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Future Stars: Teddy Geiger, Mylo and Christian Scott Are Among Billboard's 10 New Faces to Watch >P.26

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- Best Electronic/Dance Album: *Push The Button* (Field 2 - Dance Category 13)

**FATBOY SLIM**
Palookaville

- Best Dance Recording: “Wonderful Night” featuring Lateef From the album *Palookaville* (Field 2 - Dance Category 12)
- Best Electronic/Dance Album: *Palookaville* (Field 2 - Dance Category 13)

**KRAFTWERK**
Minimum-Maximum

- Best Electronic/Dance Album: *Minimum-Maximum* (Field 2 - Dance Category 13)
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### BILLYOARD MUSIC & MONEY SYMPOSIUM
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The Billboard Music & Money Symposium is the premier event for music industry decision-makers, entrepreneurs and companies interested in providing funding for entertainment ventures. Exchange ideas, generate leads and share information with the most influential members of the music, financial and legal communities.
Out: P2P Paranoia
In: Platform Parity

BY MITCH BAINWOL

Shhh! You never would know it from the popular press or even from "expert" commentary, but the collapse of legal peer-to-peer file-sharing activity is downgrading into a manageable fever.

Don’t get me wrong. Illegal downloading is not going away and remains very problematic, especially on college campuses. But real change is happening.

Lawsuits against egregious song stealers plus the Grokster decision have reframed the cultural debate and re-framed economic realities.

Parents are finally talking to their kids about right and wrong. Internet service providers are no longer building broadband marketplace share by pipping for illegal music. Universities, slowly, are beginning to act responsibly. And, the 9-0 Grokster decision by the Supreme Court is pushing the major P2P players to either go kosher or kip out. Mark it down. Sure, there will be schemes by foreign-based P2P site operators hoping to take up the slack. But gone are the days of Fortune 500 advertisers meeting demographic impression targets through the likes of Kazaa, of capital gushing into ventures predicated on theft and of kids actually believing it is legal to steal.

The first consumption of digital music by today’s 13-year-old is more likely to come by way of iTunes. Rhapsody, Napster, or Wal-Mart than by theft. Yes, a bunch will yield to the temptation of free (stolen) music, but fewer will—they will come back sooner, and now they know right from wrong from the start.

The numbers confirm progress. In the spring of 2003, just prior to the launch of lawsuits, broadband penetration was about 30 million users and the number of Internet households engaged in illegal downloading was 6.9 million. Now households with unauthorized P2P activity are down to less than 6 million even as broadband has more than doubled.

The next time you hear some sky-is-falling funky number about the explosion of P2P activity, make sure it reflects domestic (not global) active (not passive) downloading of music (not movies, porn, software or games), excluding spoofs. If you measure something else, the picture gets badly distorted.

OK—if illegal P2P use is declining, what policies do we need to make sure the digital market can realize its potential?

For Dustin Hoffman, the word was "plastic." For us, it is "parity." It was not that long ago that the royal we (the labels, and all the artists and its licensees) were being blasted for being too slow to embrace the digital market. So now that we have gone digital, we are getting hit over the proverbial head with Rube Goldberg-like legal justifications for functionality that, let unlicensed and uncompensated, will damage the continued vitality of download and subscription models. The satellite and radio broadcasters think they can not only perform our music, but also distribute copies to their listeners without any license to do so.

So what do we do?

Well, we come together as a community—not just the labels begging for fairness, but all of us who care about the integrity of creative property—to demand comparable payment for music regardless of the consumer choice of platforms.

Satellite tells us it is our biggest royalty payer. Technically that is true, because we do not have a performance right over the air and satellite is bigger than cable and Internet. But if public reports are correct, Sirius alone will pay Howard Stern during the next five years more than six times what XM and Sirius will have paid artists and labels for all of our music during the current five-year agreement that expires next year. Say that out loud to yourself. It is more shocking than a shock jock.

Satellite providers tell us they can sell devices that enable listeners to create a digital library of our songs because they pay a fee under the Audio Home Recording Act. Well? That fee generates a million or two in a year, about what legal downloads generate in two or three years.

They tell us they do a great job promoting our music. But even if that were true, would it justify using our music to attract more subscribers by giving away without permission what other digital music services sell?

And high-definition radio tells us that despite the fact that it gets free spectrum and, literally, unique in the world, does not pay a performance right, that somehow this new uncompensated functionality is good for us.

Thanks, but no thanks. We have no desire to be promoted out of business. So here we are. Apple, Napster, Real, Wal-Mart and others pay for distributions and rentals, while XM and Sirius and Clear Channel—to name just a few at the start—do not all the while offering essentially equivalent functionality.

We need parity.

That is the case we will bring to Congress. The new world means a convergence of comparable offerings over different platforms, all with different rate structures and restrictions.

Big and small labels all across this country are trying to make the digital marketplace sing. We are licensing, we are taking risks and experimenting. But that innovation will go for naught if ultimately this arcana patchwork of law called the Copyright Act treats similar competitors differently, creating an unfair, unlevel playing field. Fans deserve a digital marketplace where competition is based on the quality of the offering and not arbitrary legal advantages.

We have reason to be optimistic about the future. The appetite for music continues to grow. The technology to enjoy music has never been better. And the ways to access music—paid or rented—are more flexible and personal than ever before. All we need now are rules of the road that are rational and fair.

