Rattle and Hum tour in 1987. “Every other tour here, Zoopora [in 1991] and PopMart [in 1997], all of those have been outside,” he says. “Jake Berry, their production manager, is a big fan of this building. He goes away and tells people how good our catering is, how easy it is to slip in and out of the building. He’s a great ambassador and obviously a well-respected sort of road warrior.”

Meanwhile, Elford says the hard work of the SuperDome staff is paying off. “At the end of the day we know that people come to events rather than venues, and we can only enhance that experience once they get here,” he says. “The feedback we get from the patrons, they walk in and get the ‘wow’ factor.”

The SuperDome’s luxury suites are also a plus, Elford says. “No other indoor venue in Sydney has [suites] and we’ve got 56,” he says. “It’s a great-designed building, built with a very steep rake so even in the back rows you feel like you’re right on top of the act.”

BILLY IS BACK: Billy Joel’s return to the road is being greeted enthusiastically by ticket buyers, moving more than 150,000 tickets with the first few on-sells. Joel’s first tour in nearly eight years went on-sale last weekend and blew out several dates.

A Jan. 23 date for Madison Square Garden in Sydney sold out quickly, and within an hour-and-a-half, dates for Jan. 26 and Feb. 2 also went clean. Joel sold two shows for the Wachovia Center in Philadelphia (March 7 and 13), and sold out a Jan. 19 show in Boston at TD Banknorth Garden and a Jan. 10 date in Jacksonville, Fla., at Veterans Memorial Arena.

Sources say talks are under way to possibly add more dates in several markets. The tour, booked by Dennis Arfa at Artists Group International, begins in early January in Florida and will include 30-plus dates. The last time Joel toured solo was 1998-99, when he grossed $47 million from 64 shows that drew 1.1 million people, according to Billboard Boxscore.

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GROSSY

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www.americanradiohistory.com
much like Max Bialystock persuades Leo Bloom to help him create the greatest Broadway flop of all time in "The Producers," it was longtime producer David Geffen who convinced Mel Brooks to bring his Academy Award-winning 1968 movie to the stage.

"He was like a terrier," the legendary director/producer/comedian/actor/songwriter says of Geffen. "I couldn’t shake him off."

Brooks sat down with the original script—in which Bialystock and Bloom inadvertently create a Broadway smash—and said to himself, "Where can I stick 20 new songs?" A record-breaking 12 Tony Awards later, Brooks ended up with his own monster Broadway hit.

On Dec. 16, Brooks will produce the movie remake of "The Producers," this time with no persuasion necessary. Broadway cast members Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick return for the Universal Pictures/Columbia Pictures release, which also stars Will Ferrell as playwright Franz Liebkind and Uma Thurman as Swedish secretary Ulla.

Brooks wrote a new end-credit track, "There’s Nothing Like a Show on Broadway," which is featured on the Sony Classical soundtrack along with a Celine Dion-style power ballad performance of "Der Guten Tag Hop-Clop" by Ferrell.

Brooks, who is one of an elite few to have received an Emmy, Tony, Grammy and Academy Award, cautiously audiences to stay in their seats for the credits: "So many things are going to happen and the audience will be unsuspecting. They’ll get up and leave and miss three or four minutes of wacky, heavenly stuff."

Q: Besides director and choreographer Susan Stroman, and of course Lane and Broderick, how many people from the Broadway version of "The Producers" did you get to come back for the movie?
A: As many as we could. We also got the two supporting leads, which is Gary Beach—who plays the gay director Roger De Bris—and his common-law roommate Carmen Ghia, played by Roger Bart. So we got four solid performances right from Broadway.

Q: What was this strategy?
A: Not at all. They were the best guys for the roles. We could have got bigger stars to play the leads, bigger names to play Roger and Carmen, but they wouldn’t have been as good. The only reason I did this whole damn thing was to make sure these performances were memorialized—that the musical would be fixed forever.

Q: How do you write a song that’s successful?
A: I’ve always loved songwriting, and I vowed to be a songwriter like Cole Porter when I was only 9 years old. My uncle Joe, I loved it. When I grow up, that’s what I want to do. I want to write all of those songs that Cole Porter wrote," he said. "You’ll do it, kid. You’ll do it."

Q: So you have been writing ever since?
A: Ever since. In the army I used to write parodies and I would parody the Cole Porter song "Begin the Beguine." [sings] "When they begin to begin the beguine/It brings back a song..." I had enough of that..."

Q: Do you always write songs in your movies?
A: I always write a song. In "Blazing Saddles" I wrote the title song, and I wrote a beautiful song for Madeline Kahn called "I’m Tired." [sings] "Here I stand/The goddess of desire/Yes men on fire/I have this power/Morning noon and night/And drink and dancing/A quick romancing/And then I shower."

Q: What are you working on now?
A: Me and [Thomas Meehan], who wrote the book with me on the original musical of "The Producers," we’re working on "Young Frankenstein" for Broadway. Whether it comes out or not, I don’t know, but we’re having fun working on it. I have six or seven songs written for it.

Q: Is there a movie remake in the works then?
A: As soon as it’s a musical, they’ll want to remake it! We’ll be talking again...
With its new Xbox 360 game console, Microsoft is hoping to change the face of digital entertainment.

Introduced Nov. 22 in the United States, the new unit is the first of a series of next-generation gaming consoles to hit retail shelves, and quickly sold out before the Thanksgiving holiday sales rush even started. In some places, overzealous fans lining up outside retailers the night before prompted a police presence to maintain order.

The much-anticipated Xbox 360 strives to change gaming to a new level with a unique mix of style, connectivity and services. With it, Microsoft hopes to revolutionize the home entertainment environment in much the same way that Apple Computer revolutionized portable music with the iPod.

The Xbox 360 is at its core a videogame system and initially is being marketed as such to the hardcore gamer to drive early sales. Exact Thanksging weekend sales figures were not available at press time, but analysts say all of the estimated 400,000 consoles that made it to U.S. stores by the launch date have been sold. A total of 1 million units are expected to ship in the United States by the end of the year. The console bows Dec. 2 in Europe and Dec. 10 in Japan.

But focusing on gamers is just a beachhead strategy. Already Microsoft is positioning the system as a hub for digital entertainment discovery and acquisition, opening new doors to a music industry hungry for additional channels of promotion and sales.

With this new platform, games could evolve from a one-way medium for previewing and promoting music to a multimedia bazaar where music and other content can be bought and sold—even updated—interactively. But just like the Internet before it, these new doors open to a maze of questions about business models and digital rights management.

That videogames are an important marketing channel for music is nothing new. According to the NPD Group, 20% of consumers who buy videogames also buy the music featured in the game.

"If you want to reach this consumer, consider videogames as one way to do it," says Anita Frazier, an NPD Group analyst. "It's a terrific vehicle.

The new Xbox aims to make this vehicle even more effective.

"We're trying to build the right entertainment platform for the digital generation," says David Huddof, group director of Xbox 360 platform and games for Microsoft. "The Xbox has shown the way that when you bring together the hardware, the software and the service, you can really capture the imagination of people in new, profound ways.

Xbox 360 owners can use the console to stream music from any Windows XP-powered PC, play or rip CDs directly into its hard drive and connect with an iPod or other digital music device—essentially unifying the home theater experience.

The new Xbox also adds another dimension—the ability to download a variety of content via the Internet. Broadband Internet connectivity is already a staple feature of gaming consoles in order to support online gameplay, but only hardcore gamers have been willing to pay the $50 yearly fee to use the Xbox Live service for this purpose.

Along with the Xbox 360, Microsoft has launched a content portal called the Xbox Live Marketplace, where users can go to download all sorts of game- and non-game-related content. Basic access to the Marketplace is free, with a paid subscription needed only for online gameplay.

**400 TYPES OF CONTENT**

At launch, the Marketplace contains 400 different types of content, some free and some for sale. Included amid the game-related material are free music videos from Franz Ferdinand and Audioslave and 12 songs from a variety of artists—the first steps to what Microsoft hopes will be a new channel to sell digital entertainment content like movies, music and video. Labels interested in marketing to the gamer crowd can partner with Microsoft to add promotional content to the Marketplace, which gamers will see when logging in and can then download for free or at a price.

To encourage purchase of music from the Marketplace, games developed for the Xbox 360 have built-in "hooks" that allow players to replace the in-game soundtrack with their own music. Game developers and labels can work with Microsoft to add to the Marketplace updated soundtracks customized specifically for individual games in order to promote even newer music after a game has been released.

To reach the younger consumer with no credit card, Microsoft has implemented a points program, where users can buy $20 cards in stores with 1,600 points that can then be applied to Marketplace purchases.

If all of this sounds familiar, it should. Microsoft wants to replicate the success the wireless industry has had with ringtones by creating a similar model: develop a system with many opportunities for personalization, tie it to a device with a constant Internet connection for instant gratification and implement an easy payment system.

As Microsoft expands the sales opportunities within the Xbox Marketplace, it is expected to look less like a packaged goods industry and more like a networked services business, with content being the primary product.

Although this function is not yet available, the Xbox has the potential to let gamers make purchases from directly within the game. At some point—it is unclear how soon—gamers could be able to select a song from the soundtrack while playing and connect to the MSN Music Store or Xbox Marketplace to buy the track. In-game advertising is expected to evolve to the point where gamers will be able to select a billboard in a game's cityscape background to link to a Web site for more information, all from within the console.

"The game is going to become a primary interface for all sorts of stuff, giving gamers the opportunity to become a starting point, not an ending point," says Vince Broady, senior VP of games and entertainment for Gamerspot.

This is the big-picture vision, and game publishers are excited about its possibilities. But they also want a cut of any transaction taking place as a result of in-game discovery. Little progress is expected on this front until a business model can be worked out with the...
music industry.

"I hope people who own this music — whether it's the master side or the sync side — embrace this new technology so we can move forward and do some fun stuff," says Tim Riley, worldwide executive of music at Activision. "It could be a brilliant way to sell music. We're hoping you'll have that opportunity. But we just don't know how that's going to look from a licensing standpoint."

LABELS GIVE IT A TRY

Record companies so far are excited about the possibilities and have shown a willingness to experiment with the new platform.

"It has a lot of potential," says Christina Zafiris, senior director of new media and strategic marketing at TVT Records, which contributed the song "Band-Girls-Money" by Tsar to the music shipped with the console. "It seems it will be in a position to better draw the line between the dots, but whether the execution of this potential will be realized remains to be seen. A combination of technical and business solutions are needed to get that interoperability. It's a very complex issue."

And it is an important issue, considering that Xbox 360 games provide more than three times the storage capacity of current-generation games, with greater support for sophisticated sound systems.

Games will ship with extra features such as video footage of bands performing the original music created for the game. Some will have a soundtrack playable as a separate option, similar to what the "50 Cent: Bulletproof" game offers for existing consoles.

Additionally, games will ship with extra content that can be unlocked only if the gamer pays for it via the Marketplace. A band with only one song on the soundtrack could add the full album as a locked element, for instance.

According to Microsoft's Hufford, the company hopes to engage the music industry even further to develop additional opportunities.

"We've got troops that are moving into the field to help spread the religion about the possibilities of doing new things with music on the Xbox 360 beyond games," he says. "We're interested in bringing all forms of entertainment."

And for an industry betting its future on digital consumption, the music industry has a lot riding on whether the Xbox 360 can deliver on its promise.

Today's gamer is considered the digital consumer of the future. According to a recent Nielsen Entertainment study, households with videogame consoles represent only one-third of the U.S. population, but are responsible for the highest adoption rates of consumer electronics devices and services.

Gamespot's Broady thinks the advanced Xbox 360 user will presage the entertainment consumer of the coming decades. "They're just a different kind of person than who we've been selling to all these years. That's the sign of things to come."
“Nadie une generaciones como ella... su voz te eleva. El mundo necesita más intérpretes como Ednita. Simplemente... es una Diosa.”

Ricky Martin
The weekend of Nov. 20, Ednita Nazario broke the attendance record at Puerto Rico's José Miguel Agrelot Coliseum, playing three consecutive sold-out shows at the island's newest arena.

Nazario's success brought to mind her historic performances of more than a decade ago, when she played record-breaking, multiple performances at Roberto Clemente Coliseum, and her 13 consecutive sold-out dates at San Juan's Sala De Bellas Artes.

In the wake of the release this summer of Nazario's latest album, "Apasionada" (Sony BMG), her impressive pull at the box office speaks volumes about the lasting appeal and reverence that she continues to attract after nearly three decades of recording.

Apart from her longtime fans, many of Nazario's most ardent admirers are young artists who view the charismatic singer as timeless and hip.

When Latin music icons like Juan Luis Guerra and Julio Iglesias or other home-grown notables—such as Chayanne, Marc Anthony and Ricky Martin—come to Puerto Rico, it is likely that the petite Ponce native will appear onstage for a duet or two, as she did recently with Juanes in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Guatemalan singer/songwriter Ricardo Arjona has recorded a duet with Nazario, along with La Ley lead vocalist Beto Céspedes, and Puerto Rican compadres Robi "Draco" Rosa and Luis Fonsi have penned songs for her.

According to Nazario's longtime manager Angelo Medina, the secret to the singer's enduring success is that she has the hunger of a new artist who believes in a dream and is willing to explore new musical styles and sounds.

Medina, the CEO of Empresas Angelo Medina, has managed many popular Latino stars, including Martin and Emmanuel. He says that Nazario exemplifies a "great artist" because "she brings together essential qualities for stardom—talent, discipline, vocation and commitment—and she is constantly evolving musically. All of these qualities have enabled her to cross generations in terms of musical tastes."

A sultry blond with an unfailingly robust mezzo and endearing stage presence, Nazario has carved out a
nonpareil career replete with gut-wrenching, romantic hit ballads, sold-out concerts and critically acclaimed performances on Broadway.

The list of Nazario’s recording accomplishments is as impressive as it is long. She has rung up 43 radio hits on the Hot Latin Songs chart. Fifteen of those went top 10, including “Aprendére,” “Lo Que Soy Las Cosas,” "Tres Deseos," “Un Corazon Hecho Pedazos,” “Pensando Siempre En Ti” and “Mas Grande Que Grande.”

Since 2000 alone, Nazario has charted nine top 40 titles on Hot Latin Songs, including the 2001 hit “Devuélveme,” which peaked at No. 13, and “Si No Me Amas” (No. 15). In addition, she has landed four chart-topping entries on the Latin Pop Airplay chart: “Quiero Que Me Hagas El Amor,” which she co-produced with K.C. Porter; “Gata Sin Luna”; “Atad A Tu Volcán”; and “Loco de Amor.” And in the past five years, she has notched five top 15 titles on Hot Latin Airplay, including the top 10 entries “Devuélveme” and “Si No Me Amas.”

Nazario’s past four albums have risen to a top 10 spot on the top Latin Albums chart, including 2003’s “Por Ti,” which entered at No. 1. (“Por Ti” was named best Latin pop album, female, at the 2004 Billboard Latin Music Awards.)

She has complemented her standout chart performances with live shows that draw tens of thousands of fans and has broken virtually every attendance record in Puerto Rico. Last year she performed seven consecutive sellout shows at the 10,000-seat Roberto Clemente Stadium. In fact, she was the first recording artist to ever sell out the stadium.

In 2004, she received the prestigious ASCAP Latin Heritage Award for her lengthy run as a successful recording artist.

“She isn’t the only woman with long careers, so she’s very unique,” says Alexandra Lioutikoff, ASCAP senior VP of Latin membership. “You can give Ednita anything, and she’ll sing it and make it sound good. She’s also a nice person, and you don’t see that in this business.”

Proving that age is just a number, the veteran chanteuse with stunningly youthful looks continues to pack concert venues whenever she tours and continues to release successful albums, including “Apaísandada.”

Her 21st disc, which recently earned a Latin gold award from the Recording Industry Assn. of America for sales of 100,000 units, is appropriately titled. According to Lioutikoff, Nazario has lasted so long because she’s the “only Latin singer that’s apasionada—passionate—about her music.”

Indeed, Nazario’s ardor for all things musical has always compelled her to be one of the most innovative singers in pop music. Her tireless quest to discover something new, musically, has allowed her to reign as one of the top female pop singers of the past 15 years in Puerto Rico, the United States and much of Latin America.

Her innate gift is to wring every ounce of sentiment from every song, neatly balanced with an internal emotional compass that allows her to steer clear of melodrama. Her realistic tales about problematic affairs of the heart have resonated with women who appreciate Nazario’s image as a strong yet vulnerable woman who views romance from many heart-tugging angles.

And then, of course, there is her voice.

“The type of voice that Ednita has, from a musical standpoint, it is not a common instrument,” says Tommy Torres, Nazario’s longtime producer who is also a successful singer/songwriter. “The projection that she has, her style of singing and her vocal technique permits her to cover many, many styles of music. She has no fear of finding new styles or tackling new territories, musically or vocally.”

Always held in high esteem for her music, Nazario is revered for her exemplary lifestyle, Torres notes.

“Ednita’s fans have tremendous affection and love for her because she has managed her career and personal life in an impeccable manner,” he says. “She has not let fame affect her. She remains a simple person, kind to everybody.”

You started performing when you were very young. When did you realize it was more than a pastime?

There was a point in my life when I had to decide, because things were progressing at a pace where I had to make a commitment. I was 14. So, I had to sit down and make the decision and then bring it up with my parents, because my commitment to this career meant my family had to back me up. My parents asked me if I was aware of what was asking of them, because I had brothers, and I said yes.

Was anyone else in your family involved in music?

Not at all. And that was the hard thing. If you have a family that works in music, you know what to expect. My parents, it was a leap of faith. They saw I was going on the right path, and the things that were happening to me seemed to point in the direction of a career in show business. It wasn’t a whim. It was very interesting. I left my town, my friends, moved to a new school, and I had to work my little tush off to show my parents I was committed. They weren’t show-biz parents. They were supportive, taking care of the baby.

making sure I wasn’t going to be in trouble.

You first recorded with an indie label and then went from Melody to EMI and now to Sony BMG. During all these years on all these labels, what are the biggest changes you have seen in the industry?

Well, the nature of the business has changed, in the sense that it’s more of a business and less of an artistic process. I was lucky that I was in the business early enough to have creative control over what I do.

Also, before, it was more of a collaboration, the companies were more hands-on. Now, the process seems to be more detached. What I miss from when I started is the personal touch that the company had with the artist. I can be in the studio working and they know I’m doing, but very seldom do they come to the studio to listen.

Do you think the sound of Latin pop has changed drastically during the past few years? Absolutely. But that’s the nature of what we do. This is music. This is art.

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FROM THE HEART (cont.)

listen to so many things from the other side of the planet. We have fusions, we have new sounds. we're familiar with so many things from so many different genres, and we incorporate that into our own personal language. It's always been like that. There are new names, new people and new ways of saying things, and it is reflected in music. And that's what's exciting. If it were the same ol' same ol', it would be boring.

That may be so, but Latin radio, in particular, is very conservative and tends to play the same types of sounds. Has that been a problem for you? There's always been a little bit of pressure to fall into a specific niche. I've always resisted that. You can fall into a very dangerous tendency if you sway one way or the other because of pressures from the industry. At the same time, I believe one can never change. You have to take risks—you might hit it right on the spot, or it may slap you in the face.

On which of your albums did you take the biggest risks? There was a record I made [in 1992] called "Metamorfosis." It was a big musical change for me. And there was one I did where everybody said romantic music was dead and that I shouldn't do that, and [the 1994 album "Pasiones"] was the biggest hit I ever had.

Musically, the record that gave me the opportunity to really spread my wings and change was "Corazón" [in 1999]. It was the record I did with [rock artist/producer] Robi "Draco" Rosa. We had a lot of naysayers—"Ednita with Draco, what is she doing with him? And what is he doing with her?" That was a gigantic step for me musically. My heart was pounding when I gave the record to the label.

And what did the label say? Oh, they loved it. I know they were a little hesitant, but it was hugely embraced.

How would you describe your music? It's full of soul. It's full of emotion. My music is a reflection of life, in the most complex and mundane sense of life.

Would you call yourself a romantic singer? I'm a little hesitant to describe myself as a romantic singer. I don't see myself as a romantic singer, but as a singer that sings about life. Romance is part of it.

You also write, but never more than a few tracks per album. Why is that? It's a very personal process. In order to organize my thoughts I write them down, but the next step—the step where I lay it down as a song—that's the step I have more trouble with. I don't know exactly why.

Sometimes I feel I give so much of myself through my songs and I'm so transparent that saying things [written by other people] is easier for me. I talk a lot with my writers. We have long conversations about what I want to say, how I view life and how I view women and relationships, and then they come up with the song.

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FROM THE HEART (cont.)

Recently you have been discovering and using different writers. Why?
I listen to everything that falls in my hands, and I love new stuff. Not for the sake of finding something new, but for the sake of finding something that excites me. I've tried people that are completely unknown and people that are very famous and very good.

You performed in the Broadway musical "The Capeman." What was the significance of that? That was a huge turning point in my life. It was very unique, because it covered the whole arc of emotions, from the sublime to the ridiculous.
I was able to make one of my biggest dreams come true, which was to be on Broadway. Never in my life did I think it would be with one of the biggest names in music—Paul Simon.
To be involved in an ensemble, which was very unusual for me, and to become somebody else onstage was the hardest thing in the world. It opened up a completely different world for me.

Did "The Capeman" influence your decision to do acoustic albums?
Absolutely. Because you go back to the basics. That's why I went back to the theater.

The first single off your album "Por Ti" was "Más Mala Que Tú," a track about an unfaithful woman. Your new single, "Vengada," seems like part two of that story. Is it?

"Vengada" is a common story that many people live, where being abandoned in a relationship leads you to someone else's arms. Love blooms, and the person you leave behind, or the person who had left you, now realizes it's you he loves. He comes back crying, but it's too late. So, it's about the sweet revenge of finding a new love. I do think it's the culmination of the story that began with "Más Mala Que Tú."

Although it is not a women's liberation song, it is a very liberating song, don't you think?
I like songs that tell stories, and I like those stories to be clear and direct. I don't like songs that propose a woman who is a victim of her circumstances. I like an assertive point of view. It can be any subject, but I like the position of a woman in the 21st century who is in control of her decisions, her circumstances and her emotions.

You are fluent in English. Have you contemplated recording an English-language album?
I have. I hope a complete album in English happens, but it's not in my immediate plans.

Do you attempt to convey messages in your songs?
I'm a storyteller, and some of the songs have messages. But I'm not a prophet, and I don't pretend to be.
They definitely have to have a soul, they have to have a heart and they have to have something to tell that's relevant to anyone who feels intensely.
During the two-decade history of the Billboard Hot Latin Songs chart and the Latin Pop Albums chart, Ednita Nazario has been a consistent presence atop both. Her first top 10 hit on Hot Latin Songs came 19 years ago when “Tu Sin Mi” entered the list on Nov. 8, 1986, and peaked at No. 9. The single was the title track of her Melody/Fonovisa album, which entered Latin Pop Albums a week later and peaked at No. 5. In all, 15 of her singles have scaled the top 10 on the Hot Latin Songs chart while 10 of her albums have gone top 10 on the Latin Pop Albums chart. Her most recent album, “Apasionada” (Sony BMG Norte), peaked at No. 2 upon its July release.

### Ednita Nazario’s Top Singles

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Aprendere</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dec. 24, 1988</td>
<td>Melody</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Lo Que Son Las Cosas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>March 9, 1991</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Un Corazon Hecho Pedazos</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>May 8, 1993</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pensando Siempre En Ti</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>March 19, 1994</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tres Deseos</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Feb. 6, 1993</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mas Grande Que Grande</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oct. 2, 1999</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mirame</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 1993</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Te Sigo Esperando</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aug. 20, 1994</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tu Sabes Bien</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>June 12, 1999</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Como Antes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb. 4, 1994</td>
<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Tu Sin Mi</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov. 8, 1986</td>
<td>Melody</td>
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<td>Eres Libre</td>
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<td>Oct. 5, 1991</td>
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<td>EMI Latin</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Mas Que Un Amigo</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Feb. 8, 1992</td>
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### Ednita Nazario’s Top Albums

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<td>Sony Discos</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Por Ti</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dec. 6, 2003</td>
<td>Sony Discos</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Apasionada</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>July 9, 2005</td>
<td>Sony BMG Norte</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Acustico Vol. 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dec. 7, 2002</td>
<td>Sony Discos</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Jan. 14, 1989</td>
<td>Fonovisa</td>
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<td>Tu Sin Mi</td>
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<td>10</td>
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Titles on these charts are ordered by peak position on the Latin Pop Albums and Hot Latin 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. Data compiled by Keith Caulfield.

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www.americanradiohistory.com
This has been quite a year for the music industry. The Winners and Losers of 2005 captures the shining moments and the dismal ones. The list is based on intention vs. reality and is organized alphabetically.

Universal Music Group CEO Doug Morris and Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio "L.A." Reid intended to have a good year, and thanks to the resurrection of Mariah Carey coupled with Morris' business prowess, they did.

Meanwhile the wireless industry exploded—ringtone downloads in the U.S. market have exceeded $500 million. Sanctuary Group also intended to have a good year, but instead its 360-degree business model proved to be financially flawed. Coca-Cola set out to launch its new Zero soft drink with a bang via its Chilltop ad campaign, which ended up a flop.

CCE Spinco president/CEO Michael Rapino was actually a winner and a loser this year: He is the new leader of the world’s largest live-entertainment company, but it happens to come at a time when the touring business is in a major slump.

It has been a roller-coaster year. Billboard is happy to have been reporting from the front lines.

—TAMARA CONNIFF
Apple's iPod Ads

In 2005, the ad campaigns surrounding Apple Computer's iPod continued to impress—particularly each ad's savvy use of music and visuals. In the TV spots, created by the TBWA/Chiat/Day ad agency, band and brand come together in a seamless, albeit silhouetted, manner. Nothing is contrived or out of place. Cool reigns supreme.

Controversy aside—a new iPod commercial (featuring Eminem's "Lose Yourself") has come under attack for being too similar to a 3-year-old ad for Lugz shoes—numerous recording artists have benefited from use of their songs in iPod spots.

The ads helped launch new albums by U2 ("Vertigo") and Gorillaz ("Demon Days"). In other instances, the spots created awareness and buzz for under-the-radar acts (Gyroscope).

Apple's iPod Competitors

For MP3 players competing with Apple Computer's iPod, business this year was brutal. Virgin Electronics and Rio went out of business. And despite aggressive competition, Creative Labs and iRiver did not gain any ground on the iconic iPod.

While Sony scored the top spot for flash-based music players in Japan, neither it nor Samsung has delivered on its promise to emerge from Apple's shadow. Next year is not expected to be much different.

"Most people on Wall Street think that all fads have to burn out, but it's very difficult for these other non-iPod devices to compete," Piper Jaffray analyst Gene Munster says. "If someone gave us $150 million and said to compete with Apple, we'd probably be down $150 million 12 months from now."

Beach Street Records

Who would have thought a new venture by a veteran country artist would launch the most successful new group in Christian music?

But that is what happened when Sawyer Brown frontman Mark Miller started Beach Street, the Reunion Records imprint that catapulted Casting Crowns to the top of the charts. The Georgia-based worship band sold more than 1.1 million copies of its self-titled debut, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Its latest release, “Lifesong,” debuted at No. 1 on the Top Christian Albums chart and No. 9 on the Billboard 200, without the benefit of a mainstream radio hit.

With the sales and marketing muscle of Reunion's parent company, Provident Music Group, behind it, Beach Street has serious momentum. The label recently launched its sophomore artist, Josh Bates, who is riding the Billboard Hot Christian Songs chart with his debut single, "Perfect Day."

Broken Bow Records

Launched in 1999 by California car dealer Benny Brown, Broken Bow Records has a great year in 2005, scoring back-to-back hits from Craig Morgan and newcomer Jason Aldean.

Brown told Billboard Radio Monitor in September that after supporting the label from his "back pocket" for the last six years, it now stands on its own financially.

Broken Bow scored a four-week streak at No. 1 on the Hot Country Songs chart with Morgan's "That's What I Love About Sunday," followed by his No. 2 hit, "Redneck Yacht Club." In between, the label launched Aldean with his debut single, "Hicktown," which hit the top 10. It is the first time in the Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems era that a country indie landed two singles in the top 20.

Both artists also notched top 10 titles on the Billboard Top Country Albums chart.

Blu-ray DVDs

Between the two competing formats for the next generation of DVDs, Blu-ray is gaining ground.

This year, two major studios—Paramount Home Entertainment and Warner Home Video—switched from a focus solely on the Toshiba-led high-definition DVD format to also include the Sony-led Blu-ray format.

Now, all the majors except Universal Studios Home Entertainment are backing Blu-ray, which also has significant manufacturer support from the likes of Apple Computer, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, Panasonic and Samsung.

Forrester Research analyst Ted Schadler says that Blu-ray will beat HD DVD because "Sony learned from Betamax that the format with the most industry support will win."

Sean "Jay-Z" Carter

When Sean "Jay-Z" Carter retired from rapping a few years ago, many wondered how he would reinvent himself. The answer soon emerged when he was tapped as Def Jam's new president/CEO. Since then, Jay-Z discovered and signed Tiara Mari and Rihanna, who climbed the summer charts with "Make Her Feel Good" and "Pon De Playa," respectively. Tiara Mari hit No. 9 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, while Rihanna peaked at No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100.

Jay-Z is poised for great impact in 2006 with his two newly formed labels, Def Jam Left and Roc La Familia. Def Jam Left, which he describes as being very artist-driven, recently inked a deal with hip-hop band the Roots. Roc La Familia, unveiled in July, focuses on world music. It has signed Colombian rapper Aztek Escobar and hip-hop notable Noreaga.

Coca-Cola's "Chilltop" Ad

Coca-Cola earlier this year announced that it was reviving and reimagining its über-popular and successful 34-year-old "Chilltop" ad campaign; it unveiled its "Chilltop" ad for Coca-Cola Zero, its new zero-calorie soft drink. Execs in the advertising world and music industry were abuzz with marketing and sales possibilities.

Surely, they recalled the now-classic "Hilltop" ad featuring a multicultural group of young adults singing the song "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke"—and how two acts (the New Seekers and the Hillside Singers) experienced success with the same song, "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing (In Perfect Harmony)," adapted from the jingle.

Ad agency Crispin Porter & Bogusky created the new spot. But "Chilltop," which featured underground artist G. Love and a handful of friends singing "I'd Like to Teach the World to Chill," failed to click with audiences.

Disa Records

Disa Records could be the least-hyped label in the market. But it is mighty when it comes to identifying new regional Mexican music trends and developing new acts.

The label is largely responsible for the du rifranguer music explosion, for example, led by acts such as Grupo Montez De Durango. With the extra clout afforded by the Univision Music Group, which splits ownership of the label with the Chávez family in Mexico, Disa's market share has steadily increased during the past two years. It now stands at nearly 14% of the Latin market, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The Dove Awards

For the past few years, the Christian music community has flocked to the Gospel Music Assn.'s Dove Awards (now called the GMA Music Awards) knowing that the live event might never reach their TV screens.

The Doves have always been in search of a television home, "one industry observer says of the GMA's unsuccessful quest to land a deal to air the show. Originally slated for UPN, the 2004 Dove Awards took place in April of that year, but did not air until December on PAX-TV, with an additional airing the following April, just before this year's awards. The 2005 Dove Awards fared little better, airing in syndication during June and July.

Next year could be better as the GMA is already ahead of schedule, having announced hosts Kirk Franklin and Rebecca St. James for the 37th annual awards to be held April 5, 2006, and tickets for the event are already on sale.

DreamWorks Records Nashville

The saddest story of the year on Music Row was the shuttering of the once proud and independent DreamWorks Records Nashville.

Launched in 1998, DreamWorks quickly became one of the most successful and admired labels on the Row, making a superstar out of Toby Keith and launching the careers of several other artists.

The label merged with Universal Music Group in May 2004. And as Keith told Billboard in September, DreamWorks then "went from being . . . one of the biggest and best labels in town" to being "powerless."

When Keith split to start his own label in late summer, the writing was on the wall. A week after he announced the formation of Show Dog Nashville, UMG pulled the plug on DreamWorks.

Lisa Ellis

GM; SONY URBAN MUSIC

When Sony Urban Music GM Lisa Ellis was appointed to her post in 2004, she declared that strong A&R and breaking developing acts were at the heart of her agenda. A year later, she and her staff are clearly on course. Naysayers who dismissed the label's urban clout cannot ignore its 2005 headway.

John Legend, Omarion and Bow Wow sprang to mind, as does a quietly developing happy ending to 2005: R&B newcomer Lyfe Jennings. Signaling its A&R focus, Sony Urban Music and Columbia signed Dr. Dre's ex-right-hand man, Mike Lynn, to a production/label deal. And despite Destiny's Child bowing out, the beat goes on. Year-end releases by Ginuwine, Goapele and Lil' Flip set the stage in 2006 for the return of Maxwell and the reunited Fugees.

Europe's Authors' Rights Societies

European authors' rights societies spent an uncomfortable year under the regulatory microscope, with good reason.
In late June, the British Phonographic Industry asked Britain's Copyright Tribunal to settle its dispute over online royalty rates with the Mechanical-Copyright Protection Society and the Performing Right Society.

Then Universal Music Group International filed a complaint with the European Commission in September, arguing that Europe's 14 collecting societies are national monopolies.

Most recently, in October, the EC's internal market division released a recommendation that enforced the principle of a single licensing source for online repertoire in Europe. The EC insisted that societies must operate in total transparency.

It warned that if this recommendation was not followed voluntarily, it would be forced to legislate.

As European Union internal market and services commissioner Charlie McCreevy put it, it is time for collecting societies to move from a 19th-century model into the 21st century.

Grokster and StreamCast
Peer-to-peer operators Grokster and StreamCast lost their legal clout this year. A U.S. District Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had been on their side. The courts supported the position that the two companies were not "contributing" to the copyright infringements of their networks' users who were sharing unauthorized music files.

But Grokster and StreamCast, which operated the Grokster and Morpheus networks, respectively, suffered a major blow when the U.S. Supreme Court clarified the law in June.

The court unanimously held that the P2P operators' activities could make them liable for "inducing" copyright infringement. While the District Court must still apply this legal standard to the facts, the two companies should scramble to develop new business models.

On Nov. 7, Grokster announced it had shut down.

Independent Music on TV
From the electrifying samba of Imogen Heap to the eclectic rock of Rilo Kiley, indie music exposure on TV seemed to outpace radio play in the past year.

2005 started a mainstream trend of breaking new artists on TV, with popular shows like HBO's "Six Feet Under," ABC's "Grey's Anatomy" and every WB teen drama placing a new importance on the exposure of lesser-known acts.

"With record sales as dismal as they are, TV licensing has been one of the few bright spots in the music industry," music supervisor Billy Gottlieb says. "The labels expose their developing artists to millions of ears and actually make money in the process."

Independent Retailers
The numbers are frightening. Compared with 2004, sales at independent retailers are down 28% in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

While some of the well-known independents call that number an exaggeration—most stores that Billboard contacted were on par or only slightly shy of 2004's numbers—there are dis-patches from around the country that support the troubling outlook.

Brighton, Mass.-based Newbury Comics has reduced its staff, Minneapolis' Let It Be shut its doors; Recycled Sounds in Kansas City, Mo., is finding it difficult to stock new releases. With more albums sold online, tomorrow's consumers are buying music sans CD—or trips to any store. And while Garth Brooks may not cater to an audience that shops at independent stores, he may have set a dangerous precedent by bringing his catalog exclusively to Wal-Mart.

Independent Retail Coalitions
For independent music retailers, it is nearly impossible to compete with a $7.99 price tag for the big-box stores. But independent retail coalitions have fought back by uniting.

Together, the Coalition of Independent Music Stores, Alliance of Independent Media Stores and Music Monitor Network have been able to score exclusives unique to indie stores.

One problem: Indie retailers who are not members did not have access. Enter Junketboy, the distribution arm of CIMS, which sells exclusive product to all indies. With a larger network, exclusives have improved (see Bright Eyes' live CD "Motion Sickness"). And independents have gotten first dibs on such hot newcomers as Clap Your Hands Say Yeah and Matt Costa.

"Junketboy has made Criminal Records special again," says Eric Levin, owner of Criminal Records in Atlanta.

Andrew Lack
CEO, SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT
Question: When is having one-quarter of all U.S. market share a bad thing?
Answer: When the share emerges from combining the combative cultures of Sony Music and BMG—and fails to meet expectations that the merged companies will outpace Universal Music Group as that company fires on all cylinders.

Making matters worse: Sony BMG boss Andrew Lack finds himself in a power play with Bertelsmann executives who are calling for his ouster. As if that were not enough, key acts like Dave Matthews Band and Switchfoot revolted against CD copy-protection technology on Sony BMG discs and consumer complaints led Sony BMG to recall CDs with such protection. The company also faces consumer lawsuits. Further, the company has seen lukewarm support for its DualDisc format and is feeling the sting of a $10 million payola-allegation settlement deal with New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

Latin Radio
There is a reason why new artists develop in the Latin realm. Latin radio does not play them.

The record companies could be blamed for poor promotion of new artists or poor products. But the fact is, new names are virtually anathema to the major U.S. Spanish-language stations that Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems monitors. This continues to be the case even with the increasing segmentation of Latin radio.

For the first 10 months of the year, for example, only six debut acts placed tracks among the 100 most-played songs, according to Nielsen BDS. New acts have better standing at Latin rhythmic stations that cater to a younger demographic. But by and large, developing acts have an uphill battle on the airwaves.

Irving "Irv Gotti" Lorenzo
FOUNDER, THE INC.
Although rap label Murder Inc. changed its name to simply the Inc. to burnish its image, the move did not save company execs from federal charges in an ongoing investigation.

Label founder Irving "Irv Gotti" Lorenzo and his brother Chris were charged Jan. 26 in Brooklyn, N.Y., federal court with aiding convicted drug lord Kenneth McGriff in laundering more than $1 million, according to the U.S. Department of Justice (Billboard, Feb. 5).

And the label's problems are not limited to the courtroom. Its most recent album from Ashanti, "Concrete Rose," failed to post numbers comparable to her previous two releases. With the brothers' trial under way at press time, business goes on for the Inc.'s artists as Ja Rule prepares his new album "Exodus" to drop Dec. 13.

Doug Morris
CEO, UNIVERSAL MUSIC GROUP
In a year where CD sales are stumbling, Universal Music Group is enjoying new levels of domination under the direction of Universal Music Group CEO Doug Morris. Not only is the world's largest record company claiming a commanding lead in market share in the United States in 2005, but the company also is maximizing its revenue opportunities from a range of emerging businesses.

The music giant is now collecting money from the likes of mobile phones; ad-supported, on-demand video; downloadable video; direct TV sales; and such consumer goods as cosmetics and clothing.

As Universal Music Group International chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge notes: "We are now beginning to expand our relationships with our artists and share in the multiple revenue streams that accrue from their success."

Movie Soundtracks
Shots of star power from the likes of Jessica Simpson and Incubus were not enough to revive this year's movie soundtrack industry.

Slow sales and no standout hit to speak of leave the sector in need of a new game plan for 2006. Music supervisor Billy Gottlieb blames the slump on the movie studios' tendency to "shoehorn mediocre songs into slots in the film in an effort to create a 'marketable' record."

Musicland spokeswoman Laurie Bauer thinks that the release of the G-Unit/Interscope sound-track to "Get Rich or Die Tryin" could be the next exception to the lackluster year. "We have a strong urban following, and we'll have a big demand for that album during the holiday season," Bauer says.

The National Music Publishers' Assn. realized that long-distance relationships just are not cozy enough to pursue an important legislative agenda for a digital future.

The trade group moved its headquarters from New York to Washington, D.C., this year, tapping savvy lawyer and political insider David Israelite as its new president/CEO.

It also strengthened its clout around Capitol Hill. Democrats and Republicans who hold influential positions to help intellectual-property owners say they hold Israelite in high esteem.

Adding Berkeley Schwarz as VP/counsel, the dynamic duo wants to ensure that all publishers' interests are protected, majors and Indies alike. Given Israelite's skill at winning a seat at the World Series of Poker this year, his upcoming strategies will be interesting to watch.
Payola Practitioners

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer merits the 2005 crusader prize for blowing the lid on labels practicing payola 21st-century style.

One can bet that execs at Sony BMG and Warner Music Group caught in Spitzer’s investigation are not out only picking laurels for the politically ambitious attorney general. It was Spitzer who also embarrassed the majors—to the tune of a $50 million initial settlement—by announcing in May 2004 that millions of “lost” royalty dollars were owed to their rosters of artists.

Meanwhile, the big cheese at big radio must also be running scared. Jonathan Adeleskin, the activist Democratic commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission, said in September he plans “to put the fear of God” into broadcasters about obeying the FCC’s payola rules.

Marybeth Peters

REGISTER OF COPYRIGHTS

Kudos are due to the unflappable Register of Copyrights Marybeth Peters and her crew, who continue to step up to the plate for copyright owners and artists. (Well, that is her gig.)

This time, at the request of federal lawmakers, she wrote a white paper draft bill putting forth all the ways one could reform America’s severely antiquated and slow music licensing laws, which in this age are turtles in digital rabbit land. Except it is the American music listener who is the ultimate loser.

Why was Peters asked to handle the music and tech communities’ business? Because neither of those industries could get it together. In fact, the recent exchange of inflammatory, Heckle & Jeckle letters between the National Music Publishers’ Assn. and the Digital Media Assn. only shows that she should be the nanny that sends them to bed without their Ovaltine.

Stanley Pierre-Louis

SENIOR VP OF LEGAL AFFAIRS, RECORDER INDUSTRY ASSN. OF AMERICA

Every lawyer who has negotiated a complex contract with a major label’s attorney can appreciate the challenges that Stanley Pierre-Louis, the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s senior VP of legal affairs, faced this year.

For the U.S. Supreme Court review of the entertainment industry’s lawsuit against peer-to-peer operators Grokster and StreamCast, Pierre-Louis coordinated conference calls with all the major labels’ lawyers. He juggled their strategies and comments—or should we say strategies “and/or” comments—then joined the Motion Picture Assn. of America’s Dean Garfield and appellate lawyer Donald Verrilli Jr. to include comments from the major movie studios’ lawyers—all into one winning brief.

Michael Rapino

PRESIDENT/CEO, CCE SPINCO

In a class of his own, Michael Rapino ranks as a winner and a loser of 2005. First, when many in the industry were betting against him, Rapino has emerged as the new leader of the world’s largest live-entertainment company. He was named president/CEO of the new Clear Channel Entertainment entity CCE Spinco, as it prepares for life as a publicly traded, stand-alone company.

Rapino now oversees CCE Spinco’s global music, theater, sports representation and motor sports businesses. He has decentralized the company’s concert business, reduced ticket prices at amphitheaters, instituted a more disciplined approach to talent buying, streamlined operations and bankrolled the year’s top outing, U2’s $300 million Vertigo tour.

But, as head of the world’s top concert producer/promoter, Rapino also must shoulder much of the weight of a concert business that remains mired in a two-year slump.

With attendance and gross touring dollars down, the industry still struggles to build enough new headliners and re-establish concerts as an entertainment priority for today’s consumers.

What is more, heading into Spinco’s public offering Rapino opted to close offices and lay off staff. The new company also will inherit potentially damaging legal entanglements in Chicago, Mountain View, Calif., and elsewhere.

Antonio “L.A.” Reid

CHAIRMAN, ISLAND DEF JAM MUSIC GROUP

When Antonio “L.A.” Reid exited as president/CEO of Arista Records in January 2004, many questioned if the talented executive and LaFace co-founder was down for the count. They will not make that mistake again. Reid is experiencing a tremendous renaissance as chairman of Island Def Jam Music Group, a post he assumed in 2004.

His fortune is tied to another resurrection: Mariah Carey. The artist and Reid co-executive-produced her career-reviving album “The Emancipation of Mimi,” which has sold 3.9 million copies in the United States alone since its April release, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Reid has also flourished through other deals, such as completing the acquisition of the remaining 50% of Roc-a-Fella Records and naming Sean “Jay-Z” Carter president/CEO of Def Jam Recordings.

“When I found out that L.A. was coming in to be CEO of IDJ, I was beyond ecstatic,” says Carey, a longtime fan of Reid’s work as a producer. The two immediately clicked,” she says. “He’s a great musician; he’s a very, very, very talented musician.”

Allen Rodriguez

CEO, TOWER RECORDS

After filing for Chapter 11 protection in early 2004 because of a technicality, Tower Records became the poster child for the mainstream press, which declared that record stores were deader than a doorknob.

But reports of Tower’s death were greatly exaggerated. Eighteen months later, the chain is one of the healthiest specialty stores in the United States.

The retailer began its restructuring in 2001. Tower Records CEO Allen Rodriguez took the reins in 2003, snagging credit for leading Tower for the last mile, getting the company over the hump and back to fiscal respectability.

Andy Taylor

FORMER EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, SANCTUARY GROUP

It has not been a good year for Sanctuary Group executive chairman Andy Taylor. While the London-based company remains squarely committed to its 360-degree model, Sanctuary faces serious financial woes that led to Taylor’s decision last month to step down as executive chairman of the company. He will remain in a senior executive position.

While some analysts predict a possible demise for the independent company, the management/label/publishing/merchandise concern keeps trying to right itself. This summer, citing disappointing results by its recorded-music and urban music divisions, Sanctuary implemented a cost-cutting plan that will reduce annual expenses by $8 million. Changes include laying off 150 staffers worldwide, as well as shuttering at least two U.S. offices.

In a statement to the London Stock Exchange, Sanctuary also said a realignment of its board is part of an overall business review. The company previously announced it would initiate a review of its accounting practices.

Video Rental Chains

In the home video business, brick-and-mortar video rental chains, including Blockbuster and Movie Gallery, saw big losses in same-store revenue and stock prices in the past year. Though the decreases can be attributed in part to a lack of exciting new releases, consumer behavior is shifting toward self-entertainment through low prices.

And with Netflix proving that an online rental model can work, the chains are searching for ways to attract consumers.

Blockbuster’s “no late fees” policy and its Blockbuster Online service, and Movie Gallery’s attention to games and DVD vending machines are steps in the right direction.

The Wireless Industry

If hype has any currency, then the wireless industry has an embarrassment of riches.

This was a year of tremendous growth for the wireless music space, matched only by the expectations for the future.

The number of ringtones downloaded quadrupled, with the value of the U.S. market now topping $500 million. Ringback tones were introduced across the nation. And labels began releasing new singles as ringtones even before their radio airplay dates.

Meanwhile, Motorola and Apple Computer introduced their much-anticipated iTunes-compatible ROKR phone, albeit to lukewarm response. But unlike the iPod, the ROKR has challenges. Nokia unveiled its N91 4GB hard-drive phone that is expected to hit U.S. shores early next year, while Sony Ericsson’s Walkman phone is now available nationwide.

Looking forward, the music industry waits with bated breath for the major carriers to launch their wireless full-song download services.

At the CTIA Wireless I.T. & Entertainment con- fab in San Francisco this fall, Warner Music Group chief Edgar Bronfman Jr. called mobile full-song downloads “the single greatest opportunity the music industry has ever had.”

This special feature was written by: Anthony Bruno, Susan Butler, Ed Christman, Lesia Cobo, Bill Holland, Ivory M. Jones, Jill Kipnis, Emmanuel Legrand, Todd Martens, Gail Mitchell, Melinda Newman, Michael Paolletta, Deborah Evans Price, Phyllis Stark, Ray Waddell and Margo Whitmore.
KORN UNVEILS A NEW ‘SIDE’

When Korn named its seventh studio album “See You on the Other Side,” the band really meant it.

Guitarist James “Munky” Shaffer explains that the title is an offer for people to “come through the doorway with us, an invitation to the listener to accept the change that we felt we needed to make creatively.”

That change, Munky says, was brought about by the departure of guitarist Brian “Head” Welch earlier this year, which put Korn into an emotional and professional tailspin. But remaining members Munky, Jonathan Davis, David Silveria and Reginald “Fieldy” Arvizu are using their smaller lineup as an opportunity to reinvent their brand of metal.

“Twisted Transistor,” the first single from the Dec. 6 release, gives a taste of that sound: lots of experimentation and atmospherics, with a bit of electronica and some industrial elements thrown in. The project continues the evolution of Korn’s raw, anger-driven sound that became so evident on its heavily produced 2002 album “Untouchables.”

Radio responded to the invite by jumping on continued on >>p42

FACT FILE

Label: Virgin
Management: Peter Katsis and Jeff Kwatinetz, the Firm
Booking: John Marx, the William Morris Agency; Rod McSween, ITB
Publishing: Fieldy/Twoz Music/Stratosphere/Conness Music/Music Mynx
Publishing/Elvira Music, administered by Zomba Songs (BMI)
Best-selling album: “Follow the Leader” (1998), 3.8 million
Last album: “Greatest Hits” (2004), 1 million
Arjona Tries New Approach For 10th Album

MIAMI—It’s ironic that Ricardo Arjona’s most intimate album is the one he has deliberately tried to keep at arm’s length.

But so it is with the Guatemalan singer/songwriter’s latest release, "Adentro," which arrives Dec. 6 on Sony BMG.

As he always does, Arjona penned all the material, but instead of closely supervising the production and arrangements, as he is wont to do, he sent many of the vocal tracks to Tommy Torres and basically asked the producer to surprise him.

“I found the ideal person,” says Arjona, who was working with Torres for the first time.

“I found someone who knows more about music than I do and who is a perfectionist,” he adds. “By perfectionist, I mean having the capacity to find the perfect place for the song and having it feel fresh...To hear your song rearranged by another person was something I hadn’t experienced, and I enjoyed it tremendously.”

Arjona is one of the most distinctive and lyrical songwriters in Latin music and one of Latin pop’s most consistent performers, with more than 12 million albums sold during his career, according to Sony BMG.

A former schoolteacher, his lyrics are erudite and accessible; his topics quotidian but lofty.

He is also fiercely protective of his songs. Never has he stepped outside of the production process.

But "Adentro" ("Inside"), his 10th album, is an exception in every sense of the word. It is not named after a track, but a state of mind brought about by changes that affected his inner being.

What lies unsaid is his recent, highly publicized separation from his wife. But tracks like “Pinguinos En La Cama” cannot help but evoke the split with lyrics like, “Let’s clear things up, there are penguins in the bed with the ice you provoke/It’s been a month since you touched me.”

Then, there was his exchange with Torres, a singer/songwriter himself. Arjona says he first “tested” him by sending the hookiest and darkest tracks on the album, "Acompáñame A Estar Solo" and "Ilusor," respectively. Torres, anxious to please, says he went all out on the first demo, hiring a full band that included a string orchestra.

Arjona liked it. Eventually, only one track was sent back to be reworked.

Beyond Torres’ work, the bulk of "Adentro" was co-produced by Arjona with long-time collaborator Carlos "Junior" Cabral.

Cabral alone helmed the track "Mojado," a duet with regional Mexican band Intocable that is one of Arjona’s only duets on record and his first collaboration with an act in that genre.

Sony BMG is working the track to regional Mexican stations at the same time that pop single “Acompáñame A Estar Solo” is worked at pop radio.

"Acompáñame" is already No. 19 on the Billboard Hot Latin Songs chart. During the past five years, Arjona has had five tracks reach the top five on that chart, including three No. 1s.

But this marks the first time that his label (he has long been signed to Sony) will work two tracks with two videos simultaneously. It is a strategy that underscores the label’s faith in an artist who tours and sells well beyond U.S. borders.

“Acompáñame” has garnered the quickest reaction at radio of any of Arjona’s singles, both in the United States and the Latin region, says Luana Pagan, Sony BMG senior VP of Latin global marketing. In Latin America, she adds, there is “extraordinary” anticipation for the album.

Arjona, who splits his time between Mexico City and Miami, will kick off his 2006 tour in April with concerts in Mexico before doing arena stints in the United States and later, in the remainder of Latin America.

In the meantime, promotion for "Adentro" will be equally internationally minded, beginning Dec. 7 with a showcase and press tour in Guatemala.

Trans World is hosting a contest to fly winners to the show, and other retailers are planning their own promotions. They include a Target TV campaign, video rotation and online promotion on fye.com and bonus digital tracks for those who buy the album on target.com, walmart.com and iTunes.

“It’s a very representative and tremendously complete album,” Arjona says. “And having different producers made it rich in possibilities.”

KORN (cont.)

from >>>

the song, making it No. 7 on the Mainstream Rock chart and No. 12 at Modern Rock in this issue. In fact, thanks to several remixes, "Twisted Transistor" is Korn’s first charting single on the Hot Dance Music/Club Play list.

The seven-minute-plus video is also a big hit on MTV and other video channels, partially because of the comical appearances that Snoop Dogg, Lil Jon, Xzibit and David Banner make by masquerading as the members of Korn.

Helping emphasize the band’s outreach to listeners is a promotional campaign that, according to Virgin VP of marketing Donine Lombardi, aims “to touch and reach the fans.”

It has been a long time since Korn has hit the pavement this hard to push an album; the band is traveling cross-country doing radio station takeovers, as well as in-stores, meet-and-greets and a handful of pre-album release shows. When the band gave one such concert Nov. 29 at Hammerstein Ballroom in New York, seven European contest winners and eight U.S. soldiers flew to the United States with the band to see the show. And when Korn returns to the road in February, it plans to stay out for a staggering two years.

Davis is excited about the partnership Korn forged with Virgin parent EMI, which invested $25 million in a unique revenue-sharing deal with the act (Billboard, Nov. 12).

EMI’s investment earns the record company an estimated 30% stake in Korn’s overall business, including record sales, touring, merchandise, publishing and licensing during the course of a two-album/two-tour deal.

“Traditional record deals are just real shady and basically are whoring bands out and paying for the mistakes [the labels] make” when other acts do not succeed, Davis says.

“We’re partners in this business,” he continues. “If they promote us, we win and they win...we’re receiving stuff that we’ve never received ever. We’re getting 70% of our record, stuff like that.”

Korn was formerly on Immortal/Epic.

Davis says the new deal also allowed the band to retain its digital rights, so the group can now make such nontraditional moves as release two digital audio/video bundles to iTunes for $1.98 each, which it did in early November.

“We set the price,” Davis says, adding that he wanted the bundles to be inexpensive because he “doesn’t want to be ripping kids off.”

“Virgin’s investment should be the kind of thing that swings the balance back to the side of long-term artist career development,” says the Firm’s Peter Katris, who handles Korn’s day-to-day management with Jeff Kwantz.

But the deal does not come without its risks. EMI has inked a band whose sales have declined since its ‘90s heyday. Korn’s top-selling album, 1998’s “Follow the Leader,” moved 3.8 million units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Its last studio album, 2003’s “Take a Look in the Mirror,” sold 1.1 million.

However, retailers tell Billboard that Korn still has a strong and loyal fan base. The album is being kept under tight security to avoid leaks (“Take a Look in the Mirror” and “Untouchables” were leaked to the Internet prior to their street dates), so retailers have not yet heard the completed project. But some tell Billboard they have high hopes for “See You on the Other Side.”

“We expect it to do well; Korn always does for us,” says Sara Martin, manager of Dimple Records in Sacramento, Calif. She points out that this Christmas season is not a big year for rock releases; therefore Korn has the advantage of light competition in the fourth quarter.

Part of the “Twisted Transistor” video was filmed at soon-to-be-shuttered Arorn’s Records in Los Angeles. Ed Canavan, rock buyer for the indie retailer, says customers have been asking for the album. He does not feel the single sounds like “a Korn song,” but he applauds the group’s innovation: “They’re not afraid to stretch [out their sound] a bit...They’re always experimenting.”
New Latin Web Site Begins Voy-age

The field of Web sites dedicated to Latin music expanded with the Nov. 21 launch of Voy Music.

Voy's claim to fame is that it integrates multiple platforms under one roof. Voymusic.com includes a 23-station radio network, an online music store, podcasting, blogs, news and a Latin e-label.

"We're integrating all the different parts under one brand," Voy Music CEO Alejandro Cosentino says. "We know the community aspect helps people stay in one place, and we are offering it to them in a compelling package."

The company is part of Voy LLC, a multimedia entity that includes TV, radio, film, publishing and Internet platforms. Voy is headed by chairman Fernando Espuelas, former CEO/chairman of StarMedia Networks.

Some of the thrusts behind Voy Music, which launched after 11 months of research, were the ideas that Hispanics spend much time searching for information on artists online and that music samples alone are not enough to compel Internet users to purchase music.

Cosentino's research indicates that 80% of clients would purchase more music if they found more information on the artist or the music on the Web site.

The Voy concept is closest to that of e Latinmusic.com (originally emusielatino.com), where a major component is a digital label whose mission is to promote and sell new acts or releases that are off the beaten path. But there are other sites dedicated to new and different music, including emusic.com and misrolas.com.

Voy brings to the table the radio component—with stations specializing in a wide range of music—plus the possibility of major-label presence. Conversations are under way to have product from the majors available on the site by next year.

Voy Music is owned by Espuelas and Cosentino in partnership with the company's senior management team, which includes former MTV Latino VP Ruth Infurnato as content director, Gabriel Paluch as chief technology officer and Rudy Vila as VP of business development. The company has offices in New York, Los Angeles and Buenos Aires, with plans to open a Miami branch in first-quarter 2006.

J&N's Online Plan: Established labels continue to explore the possibilities offered by establishing a proper Web site and dispensing music from it.

Miami-based indie J&N Records recently acquired musicalatina.com, a Web site that links users to online stores and fan sites, in addition to providing original content.

J&N plans to preserve the site's name but take things several steps further, using it as a vehicle to promote its own artists and to sell downloads, physical product and ringtones from a wide array of acts.

"We know the direction the business is taking is via the Internet," says Raul Escalante, director of international marketing for J&N.

The revamped musicalatina.com will launch in February with a new image and new services. Currently, Escalante says, the site has more than 500,000 visitors per month.

AND... In other J&N news, one of the label's marquee acts, Monchy & Alexandra, will soon see their music released in Spain via indie Vale Music. Monchy & Alexandra's brand of bachata has already been successfully tested in Italy and France by Planeta Music, which also licensed Papi Sánchez. Sánchez, who plays a mix of merengue and hip-hop, has also had material licensed by Vale for release in Spain.
Bice Is All About Keeping It ‘Real’

About the only thing Bo Bice shares in common with Carrie Underwood or Kelly Clarkson is his vehicle. It took “American Idol” to earn the Southern rocker a place in the sun. He credits where it is due, but the season-four runner-up is aiming to be more of a self-made man than many of his predecessors.

His debut album, “The Real Thing,” due Dec. 13 on RCA, is certainly meant to hint that the performer is driving his own material and collaborating more with songwriters and producers than most along the “Idol” assembly line.

At 30, Bice is a seasoned musician, fronting his band Sugar Money, and he is actually old enough to have something to say. “I identify with all of the songs on this album—and the title made sense to me because that’s what we’re setting out to prove that I am legitimately the real thing,” he says. “I play instruments, I write songs, I’ve been doing this for a while. It think it encompasses what we are going for.”

Writers and producers for the project include a who’s who of contemporary pop/rock hitmakers: John Shanks, Jon Bon Jovi, Richie Sambora, Murti Pederekis, Ben Moody, Desmond Child, Ken DioGuardi, Max Martin, and Nickellback’s Chad Kroeger. Bice co-wrote two of the tracks. “It’s My Life” with Clif Magness and DioGuardi and “Valley of Angels” with Magness. Clif came in and added a pretty bridge to a song that I had written,” Bice says. “It felt good to bring something to the table that was mine and add another person’s input.”

At press time, RCA had yet to pick a single. The album will be issued as a DualDisc showcasing additional studio and acoustic songs all written by Bice, as well as a 22-minute day-in-the-life video.

Bice will back the release with TV appearances and a solo tour. “I’m ready to get out there and do some touring,” he says. “I love to be onstage with a band having fun.”

As for the album, Bice says he is more satisfied than he ever imagined: “I’m just like, ‘Wow, how in the world did I get such an incredible album, with these great songs from these big names?’”

“I’m grateful for ‘Idol,’ but so many of the first albums are taken as souvenirs,” he adds. “I think that everything to do with my album—the look of it, the feel, the songs—are about me. They didn’t come in and go, ‘Bo, change this, all of the kids are wearing mascara...’ Fuck that. This is about the music. We got a rock ’n’ roll album, not a soul venue from a television show.”

Clive Davis, BMG North America chairman, CEO and executive producer of “The Real Thing,” echoes that Bice is anything but a cookie-cutter pagent contestant.

“We approach each of these albums in a custom-crafted way based on who the artist is,” Davis says. “Our job is to find material that is best-suited for him—that he can sing well and hopefully have hits with.”

A suitable project for Bice, Davis says, takes into account his early rock-based influences: “Whether that leads you to a Rob Thomas or a Nickelback, we will find material that is a natural extension of who he is, a natural pop sound with a rock edge.”

Bice has already worn his colors on his sleeve. In July, soon after the fourth season of “American Idol” wrapped, his first single, the double-sided “Vehicle” (he performed the title of March cover on the show) and “Inside Your Heaven” debuted at No. 1 on the Hot 100 Singles Sales chart and was certified gold. Since then, he has performed with such idols as Lynryd Skynyrd, Willie Nelson and Sambora. He also duets with Santana on “Brown Skin Girl,” a cut from the latter’s new album. “All That I Am”.

RCA says it has advanced orders of 750,000 for “The Real Thing.” If sales of season-four winner Underwood are any indication, Bice is in the running for a formidable hit. According to Nielsen SoundScan, Underwood sold 352,000 albums in her first week, debuting at No. 2 on The Billboard 200.

Mike Fritt from Omaha, Neb., retail chain Homer’s notes, “The American Idol franchise is very savvy at keeping strong brand awareness. Both Underwood and Bice should have a decent holiday season.”

Bice, meanwhile, is already looking ahead, before his first full-length project has even warmed the record racks.

“My biggest goal is to go out and support this album and start writing a new album that’s even better... to be a good dad and a good husband... and to constantly move forward.”

Additional reporting by Joy Mitchell in Los Angeles.

FACT FILE

Label: RCA
Management: Simon Rombach and Gayle Boulware, Strategic Artist Management
Booking: Jeff Fratko, Creative Artists Agency
Publishing: SugarMoney Publishing (BMI)

The Beat

Rock Hall Of Fame Names Class Of ’06
Sabbath, Blondie, Miles, Skynyrd, Pistols To Be Honored

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame comes of age with its 21st annual induction ceremony on March 13. Earning their place in the pantheon are Black Sabbath, Blondie, Miles Davis, Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Sex Pistols. It is certainly a disparate group, but all are worthy new entries. As the founders of A&M Records, Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss will be honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award in the non-performer category.

The festivities will take place at New York’s Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

SHUTTERED: Sony/ATV Music has closed its New York studio. The Nov. 11 move occurs nearly six months after the publishing company shuttered its Los Angeles studio. Among the artists and songwriters who had created music at the 14-year-old studio were Norah Jones, Cyndi Lauper, Lauryn Hill and Mary J. Blige.

Danny Strick, president of Sony/ATV Publishing, says the studios were closed in part, because of the wealth of other material available in both cities. “We don’t feel that we need to have a studio in-house to service our writers and producers,” he says. “People will use home studios or there are great studios in Los Angeles or New York that can handle the business.”

He adds that the New York studio was “a fantastic facility,” and stressed that Sony/ATV would continue to “service our writers, producers and artists with different facilities outside our own buildings.”


Libbeth Cassidy, former VP of publicity at Lava Records, is the new VP of publicity for Fuse in New York. Promoter/manager Bill Silva has hired talent buyer Eric Herz to oversee his Silva Tour/ Billing Silva Presents divisions. Herz, a former Avalon Attractions and Metropolitan Entertainment executive, previously booked the Will and Avalon theaters in Los Angeles. He was among the lay-offs at Clear Channel Entertainment as the company restructured (billboard.biz, Oct. 20). Bill Silva Presents, along with Andrew Hewitt, have been the exclusive promoter of the Hollywood Bowl since 1991.

Carol Yumkas, former VP for Sirius Satellite Radio and at the William Morris Agency, has new management. Clients with the Santa Monica, Calif.-based firm include singer/songwriter Ray Herndon, bassist/composer Viktor Krauss, musician/producer Matt Rollings and producer/drummer Russ Kunkel.

Grammy Award-winning producer David Kershbaum is producing Melanie Decker’s debut album. The set will come out on SME Records, a division of Sonoma Mountain Entertainment.

Gunnar and Matthew Nelson have signed with Jake Hooke’s Edge Management for artist representation. In addition, Edge will manage events surrounding next year’s 20th anniversary of the passing of the twins’ father Rick Nelson.

THE BEAT GOES ON: LIFEBeat, the music industry charity that funds AIDS research and other AIDS organizations, began an online auction on eBay on Dec. 1, World AIDS Day.

The Bid 2 Beat auction includes the original mock-up of Joni Mitchell’s “Court & Spark” album, as well as a 2006 Vaspa signed by Kanye West and others. Jennifer Lopez, Carlos Santana and Elton John are among those donating clothes. The auction runs for 10 days.

SUN SHINE: Legendary Sun Records founder the late Sam Phillips will be honored at the inaugural Sam Phillips Music Celebration Jan. 2-7 in Florence, Ala. Performers include former Wet Willie member Jimmy Hall, The Amazing Rhythm Aces and Jerry Lee Lewis.
Second Shot Of 'Whiskey' Is A Winner

The second time was the charm for Bill Anderson and "Whiskey Lullaby," the hit country song he wrote with Jon Randall.

Performed by Brad Paisley and Alison Krauss, "Whiskey Lullaby" was nominated for a Country Music Assn. award for song of the year in 2004. While it lost to "Live Like You Were Dying," the song earned CMA awards for vocal event and video of the year. But this year, it was again nominated in the song category and took home the prize during the Nov. 15 show.

Despite a distinguished career nearly half a century in duration, it was only Anderson's second CMA award win, and the first time he got to accept one on live TV. His other win, the 2001 vocal event prize for "Too Country," was given out in the pre-taped ceremony.

Anderson says he was "shocked" that the same song could be nominated two years in a row, but he kept his mouth shut. "I was afraid to ask any questions for fear they might realize they'd made a mistake and withdraw the nomination," he says. (A song can be nominated for a CMA Award in consecutive years if it remained on the chart during part of the eligibility period for both years.)

While he has written many hit songs, Anderson says he has never had one like "Whiskey Lullaby," which has won awards at several other shows in addition to the CMAs. "In many ways it seems to have taken on a life of its own," he says. "I feel very blessed."

Anderson says the song will likely define the second half of his career, if not all of it.

"I feel like I have had two songwriting careers, one from the late '50s until the early '80s and then a second career that began in the mid-'90s when I discovered this new thing called co-writing," and had numerous contemporary country artists cut his songs.

"I love co-writing, but I'm trying real hard to not use it as a crutch," he says. "I start writing songs by myself all the time and fight the temptation to say, 'But if a co-writer were here with me, would he or she say it that way?' I'm not sure I trust my own instincts as much as I should right now, but I'm working on it."

Anderson, a Grand Ole Opry regular who has notched seven No. 1 hits as an artist, says he has been lucky in having success both as a performer and a writer.

"I've been fortunate in that I've never had to choose between the two," he says. "Right now, though, I would say songwriting is more of an emphasis for me. I'm still performing at the Opry. I still do 50 or so tour dates every year... but the writing is still the major focus of what I do."

Among his recent cuts is "I'll Wait for You," a song he wrote with Harley Allen that appears on Joe Nichols' latest album. In his spare time, Anderson enjoys hosting a regular show on XM Satellite Radio.

"I got my start in radio, and this takes me back to some of those good ole days," he says. "I help to visit with my friends, listen to some classic country music and do a new, 60-minute, commercial-free show every week. I'm a big fan of satellite radio, and feel fortunate to have been in on it from the very beginning."

The artist, nicknamed "Whispering Bill" for his unique singing style, is finalizing plans to record a bluegrass project he jokingly calls "Whispergrass."

He also hopes to take more time for personal travel next year. "I've been nearly everywhere," he says, "but I've seen very little. I want to begin remedying that."

TV TALK: Actor James Denton, who plays Mike Delfino on "Desperate Housewives," has signed a first-look development deal with CMT to create and produce original shows for the network. Denton has also been tapped to host the "Miss America Pageant," airing live on CMT Jan. 21.
Jewel, Bo Bice, Gwen Stefani, Lindsay Lohan and Santana do not seem to have much in common—until you look at their album credits.

Sharing songwriting props with each is Kara Dioguardi, whose résumé resembles a modern-day who’s who of hitmaking. Her presence on the charts has become so widespread during the past two years that Dioguardi has become the go-to music scribe for established chart-toppers and those hoping to reach the summit.

Since the beginning of the decade, she has evolved from having tracks cut by such artists as Celine Dion, Enrique Iglesias and Kylie Minogue to being hired specifically to work on projects with Lohan, Kelly Clarkson, Ashlee Simpson and Hilary Duff.

Dioguardi, who got her start in the music business as Billboard’s assistant to the president, has also produced a number of those singers, as well as the Pussycat Dolls, Cheyenne and Paris Hilton. And the list is growing.

Q: You started as an assistant to Billboard. Talk about your journey.
A: People think I came out of nowhere, but I worked my ass off for seven years, and it felt like I could not get arrested. It took working with great people to get noticed. When I was at Billboard, I always felt like I was pushing the boulder up the hill, but when you meet people along the way that inspire you and they keep you growing and learning, and you continually get better.

Now I’m at a place where people take my calls and I have work, but it’s taken finding people to work with that are as good or better than me. And the most important thing: I have to love what I’m doing; that’s what keeps me going.

Q: What has the last year been like for you?
A: Really, I’m working every day. The songs become your little babies, and you want to see them all the way through the process to production and mastering. It’s a constant thing that never really ends; you can be tweaking until the very end. You never stop working to make it the best it can be.

Q: How do you clear your head between working with a Lindsay Lohan one day and a Jewel the next?
A: My job is to help inspire them in different ways. When I’m working with Jewel, she’s already on her own path and I’m there to help her as opposed to being a primary writer that’s pitching a song. That’s different from working with someone like Lindsay. Sometimes I’m pulling things out of me like an 18-year-old. Sometimes it’s a 34-year-old. It all depends.

Q: So how does it feel to realize that your work has paid off?
A: It feels great, it really does. God, did I work hard— from running on my lunch hour in my Easy Spirit pumps to record demos to now getting on planes and going to Sweden, Miami and L.A. It’s certainly been a whirlwind.

Five years ago, Hidden Beach Recordings answered the question, Who is Jill Scott?
Since then—under a creative mandate that encourages artists to “stay true to their inner soul and emotional center”—the Epic/Sony Music-distributed label has introduced consumers to a diverse array of contemporary R&B. Flagship artist Scott is part of an eclectic roster that includes husband-and-wife duo Kindred the Family Soul, saxophonist Mike Phillips, singer/songwriter Lisa and trombonist Jeff Bradshaw.

Come 2006, Hidden Beach is expanding its reach. With the first-quarter launch of divisions that will sign acts from around the globe, the label will mount its most extensive release schedule to date.

“We want to open the door wider to music from around the world,” Hidden Beach founder and CEO Steve McKeever says of the new offshoot, Hidden Beach International. “This move is very different for us.”

That is indeed apparent after listening to the new division’s inaugural release: the pop/electronic set “Lifebox” by Grammy Award-winning composer Bent Fabric. The Jan. 24 release will be tied to a multimedia marketing campaign that encompasses TV, film, Cingular Wireless and iTunes.

Coming after Bent Fabric will be Tribal Jazz, a nouveau jazz ensemble led by the Doors’ John Densmore. The group’s album is slated for a spring bow.

Still Waters, Hidden Beach’s inspirational division that launched in 2003, is expanding. On the first- and second-quarter docket, respectively, are albums by Omitha, whose music is reminiscent of Roy Ayers, and Sunny Hawkins (a member of the famed gospel family).

Keita Young, formerly on the Still Waters roster, is now a major 2006 focus on Hidden Beach proper. The multi-instrumentalist/singer is an intriguing amalgamation of Prince, D’Angelo, Sly Stone and Sam Cooke. Among the guests on his debut album (nothing came out while he was on Still Waters), “The Rise and Fall of Keite Young,” is former Erykah Badu background singer N’Dambi.

Also in the Hidden Beach wings is singer/songwriter Leigh Jones, who brings a jazzy R&B pop slant to her material. And that is not counting McKeever’s aim to issue a series of adult-targeted instrumental compilations.

Prefacing Hidden Beach’s aggressive 2006 slate is the Dec. 20 release of “Unwrapped, Vol. 4.” In the meantime, Scott and Bradshaw will release new albums next year as the label continues to promote its 2005 projects by Kindred the Family Soul, Phillips and Lisa.

Motown founder Berry Gordy once said you should put truth in every record.” McKeever says, “And that’s our mission. But we’re only at the tip of the iceberg in what we want to do.”

To help chip away at that tip, McKeever says he wants to execute a recapitalization of the company.

“I started Hidden Beach on what some people would spend on a single artist campaign,” he says. “We’ve fought hard to be a true independent, and we’ve come a long way in a short time. Now we want to take advantage of the opportunities we have to enter into other areas of entertainment.”

Beyond that, McKeever would not elaborate.

Among the label’s investors is basketball legend Michael Jordan.

OF NOTE: Industry veteran Hiriam Hicks has signed on to run Radio One Founder and chairperson Cathy Hughes’ label, Music One. The company lists only one artist, harpist Jeff Majors, and its latest release is his “Sacred, Chapter 6,” which is part of a planned 12-CD gospel/inspirational series. The Sony BMG-distributed Music One is not affiliated the Radio One station chain.

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SIBERLY IS YOURS FOR A SONG

Assessing a song's commercial value in the digital age has been a headache for music vendors, but Jane Siberry is letting the buyer decide.

The Canadian singer/songwriter is shifting her entire Sheeba Records catalog to a download-only setup, including artwork. Siberry has initiated a "self-determined pricing" policy whereby fans have four choices in obtaining her music: They can pay their own "self-determined" amount immediately at the time of transaction—or pay later after giving it some more thought. They can also pay the "standard" industry price of 99 cents a song.

But the fourth option—and one that Siberry openly encourages—is the most radical: download freely as a "gift from Jane."

"I received a lot of requests for permission to burn copies of "Calling All Angels" after the New Orleans floods—and also after 9-11 and the tsunami—and I always said yes," says Siberry, whose musical solicitation of heavenly help has become an inspirational anthem for relief workers. "Then I thought I'd just put it on my Web site so they could download it free without wasting the plastic from burning it onto a CD."

"But then I started feeling it was wrong to withhold my music for money—as strange as that might sound—and if I need to find another way to make money, I will. I'm selling my house and living simply nowadays, so I don't really need that much. I just rented a room in Vancouver with just a table for writing my music on a laptop, and that's all I need."

Siberry informed her substantial fan base of her new pricing structure via her e-mail newsletter, and even offers downloading instructions while making "Calling All Angels" sheet music available for a suggested $4.99. (The former Warner/Reprise artist notes that not all of her recordings are available for free in all territories.)

But self-determined pricing "doesn't mean giving it away," she says. "It's an important distinction—it's not giving away my music for free, it's 'dumbing up' to give people the opportunity to pay what they want," she explains. "It's not seeking donations [by way of] a guilt trip on my part—[it's] just treating people the way I like to be treated."

The gift from Siberry, then, is "an educated transaction of energy." I assume they'll really enjoy and spread the music to other people as a service to me," she adds. "If I don't make money, I accept that."

Siberry's pricing policy has been up on janesiberry.com only three weeks, but she has already seen some buyers pay more than the standard price—as well as exploit the free downloads.

Having recently embarked on a North American Shake Your Tootie tour, she is also selling a three-song-limited edition Tootie souvenir CD on the road, according to the same principle. "There's an 'honor table' with a box of CDs and a money jar," says Siberry, who recently received the Canada Council for the Arts Victor Martyn Lynch-Staunton Award for outstanding artistic achievement. "They cost me $2 each to make, but a lot of people are paying $20. They say, 'There's no way to pay you more for your music,' so it opens the door for people who want to balance how much value they get from the songs."


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Global Pulse
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Andersson Plays The Name Game

ABBA Member's Offspring Takes A Rock Turn On 'Ella Rouge'

The younger son of ABBA member Benny Andersson may submerge his identity within six-piece rock act Ella Rouge, but Ludvig Andersson remains proud of his association with the 1970s hitmaker's enduring legacy.

"I just do my best; whether it comes out sounding like ABBA or Led Zeppelin, I don't know and I don't care," the 23-year-old singer/guitarist says. "I'm not afraid to walk in my father's footsteps—if I have 1% of his talent and abilities, I'll be very happy."

Ella Rouge's self-titled debut was released Oct. 26 in Sweden on Andersson's new Moby Dick Music label. He co-owns the label, which is distributed by Bonnier Amigo Music Group, with his manager/business partner, Fabian Bonnier. "Ella Rouge" follows Andersson's 2004 solo pop debut, "SRO" (356 Recordings), which included local radio hit "One Touch."

The self-published Andersson wrote or co-wrote the new set's 13 tunes. He says Moby Dick is keen to license "Ella Rouge" internationally, and he will be in Japan in December in an effort to strike an Asian deal.

-JEFFREY de HART

'DEVIライン' RELEASED: Some 20 years after official German censors restricted its sale, Berlin rock trio Die Ärzte's debut album has finally charted. The band released "Debil"—meaning "feebleminded"—on CBS in 1984. However, the album was removed in 1986 after censors judged its lyrics as potentially harmful to morals and banned its sale to minors. That ban continued until 2004.

The remastered album was rereleased Oct. 21 as "Debil" on Columbia in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and entered Germany's Media Control chart the following week at No. 5. The reissue includes bonus tracks, videos and a 24-page booklet.

The band is published by BMG Publishing Germany, whose Berlin-based managing director Hartwig Masuch explains that the album's lyrics are now viewed as ironic. "Die Ärzte's musical genre is a mixture between punk rock and pop," he says. "Their combination of simple melodies with lyrics mixing humor and irony made them so unique."

Despite an 18 album career, Die Ärzte remains largely unknown outside of the German-speaking territories, and live performances elsewhere are fairly rare. KKT in Hamburg books the band.

-WOLFGANG SPAHR

CABINET COLLECTION: Japanese prime minister Junichiro Koizumi has a clear yes for the music of veteran Italian soundtrack composer Ennio Morricone.

BMG Japan recently issued a Koizumi-compiled collection of Morricone's soundtrack recordings. "My Favorite Ennio Morricone Music Presented by Junichiro Koizumi." BMG Japan Strategic Marketing Group chief producer Takuya Matsuyama says the album has sold 20,000 copies since its Oct. 5 release.

"We were first notified of the prime minister's wish to release such an album in April," Matsuyama says. "Mr. Koizumi has adored the music of Ennio Morricone since a young age, and his desire to spread the word about it tied in with my own—we had to release it."

The album covers Morricone's work from 1964 to 1998, including his "Spaghetti Western" themes and Academy Award-nominated score for "The Mission" (1984).

It is the second time Koizumi has compiled his favorite music. In 2001, BMG Funhouse released an Elvis collection, which BMG says has shipped 200,000 copies.

-STEVE McCLURE

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Slok Prefers Performing Live

We first get a load of Slok—a producer/vocalist duo—in May. The group’s “Lonely Child,” a wonderful electric-ballad, closed DJ Sanoshi Tommie’s mix CD, “ES” (or “electronic soul”). It was Tommie’s first compilation release in three years, and a fitting place to showcase the newest signing to his label, S/C Recordings.

According to A&R director Hector Romero, Slok represents a new frontier for Sow, and if he is reading right, dance music overall. The pair consists of Italian producer Alessandro Russo, best-known for his work in drum ’n’ bass, and French vocalist Eric Pasquerel. They intend to perform live, an unusual move for a noncommercial dance act without an arena-sized sound (see the Crystal Method).

“The whole DJ being the front-person thing is cool, but it’s been done too much already, and it doesn’t work as a face for dance music,” Romero says. “We need positive, good-quality artists to be the faces.”

With the dance scene’s recent penchant for looking back to find its future, Slok makes even more sense. Romero compares the band’s goth-tinged sound to Depeche Mode, New Order and Echo & the Bunnymen: “It’s almost like the ’80s again, and I’m an ’80s child, so I relate. I love it,” he says.

Saw has enlisted Sergio Gonzalez’s Pitch Control, an independent marketing and promotion company based in Los Angeles, to gauge interest in “Lonely Child,” which was released as a single Nov. 7. Romero reports that serviced DJs responded well and showed interest in more music from the act. The label is considering taking it to college radio. And Tommie recently completed his own mix, which will be released soon. Apart from the attractiveness of Slok’s band format, Romero says the release fits into the label’s philosophy in a broader way.

“Saw’s direction, over the last three years, especially, to release more vocal records that are great for [club play] not fluffy, not too hard, just the right balance. Kind of a universal house music sound.”

DIVERSE DIVA: Gloria Gaynor is simultaneously working on a book, a film, a high-profile New Year’s Eve appearance and three separate albums. Her career “is improving,” she says. “I’m doing more of some of the things I really want to do.”

The book, “I Will Survive: Real Life Stories of Real Life Survivors,” is an inspirational play on her old classic “I Will Survive.” It was culled from conversations Gaynor had with people who endured various hardships.

Gaynor also took to the stage to play herself in “Gray Matters,” an upcoming romantic comedy. Next, she will perform on cable provider Comcast’s live New Year’s Eve TV special. “CNBC Presents: Celebrate 06,” Then, she will work on those three albums—one gospel, one jazz and one Christian—all with producer Don Orozco.

Slok

A&R for Centricity, Jamgochian co-wrote the bulk of the album, including the title track—the set’s first single—which she penned with producer David Zaffiro. Currently living in Nashville, she is also starting to get other cuts as a songwriter. A&R and co-writer with Zaffiro, was recorded by Vital Records act Julian Drive for the band’s Nov. 22 debut.

“My passion is to sit behind the piano and write, but I haven’t lately. I need to start up again right away,” says Jamgochian, who has been busy touring with Point of Grace on its Girls of Grace tour.

“I would love to work with young women that maybe have made bad decisions in their past that God has a fresh start for them and just for them to not walk and feel shame, but to walk and feel grace,” Jamgochian says of her musical message. “You can start over today.”

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON: Rarely has there been so many great new Christmas releases available for the holidays. Steven Curtis Chapman and MercyMe have new offerings and are in the midst of a 21-city Christmas tour together. Point of Grace is also on tour this season in support of its “Winter Wonderland” set.

The Oak Ridge Boys deliver their second holiday album for Spring Hill with “Christmas Greatest Hits,” and are on tour through Dec. 18. Natalie Grant has had a great year, and that momentum continues with her acclaimed Christmas collection “Believe.”

Among the other holiday projects you should check out while baking your Christmas cookies are new seasonal sets from Sandi Patty, Bryan Duncan & the Neho Soul Band and Native American chanteuse Jana, whose “American Indian Christmas” features 10 songs in 10 different Native Indian languages.

After several delays, Columbia/Legacy will finally issue the six-CD boxed set “Miles Davis—The Cellar Door Sessions 1970” on Dec. 27. Recorded live at the height of Davis’ full-flame electric funk period, post-“Bitches Brew,” the discs feature an all-star lineup including Keith Jarrett on Rhodes and electric keyboards, guitarist John McLaughlin, saxophonist Gary Bartz, electric bassist Michael Henderson, drummer Jack DeJohnette and percussionist Atoirio Moreira.

“When you think of who was in the band and how they were playing and reacting to Miles’ extremely discreet and very ambigious directions, it’s just amazing,” McLaughlin told Billboard earlier this year. “Keith was playing like a man possessed on two key-boards, and we all had wah-wah pedals.”

Bob Belden, who produced the previously unreleased compilation with Adam Holzman, says, “These guys had the idea of how rock and jazz worked together, and they got more of a focused sound out of their instruments than the rock guys. Miles was capturing Cream and Hendrix and extending it into improvisation in a powerful live setting. After this came fusion, most of which sounds childish in comparison.”

In related news, at Mo Pitkin’s House of Satisfaction in New York, Davis aficionado Greg Masters hosts Miles Monday, a free, three-hour weekly listening session featuring his extensive collection of Davis’ standard and bootleg recordings. “This is a chance for people to hear Miles’ music, especially the electric stuff, that never gets played on the radio,” Masters says.

LOOK CLOSER: It is inevitable that all-lounge recordings pass unnoticed. It took catching erstwhile Christian pop artist Charlie Peacock unveiling his hip Miles Davis-inspired electric jazz project at New York’s Jazz Standard on Nov. 9 to unearth his CD, “Love Press Ex-Curio” (Runway Network, distributed by Emergent/Red). It has high energy, loops and fine keyboard playing by Peacock, who is joined by trumpeter Ralph Alessi, saxophonists Ravi Coltrane and Kirk Whalum, guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel and electric bassist Victor Wooten, among others. In the same electric vein, it is worth tracking down the grooved-and-out European import “Ibrahim Electric Meets Ray Anderson” (Stunt/Sundance).

While guitar virtuoso Bruce Cockburn is best-known as folksy-turned-rocker, his first all-instrumental disc, “Speechless” (Rounder), is jazzed up with tunes from his albums dating back three-plus decades. Also highly recommended is Grammy Award-nominated drummer/bandleader Anthony Brown’s jazz orchestral work, “Rhapsodies” (Water Baby Records, available through anthonybrown.org). The project brilliantly links Asian-rooted music with jazz arrangements and improvisation.
KORN
See You on the Other Side
Producers: Atticus Ross, the Matrix, Jonathan Davis
Virgin
Release Date: Dec. 6
Korn is nothing if not a survivor. Having helped launch the much-maligned nu-metal genre in 1994, Korn now finds itself with a new lineup, a new label and, on its seventh album, hints of a new sound. By choosing to work with songwriting outfit the Matrix and Nine Inch Nails collaborator Atticus Ross, the band could alienate core fans. But for the most part, the producers simply add audio garnishing to Korn’s signature sound via loops and Pro Tools trickery. There is more of an electronic influence than the band has shown before though, likely because of Ross. In fact, “Love Song” has more in common with NIN than Korn. While the middle of the set gets bogged down in midtempo songs, “Politics,” “Coming Undone” and “Hypocrates” are worthy singles, while “For No One” and “Liar” will keep the old-school Korn fans happy.—BT

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Our New Orleans 2005: A Benefit Album
Producers: various
Nonesuch
Release Date: Dec. 6
When the levee broke, those passionate about the sounds of New Orleans worried about the safety of its musicians as if they were family. Fortunately, most survived but continue to live in forced exile, giving this benefit for Habitat for Humanity a bittersweet veneer. The can-do optimism of Allen Toussaint’s “Yes We Can” sets a hopeful tone, while there is new resonance to such funky, now poignant songs as Dirty Dozen Brass Band’s “My Feet Can’t Fail No More.” Creative twists on standards abound. “Check local cult hero Eddie Bo solo on “When the Saints Go Marchin’. ” Not to be missed are reflections on an eerily flood-related Irma Thomas singing Bessie Smith’s 1927 tune “Back Water Blues” and Randy Newman doing his own “Louisiana 1927.” Both illuminate the unacceptable truth that when natural disaster is magnified by political neglect, not enough has changed in nearly 80 years.—WR

RICARDO ARJONA
Adentro
Producers: various
Sony Latin
Release Date: Dec. 6
Latin music pundits often talk about the resurrec tion of the singer/songwriter and label’s growing interest in signing such artists. Ricardo Arjona has consistently delivered albums of hits built on that proposition. Intimate songs arranged with distinct commercial appeal “Adentro” is no exception, save that lyrically it is probably Arjona’s personal album. The arrangements have more rock elements and are more cohesive than past efforts. Mixed with violins, piano and percussion with tasteful results. Arjona tackles issues like PMs in the sweetly reproachable “De Vez En Mas,” then gets downright sultry on “Pinguinos En La Cama” and “Para Que Me Quieras Como Quieras.” The biggest surprise is “Mojado,” a duet with regional Mexican band intocable. It is hard to be touching, relevant and musically compelling all at once, but Arjona pulls it off.—LC

RAY J. ONE WISH
(4:00)
Producer: Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins
Writers: Ray J., R. Jerkins, F. Jerkins III
Publishers: various
Sanctuary/Knockout
Date: Dec. 6
If Ray J had one wish, would it be to make the top 10 and establish himself as a formidable protégé to Usher? Might he be no longer be referred to as “Brendy’s little bro”? How about to write his own hits, making a persuasive name for himself on all fronts? That is three wishes, all of which have been granted to the 24-year-old talent. “One Wish,” written by Ray J. and produced by smash-makers Rodney “Darkchild” Jerkins and Fred Jerkins III, promises true love to his “Boo”—right up to making her his wife. Beats, romance, cachet and physical presence add up. Yep, all in line. (P.S. The album version offers quite a different thematic take than the radio mix: worth a listen.)—CT

ROB THOMAS
Ever the Same (4:16)
Producer: Matt Serletic
Publishers & Thomas Publishers: U Rule Music/etc (ASCAP)
Atlantic (album cut)
The third single from Rob Thomas’ platinum solo album “Something to Be” is as steadfast a pledge of devotion as anyone could ever hope for. The singer/song writer practically beggs his object of affection to lean heavy and fall hard, just so he can hold her up and prove his love: “You’re no burden I assure/You tame me over/with a warm bath/it won’t forget.” Okay, so perhaps there is a little co-dependence going on, but balls is tender, pretty and destined to connect with this era’s rhythm and blues fans. At age 40, now, Thomas is pretty much in a can-do-no-wrong phase. “Ever the Same” is another winner.—CT

LIL WAYNE
The Carter II
Producers: various
Young Money/Cash Money/Universal
Release Date: Dec. 6
Lyrically, Lil Wayne has always stood out from his hitting Cash Money clique. And with his fifth offering, the 23-year-old New Orleans rapper takes another major step toward the head of the rap class. While Wayne’s rhymes are noticeably sharper this time around, they are sometimes stiffed built on nearly half the magnetic, organ-infused “Hustler Muzik” is by far one of his most lyrical efforts, and the chopped- and-screwed hook of “Money on My Mind” complements his signature trap-gangster flow. The Isley Brothers-sampled “Receipt” is another track where quality production makes up for lyricism. But when Wayne reverts to his vain Cash Money ways (“I’m a Doby” and lead single “Fireman”), the album loses steam. Still, his witty metaphors and assuredness (“I don’t care who’s at the top of the stairs, I’m stepping up”) are as poised as ever.—CH

PITBULL
Money Is Still A Major Issue
Producers: various
TFT
Release Date: Nov. 15
This is a regressed idea of barking, chorus-hoiling and general crankage on the remix edition of Miami rapper Pitbull’s gold-certified “Money Is A Major Issue.” As one might expect, “Money Is Still A Major Issue” is less a cohesive unit than a big beat mix tape—the headliner gets “featuring” courtesies on all these tracks. But it does sport the usual array of crunk all-stars: Lil Jon, Ying Yang Twins, et al., as well as turns from R&B group Pretty Ricky on the banging “Everybody Get Up” and diaper-wearing Elephant Man on the appropriately jittery “Shake Remix.” A bonus DVD includes a smattering of live clips and interviews, but like most of the major crunk purveyors these days, Pitbull’s “issue” is inter- ested in little more than moving bodies with a hypnotic beat.—JW

RUSH
Rush-R3O
Producers: various
Zob/Runner
Release Date: Nov. 22
This 30th-anniversary compilation is a visual counterpart to the Canadian trio’s 1990 retrospective, “Chronicles,” which packed favorite cuts from its first 15 years onto a double-CD. This four-disc collection of the Kat’s two DVDs boasts footage from the band’s earliest performances (love those 1970s shows); five lengthy interviews (including a touching tribute created for Rush’s Juno Hall of Fame induction) and a booklet of vintage photos. An animated sequence that organizes the concert DVD (filmed last year in Frankfurt, Germany) combines elements from Hugh Syme’s icon Rush album covers and stars comedian Jerry Stiller. The group took a streamlined approach to the concert, toning down the audio bells and whistles but retaining its brilliant light show. Digging deep into rarities, the set lists turns up nuggets like “Between the Wheels,” “Force Ten” and a cover of “The Seeker.” A nicely packaged memento.—CLT

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Higher Ground: Hurricane Relief Benefit Concert
Producer: Wynstan Marsalis
Blue Note
Release Date: Nov. 22
The most cohesive- sounding benefit of the past few days is a new benefit CD to date, “Higher Ground: Hurricane Relief Benefit Concert.” A 70-piece benefit benefit at New York’s Jazz at Lincoln Center, balances reverence, melancholia and showmanship. The concert was assembled by Big Easy native Wynstan Marsalis, whose horn appears throughout, and it is the definition of a classy group effort captured during a time of still-fresh uncertainty. Tenence Blanchard’s trumpet cries during a gorgeous “Over There,” Norah Jones glides through Randy Newman’s “I Think It’s Going to Rain Today,” Diane Reeves is perfect mournfulness on “The House I Live In” and Neville brothers Art and Aaron “Go to the Mardi Gras” with aplomb. Though there is not a misstep in the bunch, it is hard to listen with anything less than a weary heart.—JY

DAVID MURRAY 4TE & STRINGS
Albhz Again
Producers: David Murray, Valerie Malot
Jazz Time
Release Date: Dec. 6
In one of the most unusual, creative jazz releases of 2005, vastly underplayed saxophonist David Murray delivers this compelling quartet and 10-piece string section set. Original jazz-out. Recorded in 2002 but just now hitting stores, the disc showcases Murray experimenting with the ebb and flow of string swells, such as on the joyfully mysterious “Dark Secrets,” where the strings stream with the strings, plays counterpoint to them and then soars over their liquid proceedings. The highlight is the 26-minute “Pushkin Suite #1,” a seven-movement epic that rivets and calms. Murray reveals his multifaceted saxophone personality here, opening with harsh honks, then continuing with buoyant slap-tone blasts, playful swings, wistful romancing and urgent post-bop flourishes. While the prolific Paris-based Murray has recorded widely, his August delivery into orchestral jazz on “Waltz Again” marks his highest recent triumph.—DO

KEO NOZARI
Late Nite VIP
Producers: Keo Nozari, Ersin Berberoglu
KeSide
Release Date: Oct. 18
Keo Nozari is a Minne-apolis based DJ who calls New York home. On his debut album, “Late Nite VIP” Nozari continued on ->50
Chuck
rhythms
through the
keep
young
from
REVI
Rizzo's
Sure,
has
For
section
producer,
CARMEN RIZZO
Joss
Stuart
sound
Terry
and
Alanis
Morissette.
©Carmen
Rizzo
a
concocted
his
Lab:
the
talented
electronic
artist
including
the
talented
electronic
solo
debut,
Rizzo
Gambling
10,
(2005)
and
a
leonard
of
Rhino
Home
Entertainment
Terry
Lee
Oakenfold,
while
there
are
a
few
mistakes
(on
the
track,
"Firefly"),
"Various
States
of
Undress"),
this
showcase
a
newcomer
to
keep
an
eye
on.—MP

CARMEN RIZZO
The
Lost
Art
of
the
Id
Melody
Producer:
Carmen
Rizzo
The/Lab/Fuel2000/
Universal
Music
&
Video
Distribution
Release
Date:
Sept
27
Carmen
Rizzo
is
a
talented
electronic
who
wears
many
caps
(resume,
engineer,
producer,
programmer).
Through
the
years,
he
has
worked
with
a
cross-
section
of
acts,
including
Coldplay,
Paul
Oakenfold,
BT
and
Alain's
Mississette.
For
his
solo
debut,
Rizzo
has
concocted
beats
and
rhythms
that
are
cinematic,
ambient
and
always
lush.
Joining
him
on
this
curiously
nourishing
ride
are
a
handful
of
guest
artists,
including
Esthero
("Too
Rude"),
Jem
("Easy
Way
Out")
Grant
Lee
Finch
("As
the
Day
Breaks")
and
the
Digable
Planets'
Ladybug
Mecca
("Indigo")
Sure
this
trip
arrives
with
a
distinct
personality.
But
it's
Rizzo's
deep
sensibilities
that
ring
loud
and
clearly
out.

JUDAS PRIEST
Rising
in
Eternity
Producers:
Tom
Allom,
Haroon
Visual
Division,
Rhino
Home
Entertainment
Release
Date:
Nov
15
Of
late,
Judas
Priest
has
been
touring
as
it
did
in
its
halcyon
days,
declaring
more
than
three
decades
in
music
and
the
creation
of
its
sensual
lineup.
"Rising
in
the
East"
documents
a
visit
to
the
Budokan
in
Tokyo,
and
the
23-song
set
list
muses
upon
the
DVD's
lack
of
extras.
The
band
is
solid
when
it
performs
newer
songs
like
"Revolution"
and
"Judas
Rising."
But
older
favorites
like
"Turbo
Lover"
and
"The
Ripper"
are
Priest
comes
alive,
turning
them
into
great
displays
of
performance
and
style.
It
is
too
bad
that
the
Clive
footage
does
not
adequately
capture
the
impact
of
the
band's
light
show.

ANGIE STONE
I
Wasn't
Kidding
(4:31)
Producer:
Andrea
Martin,
Vagga
Nobles,
Wendy
Green,
A.
Austin,
C.
Womack,
L.
Womack
Publishers:
various
J
Records
(CD
promo)
Angie
Stone
conjugates
the
1980s
with
the
booty-bumping
"I
Wasn't
Kidding,"
which
reveals
the
man
who
refused
to
follow
the
rules.
A
sampling
of
Womack's
1983
song
"Don't
Tell
Me
Ooof,
You,"
is
used
to
effect,
along
with
the
songwriting
and
production
perspective
of
Kaptain
Cook
and
his
classic
quartet,
oficially
released
here
for
the
first
time.
The
first
showing
of
their
collaboration
showed
promise.

RICKY MARTIN
FEATURING DADDY
JANET
Drop
It
On
Me
(3:54)
Producer:
Will.i.am,
Luna
Tunes
Writer:
not
listed
Publisher:
not
listed
"Drop
It
On
Me"
is
Rick
Martin's
much-
anticipated
return
with
"I
Don't
Care"in
the
record
industry.
Pixie
Lott
was
the
second
"Drop
It
On
Me"is
another
un-
remarkable
pop-disguised
as-
hip-hop
number
that
seems
particularly
low-
brow
for
a
talent
in
Martin's
class.
In
its
favor,
the
song
does
a
catchy
vibe
and
should
work
well
in
the
clubs.
On
the
downside,
leads
again
the
record
world.
Second
single
"Drop
It
On
Me"is
another
un-
remarkable
pop-disguised
as-
hip-hop
number
that
But:
the
band's
standing
"My
Favorite
Things,"
touched
to
23
minutes
and
infused
with
newborn
passion.—DO

Celine Dion
Dance
With
My
Father
(4:40)
Producer:
David
Foster
Writers:
E.
Vandross,
R.
Marx
Publishers:
various
J
Records
(CD
promo)
Celebrating
a
definition
of
classic
voice
in
Dion,
with
Luther
Vandross
"Dance
With
My
Father"at
the
Grammy
Awards
in
February
that
the
song
would
become
the
cornerstone
of
the
album
"So
Amazing:
An
All-Star
Tribute
to
Luther
Vandross."
Even
though
Vandross'
original
was
a
staple
at
AC
radio
for
more
than
a
year,
Dion's
drew
local
a
fan
base.

NEW YORK TIMES INTERVIEW
Q: What
was
your
reaction
when
you
heard
the
first
single?
A: I
was
very
impressed.

Q: What
did
you
think
of
the
album?
A: I
thought
it
was
amazing.

Q: How
did
you
prepare
for
this
project?
A: I
took
my
time
and
really
listened
to
the
music.

Q: What
are
some
of
your
favorite
tracks?
A: "Close
to
You,"
"Love
You,"
and
"You
Are
in
My
Heart."
System Rules Again; Broons’ Numbers Are Shrouted

In a Thanksgiving week when music stores pulled the wrong end of it, wideskinned, System of a Down still manages a feat worth celebrating.

With first-week sales of 320,000 copies, “Hypnotize” bows at No. 1. The album is a companion to the chart- topping “Mezmerize,” which rang the bell 28 weeks ago (Billboard, June 4).

“What about the Beatles?” another peer asked.

“Anthology 2” and “Anthology 3,” which both entered at No. 1 in 1996, were not studio albums. And, while the Fab Four had multiple No. 1s in each of the years 1964, 1965 and 1966, albums rarely deburred in the top slot before Billboard flipped to Nielsen SoundScan data in 1991.

You could also add that this is the first time in the history of The Billboard 200 that two different acts had a pair of chart-topping starts in the same year, although System’s trajectory is possible of that of Cheney.

Three weeks ago, Cheney’s “The Road and the Radio” had a much heartier opener, 469,000 copies, than the 311,000 that his non-country diversion “As You Are: Songs From an Old Blue Chair” included in the Feb. 12 issue.

By contrast, System’s earlier “Mezmerize” sold 41% more in its opener, 453,000, than the new one does in its first week.

THE THUNDER ROLLS: A man who has already notched eight No. 1 albums on the big chart might have rallied another act who has Brooks’ “Limited Series” been widely available at retail, rather than exclusive to Wal-Mart.

As tipped here last week, the racks that service the department store chain—Anderson Merchandisers and Handleman—opted to withhold reporting sales of this proprietary title to Nielsen SoundScan. Because it was an exclusive offering, the title did not qualify for The Billboard 200 or Top Country Albums.

Without tracking at SoundScan, there are conflicting messages about how much Brooks’ boxed set sold. A Wal-Mart press release states that it “achieved gold status, more than half a million copies sold, the first day it was available for purchase,” but since the Recording Industry Assn. of America’s certification criteria multiply net shipments by the number of pieces in a boxed set, that calculation lacks clarity. Industry sources tell Billboard it sold in the neighborhood of 300,000-400,000 in its three-day window (see story, page 5).

The three previously released albums included in this new box averaged first-week sales of 815,932. Brooks’ first boxed set, similarly titled “The Limited Series,” opened with 372,000 copies in 1998 and has sold 1.9 million, according to SoundScan.

Factor in Brooks’ Nov. 10 visit to “The Tonight Show With Jay Leno,” multiple visits to “Good Morning America,” the impact of radio hit “Good Ride Cowboy” (bullering 5-4 on Hot Country Singles), a bargain price point ($25 for five CDs and one DVD) and pent-up demand from the four-year gap since his last album, and it is easy to imagine that the new “Limited Series” could have outsold System’s “Hypnotize.” Yet, without the verification of SoundScan data, this ends up akin to the tree that falls in the forest when no one is there to hear it.

FUN WITH NUMBERS: This is the 11th week in a row that an album has debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200, the longest takeover streak in the chart’s history. Also at a historic high are the 31 albums that have bowed at No. 1 in this calendar year.

Both records were predicted here (with the assistance of one sharp analyst from one of the major distributors) in the Nov. 19 issue, and they have a chance to be extended next week. Since Shakira’s “Oral Fixation Vol. 2” has a shot to rally 150,000 copies, which might be enough to rule the roost.

A smaller but still notable feat resides on billboard biz, as Kidz Bop Kids become the first act in the history of Top Kid Audio to lock in Nos. 1, 2 and 3 at once.

---

**System of a Down:**

The first band to see a pair of studio albums plate No. 1 bows within the same calendar year.

“What about Kenny Chesney?” one colleague asked, noting that the country star also saw two albums start atop the big chart this year.

“Kenny’s not a band,” I replied.

---

**Market Watch**

**WEEKLY UNIT SALES**

**ALBUMS**

| This Week | 17,029,000 | 71,000 | 7,830,000 |
| Last Week | 13,108,000 | 64,000 | 7,192,000 |
| Change | 42.8% | 10.9% | 8.6% |
| This Week’s Total | 19,504,000 | 90,000 | 3,647,000 |
| Change | -12.7% | -28.3% | 114.7% |

**WEEKLY ALBUM SALES**

35 million units

**YEAR-TO-DATE**

| WEEKLY NATIONAL MUSIC SALES REPORT |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| OVERALL UNIT SALES | 565,280,000 | 599,317,000 | -9.9% |
| Store Singles | 6,657,000 | 4,630,000 | -32.5% |
| Digital Tracks | 119,504,000 | 300,000 | 151.7% |
| Total | 691,841,000 | 814,003,000 | 17.8% |

**ADJUSTED SALES**

| Albums | 550,578,000 | 599,317,000 | -7.5% |
| Albums w/TEA | 562,529,000 | 539,466,000 | 4.1% |

**Digital Tracks Sales**

| ’04 | 119.5 million |
| ’05 | 300.8 million |

**SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT**

| CD | 551,142,000 | 494,841,000 | -10.7% |
| Cassette | 8,214,000 | 2,333,000 | -71.6% |
| Digital | 4,485,000 | 13,667,000 | 204.7% |
| Other | 1,428,000 | 986,000 | -31.0% |

**CHART BEAT**

**WALKING THE LINE**

"Walk the Line" as interest generated by the new "The Legend of Johnny Cash" anthology, the Man In Black is represented by five different sets in the top 15 of Top Country Catalog Albums.

**WALKING THE LINE**

A weekly round-up of notable chart achievements.

---

**CHARTS**

**Over the Counter**

GEOFF MAYFIELD gmayfield@billboard.com

---

**Read Fred Bronson every week at billboard.com/fred**

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**Nielsen SoundScan**

For week ending Nov. 27, 2005. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail stores and rack sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.

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**YEAR-TO-DATE ALBUM SALES BY STORE TYPE**

| 2004 | 2005 | CHANGE |
| 300 million units |

---

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Producer</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>GOOD RUN IT</strong></td>
<td>cards from ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>MAKE ME THINK</strong></td>
<td>knight west films</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>DON'T KNOW HOW TO LOVE</strong></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>PROMISE</strong></td>
<td>sharon jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>SAFE AND SOUND</strong></td>
<td>island records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>KISS ME</strong></td>
<td>bob Dylan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>WE ARE IN LOVE</strong></td>
<td>bmg records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>THE TIME</strong></td>
<td>a&amp;m records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>JOHN DOE</strong></td>
<td>a&amp;m records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>LET IT GO</strong></td>
<td>ac/dc</td>
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### ADULT TOP 40

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<th>Artist/Producer</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>SHE'S GONNA BE ROLLING IN THE RAIN</strong></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>WHERE THE ROAD MEETS THE SKY</strong></td>
<td>capitol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>JOHN MEANS JOHNNY</strong></td>
<td>capitol records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT</strong></td>
<td>capitol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>WE'RE THE FAMILY</strong></td>
<td>capitol</td>
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### ADULT CONTEMPORARY

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<td>1</td>
<td><strong>SHE'S GONNA BE ROLLING IN THE RAIN</strong></td>
<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>capitol</td>
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### MODERN ROCK

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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>island records</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td><strong>WE ARE IN LOVE</strong></td>
<td>bmg records</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td><strong>THE TIME</strong></td>
<td>a&amp;m records</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td><strong>JOHN DOE</strong></td>
<td>a&amp;m records</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>LET IT GO</strong></td>
<td>ac/dc</td>
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Data for week of December 10, 2005 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

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

| # | Title | Artist | Label | Radio Airplay
|---|---|---|---|---
| 1.0 | "Run It!" | Gnarls Barkley | L.A. Reid/Interscope | 27,136
| 2.0 | "因为它不快乐 Go for You" | Wang Fei-Fei | Chao Liang/ZMF | 13,784
| 3.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 10,290
| 4.0 | "Have You Met Miss Jones?" | Tyga ft. Wiz Khalifa | Interscope | 9,090
| 5.0 | "Dance, Dance" | Flo Rida ft. T-Pain & Rick Ross | Cash Money/Atlantic | 8,309
| 6.0 | "Dance" | Dance Dance | Dance Dance | 8,263
| 7.0 | "Dirty Little Secret" | The Black Eyed Peas | Interscope | 8,049
| 8.0 | "I'm Sprung" | Ke$ha | Columbia | 7,762
| 9.0 | "The Friday Night Funkin'" | The Friday Night Funkin' Band | Epic | 7,506
| 10.0 | "Don't Forget About Us" | Good Charlotte | Columbia | 7,408
| 11.0 | "Fly Away" | Fantasia | Epic/RTJ | 7,327
| 12.0 | "Fly Away" | Fantasia | Epic| 7,327
| 13.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 7,023
| 14.0 | "Together" | hardJet | hardJet/Interscope | 6,961
| 15.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,961
| 16.0 | "Who You'd Fly" | Gfunk | Gfunk | 6,843
| 17.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,773
| 18.0 | "Don't Forget About Us" | Good Charlotte | Columbia | 6,633
| 19.0 | "I'm Sprung" | Ke$ha | Columbia | 6,587
| 20.0 | "The Friday Night Funkin'" | The Friday Night Funkin' Band | Epic | 6,440
| 21.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,440
| 22.0 | "Fly Away" | Fantasia | Epic/RTJ | 6,372
| 23.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,372
| 24.0 | "Dirty Little Secret" | The Black Eyed Peas | Interscope | 6,269
| 25.0 | "We Be Burnin'" | Snoop Dogg ft. Pharrell Williams | Def Jam/Interscope | 6,153
| 26.0 | "Who You'd Fly" | Gfunk | Gfunk | 6,090
| 27.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,090
| 28.0 | "Fly Away" | Fantasia | Epic/RTJ | 5,949
| 29.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 5,949
| 30.0 | "Dirty Little Secret" | The Black Eyed Peas | Interscope | 5,836

### POP 100 Singles

| # | Title | Artist | Label | Radio Airplay
|---|---|---|---|---
| 1.0 | "Every Little Thing That Goes Wrong" | Maroon 5 ft. Kelly Clarkson | Interscope | 27,136
| 2.0 | "Every Little Thing That Goes Wrong" | Maroon 5 ft. Kelly Clarkson | Interscope | 27,136
| 3.0 | "Don't Forget About Us" | Good Charlotte | Columbia | 10,290
| 4.0 | "Don't Forget About Us" | Good Charlotte | Columbia | 10,290
| 5.0 | "I'm Sprung" | Ke$ha | Columbia | 7,762
| 6.0 | "The Friday Night Funkin'" | The Friday Night Funkin' Band | Epic | 7,506
| 7.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 7,023
| 8.0 | "Who You'd Fly" | Gfunk | Gfunk | 6,961
| 9.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,961
| 10.0 | "Fly Away" | Fantasia | Epic/RTJ | 6,843
| 11.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,773
| 12.0 | "Dirty Little Secret" | The Black Eyed Peas | Interscope | 6,633
| 13.0 | "We Be Burnin'" | Snoop Dogg ft. Pharrell Williams | Def Jam/Interscope | 6,587
| 14.0 | "Who You'd Fly" | Gfunk | Gfunk | 6,440
| 15.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,372
| 16.0 | "Fly Away" | Fantasia | Epic/RTJ | 6,269
| 17.0 | "I'm Gonna Be Me & I'm Gonna Be You" | Jaden Smith | Sony Music | 6,153
| 18.0 | "Dirty Little Secret" | The Black Eyed Peas | Interscope | 6,090

**Note:** The above chart represents the top 50 songs in the Billboard Hot 100 chart for the week of December 10, 2005. Source: Billboard magazine.
## Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
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<th>PRICE</th>
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<td>Ginuwine</td>
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## Top Reggae Albums

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<td>Damian &quot;Jr. Gong&quot; Marley</td>
<td>Welcome To Jamrock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Marley and The Wailers</td>
<td>Live At Stubb's Gold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Marley and The Wailers</td>
<td>Live At Stubb's Soundtrack</td>
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<td>T.O.K.</td>
<td>Unknown Language</td>
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<td>Sinead O'Connor</td>
<td>Throw Down Your Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willie Nelson</td>
<td>Countryman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Marley</td>
<td>The Best Of Bob Marley</td>
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**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

rgeorge@billboard.com

**THANKSGIVING WEEK HEATS UP MARLEY**

Bob Marley & The Wailers rocket 83-56 with "Africa Unite: The Singles Collection," taking the slickset badge as sales more than double (+p 108%).

This latest hits package from the reggae legend—which is No. 3 on Top Reggae Albums—add three new remixes, including the title track redone by Black Eyed Peas frontman Will.I.Am. 

Era Clapton and Marley's son Damian are also featured, the former on "Slogans," recently unreleased 1979 track. Damiin's "Welcome To Jamrock" is mashed up with his father's classic "Get Up, Stand Up." 

Speaking of the younger Marley, he recently wrapped a monthlong run as the opening act on U2's North American tour, and is currently headlining his own string of dates until early December.

—Raphael George

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run It</td>
<td>Ray J</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Wish</td>
<td>Mariah Carey &amp; collaborators (Island/IDJMG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Tomite</td>
<td>Killa Kall &amp; Jazzy (URG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unbreakable</td>
<td>Wyclef Jean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soul Survivor</td>
<td>Mary J. Blige</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t Forget About Us</td>
<td>Diddy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Here We Go</td>
<td>Ludacris</td>
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<td>I’m Sprung</td>
<td>P. Diddy &amp; his friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>There It Go! (The Whistle Song)</td>
<td>DMX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay Fly</td>
<td>R. Kelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go So Unrewarded</td>
<td>The Game</td>
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<tr>
<td>Must Be Nice</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talk That Talk</td>
<td>J겠다 &amp; Diddy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heard Em Say</td>
<td>Big Ant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tempo West Flat</td>
<td>Blackstreet &amp; R. Kelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gold Digger</td>
<td>Micah &amp; Clifton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td>Nelly</td>
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<td>Nasty Girl</td>
<td>Mary J. Blige</td>
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<tr>
<td>In My Mind</td>
<td>Diddy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can I Have It Like That</td>
<td>Ginuwine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trouble</td>
<td>Jadakiss</td>
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<td>Fireman</td>
<td>Sisqo</td>
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**RHYTHMIC HUMANITY PLAYLIST**

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<tr>
<td>Soul Survivor</td>
<td>Mary J. Blige</td>
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<td>One Wish</td>
<td>Mariah Carey &amp; collaborators (Island/IDJMG)</td>
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<td>I’m Sprung</td>
<td>P. Diddy &amp; his friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>There It Go! (The Whistle Song)</td>
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<td>Jadakiss</td>
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**ADULT R&B AIRPLAY**

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<tr>
<td>I Feel You</td>
<td>Mary J. Blige</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In My Mind</td>
<td>50 Cent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can I Think About Her</td>
<td>Sisqo</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Can’t Stop Loving You</td>
<td>50 Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grown &amp; Sexy</td>
<td>Sisqo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We Belong Together</td>
<td>Mariah Carey &amp; collaborators (Island/IDJMG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>That’s The Way Love Works</td>
<td>Mary J. Blige</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whodda</td>
<td>V. V.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free Yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crazy Love</td>
<td>Sisqo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Woman Dreams</td>
<td>Sisqo</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Think They Like</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone Watching You</td>
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<td>Yes I’m Ready</td>
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**HIT PREDICTOR**

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**HOT LATIN SONGS**

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<td>&quot;Rakata&quot;</td>
<td>Wash &amp; Yandel</td>
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<td>&quot;Ven Bailalo&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;No Te Preocupes Por Mi&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Llama Pa' Verde&quot;</td>
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<td>Zion &amp; Lennox feat. Daddy Yankee</td>
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<td>&quot;A Chillar A Otra Parte&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Se Te Olvido&quot;</td>
<td>Beto Y Sus Canaros</td>
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**TOP LATIN ALBUMS**

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<td>Fijaciones Oral Vol. 1</td>
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<td>Luis Miguel</td>
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<td>Ana Gabriel</td>
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<td>La Autoridad De La Sierra</td>
<td>Flashback</td>
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<td>Andy Andy</td>
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For complete chart data, visit [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz).
**Latin Airplay**

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<td>Shakira</td>
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<td>Ruben Blades</td>
<td>El pedacito</td>
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<td>Thalía</td>
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<td>Rompe</td>
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<td>Olvido</td>
<td>No puedo olvidarte</td>
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<td>Los Tigres</td>
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<td>Luis Miguel</td>
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<td>Como un sol</td>
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**Latin Albums**

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<td>El disco en blanco</td>
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<td>Carlos Vives</td>
<td>La cumbia</td>
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<td>J Balvin</td>
<td>Mi mujer</td>
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<td>Tito</td>
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**Gorillaz**

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<td>Jana Dobney</td>
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### Hits of the World

#### Germany

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<td>Keep Me Wanting You</td>
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<td>Virgin</td>
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**Viewing Options**

- **DVD SALES**
- **TOP DVD SALES**
- **TOP VIDEO SALES**
- **TOP VIDEO GAME RENTALS**
- **TOP VIDEO GAME RENTALS**
- **TOP DVD SALES**

**Chart Legend**

- **New**
- **Returning**
- **New**

**Chart Dates**

- December 10, 2005

**Breaking & Entering**

- "My Heart of Music" by country singer Ray Scott, debuts at No. 4 on Top Heatseekers and at No. 1 on Top Country Tracks, scoring the title track bullets at No. 44 on Hot Country Songs. Scott, a developing artist making their inaugural Billboard chart run this week, is also entering on billboard.com.

**Heatseekers Chart**

- For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

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Renee Chandler 818.261.1165

**MAIN CHANNEL VIEWS**

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Jim & Mary Kay Dorothy 805.495.2000

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The 2005 Billboard Music Awards' Artist Achievement Award honors. Kanye West signs a Pacino 2006 Vespa Lx150, which has already been signed by the likes of Audioslave and Goo Goo Dolls, in celebration of Sirius Satellite Radio in New York. Sirius will donate the celebrity-autographed Vespa to LifeBeat's 19-day Big 2 Week AIDS auction benefit, which kicks off Dec. 1 (World AIDS Day). For more information, visit bid2beat.com.

Lifebeat's 10-day Bide-aids auction kicked off Beat AIDS auction on March 22 with a benefit performance by the band Five for Fighting. The proceeds will benefit the HIV/AIDS organization LIFEbeat, which is dedicated to enriching the Miami music community through the recording of an Academy Award-winning album, "The New York City Championship," at the Academy Awards Convention Center. The album features songs by the band's artists, including M. Ward, Matt Morris, and Morgan Freeman, and is available on the label's website, www.americanradiohistory.com.

Bruce Springsteen took his solo tour to the Hard Rock Live in Hollywood, Fla., on Nov. 19. He performed songs from his latest album, "Working on a Day," executive producer Bill Amsel, Right, received the $10,000 Bruce Springsteen Signature tour van as part of Hard Rock's promotion. Among the items auctioned off were: a pair of genuine Bruce Springsteen signature tour van tickets, a signed Bruce Springsteen songbook, and a signed Bruce Springsteen guitar. Such artists as Berenice Bejo, performed in the "Katy Perry: Part of Me" concert Nov. 30 at the Theatre at Amstel Pond in Amstel Pond, Calif. The concert was held to raise funds for the Special Olympics. The concert benefited the Special Olympics efforts in Latin communities in the United States, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Latin America. The lineup featured a variety of Latin artists, including Pitbull, Carlos Vives, and Marc Anthony.

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LATINA IDOL
Pop diva Thalía will record the title song of a new Mexican TV reality show, "Cantando Por Un Sueño." The show, which debuts in January on Televsia, features new artists competing for a record deal. Thalía will be one of the "godmothers" of the show. The title track was penned by Estelano and will be included in a rereleased version of Thalía's current album, "El Sexto Sentido." The revamped EMI/Televsia collection, due next year, will be called "El Sexto Sentido Reloaded."

GEFFEN TAKES A HOLIDAY
Track has learned that Shawn "Tubb" Holiday has segued to Geffen as senior VP of urban A&R. Holiday spent the last year as VP/GM of Hitco Music Publishing's new Los Angeles office. Hitco, a joint venture between Island Def Jam chairman Antonio "L.A." Reid and Windswept Holdings, is headed by CEO Evan Medow. Prior to joining Hitco, Holiday logged two years as a creative manager with EMI Music Publishing.

IF THE SHOE FITS
You have heard that Darryl "D.M.C." McDaniels—formerly of Run-D.M.C.—has sworn off his Adidas in favor of Le Coq Sportif. Indeed, after a decades-long affiliation, the veteran rapper has parted ways with the footwear maker. But details of his partnership with international fashion brand Le Coq Sportif have yet to be finalized. Track is confident, though, that D.M.C.'s solo debut album, due in the first quarter of 2006, will figure into the marketing mix.

HILBURN WALKS AWAY
Robert Hilburn is stepping down from his longtime post as critic and senior music editor at the Los Angeles Times, although he says he will still contribute occasional high-profile stories to the newspaper. "I don't want people to say 'goodbye,'" Hilburn tells Track. "I start feeling sad like something's past." Hilburn wants to carve out time to write books, his first priority being a "social history of rock 'n' roll." He has been with the Times since 1970, when he became its first full-time pop critic, and he still vividly remembers his first assignment: a review of Linda Ronstadt at the Troubadour with opening act Kris Kristofferson.

EXIT RAMP
Rumors are running rampant that Columbia Records publicist Angelica Cob is heading for the door. Track would not be surprised if the talented Cob ends up working for a "44-year-old virgin" in the very near future.

SUPPORT OUR SINGERS
Jerry Sharell, who has greatly increased the profile of the Society of Singers since assuming the president/CEO role a few years ago, has re-upped with the organization for three more years. SOS, which provides emergency financial funds for professional singers, has also appointed three new board members: Warner Bros. Studios president of worldwide music Gary LeMel, Walt Disney Music president Chris Montan and Warner/Chappell Music VP of creative Bob Feed, who is also president of Burt Bacharach Music Group.

GOOD WORKS
KC & JC PARTNER
Kenney Chesney is working with JC Penney to raise money for the JC Penney Afterschool Fund. The retailer is donating profits from its sales of Chesney's latest album, "The Road and the Radio," to the fund, which makes after-school programs available to families in need.

BEAUTIFULLY HUMAN
Grammy Award winner/Blues Babe Foundation founder Jill Scott and DreamLink Foundation founder Lannott Graves—both Philadelphia natives—have partnered for the North Philly Cares Holiday Celebration. The Dec. 6 event, to be held at Art Sanctuary/Church of the Advocate in Philadelphia—and sponsored by Bruno Magli—is for children from the Gesu School.

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND
Original Platters member Herb Reed is raising funds for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund via "Journey of Hope," a new CD by Herb Reed's Platters. The disc is available at journeyofhope.com for $10, with net proceeds (approximately $9 from each CD) going to the Red Cross.

FOR THE RECORD
The cover photo of Tom Petty in the Dec. Issue should have been credited to Robert Sebree.

In the same issue, a photo of Lee Ann Womack and Waylon Payne contained incorrect caption information. The two performed together Nov. 14 at the Bowery Ballroom in New York.
THANK YOU

to our panelists, speakers, music supervisors, attendees and sponsors for making this year's event a world-class success!

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- Playing the Tech Game to Reach Your Target - Learn about what's coming next on the tech horizon that will redefine how to make your message matter. Presented by Hilmi Ozguc, CEO, Maven Networks
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