Mitch Bainwol is chairman/CEO of the RIAA, the U.S. labels’ trade group in Washington, D.C.
Holiday Retail 2005: Too Little, Too Late

NEW YORK—While Dec. 23 turned out to be one of the biggest days in sales volume that the music industry has enjoyed in years, it was not enough to save the holiday selling season for merchants. For the five-week period that ran from Nov. 21 to Dec. 25, the U.S. music industry scanned 109.8 million album units, down 8.3% from the 119.7 million copies counted last year in the corresponding period, according to Nielsen SoundScan. According to SoundScan, the industry enjoyed a modest 1.6% uptick in sales last week, with album sales reaching 33.2 million units.

But merchants contacted by Billboard paint a different overall holiday picture, saying that while sales improved from preceding weeks, same-store sales for music were still down around 10%. These retailers say that strong sales in product categories besides music left over-all comparable-store sales down anywhere from 3% to 9% for the holiday selling period.

Merchants noted that sales were very strong on Dec. 26, fueling hope that sales for the rest of that week would help further close the gap with last year. “We are doing OK, and we still have a week to go,” says Rob Perkins, president of Marietta, Ga.-based Value Music. But while the holiday selling season ended up stronger than it started, Mike Dreeze, CEO of Brightline, Mass.-based Newbury Comics, says his chain experienced only three days during the holiday season in which it out-sold the previous year, compared to 26 in which it did not.

During the holiday period, sales of current albums dropped about 12% from the 80.2 million units scanned in the five weeks of 2004 holiday sales. Top 40 hits averaged about a 40% decrease at chains surveyed during the holidays. Catalog sales held steady, selling slightly less than 40 million units.

Sony BMG Agrees To DRM Settlement

NEW YORK—Sony BMG has entered a preliminary agreement to settle a class-action lawsuit brought against the company here for its use of copy-protection software that allegedly behaves like spyware. The move signals a setback to major-label efforts to control consumer copying of CDs. Sony BMG on Dec. 28 reached a deal with New York class-action attorneys to settle charges that copy-protection software the major label used on its CDs compromised the digital security and privacy of consumers who played the discs in their computers.

The cash value of the settlement, which will include payment of attorneys’ fees, has not been fully defined. The settlement still requires judicial approval.

As part of the agreement, consumers who are already named as a party in the suits will be entitled to collect up to $1,000, as well as a cash refund of $7.50 for each disc purchased, or a credit for three free album downloads; consumers now opting into the class will be entitled to the $7.50 refund or album credits. Any U.S. consumer who purchased, received or came into possession of a Sony BMG copy-protected CD between Aug. 1, 2003, through Feb. 1, 2006, can be part of the suit.

Additionally, Sony BMG is agreeing to recall all copy-protected titles and to release uninstall software and security patches for computers infected by the digital rights management technology. The company will waive certain provisions in the end-user license agreements the copy-protected discs contain and vow not to collect personal information from any future content-protection software without the express consent.
RETAIL (cont.)

from >>p5

both years.

According to Nielsen Sound-Scan, the top 10 made a late-week comeback, finishing up 20.5% over the total sales of the top 10 in the week before Christmas last year, fueled by three new releases. Mary J. Blige’s "The Breakthrough," saw about 727,000, and Notorious B.I.G. ’s "Duets: The Final Chapter" moved 180,000. The top three nos. 1, 2, and 3 in this issue’s The Billboard 200, based on sales for the week ending Dec. 25.

Overall, the top seller for the holiday period was Eminem, followed by the "Now 20" compilation and "American Idol" winner Carrie Underwood, with each of the titles selling slightly less than 1.2 million.

There were some holiday shortages, including the Blige and Fox records and top videos such as "The 40-Year-Old Virgin," but manufacturers scrambled to keep pace with demand, and, according to most retailers, generally succeeded.

In indie stores, "it wasn’t a wacky kind of selling season," Newbury Comics buyer Carl Mello says. "Our biggest releases were a Hasidic reggae album [Matzuyahu’s "Live at Stubs"], a comedy album [Dane Cook’s "Retaliation"] and Johnny Cash ("The Legend Of")."

Finally, digital music also played a part in the late retail rally. SoundScan numbers for the week ending Dec. 25 show digital track downloads growing to about 9.56 million—almost double last year’s same-week totals, and up from 7.33 million the prior week, an increase of 23.7%. Digital album sales more than doubled to 531,000 units during Christmas week, the first time the 500,000 mark was passed in one week.

Search engine Yahoo also picked up on the trend. In Dec. 27 "Buzz Log," the site noted that "it knew what you got this year."

The answer was an iPod, "just like everyone else in your neighborhood, city and state." According to Yahoo, "queries on the coveted device more than doubled on the 25th after the wrapping paper was ripped to shreds, booting the iPod into our top 20 search terms."

SONY (cont.)

from >>p5

of consumers. Sony BMG executives contend that the company has never collected personal information from consumers using copy-protected CDs.

Sony BMG has already suspended the production of all copy-protected discs. As part of the deal, the company formally agrees to cease production of CDs using XCP DRM technology from First 4 Internet or MediaMax DRM from SunComm.

Sony BMG also agreed to a series of injunctive measures governing any of its CDs manufactured with content-protection software during the next two years. Any copy-protected CD produced within that time frame must not install any software without the express consent of consumers or collector consumer information.

The extent to which Sony BMG ultimately will curb its production and use of copy-protected discs hinges on what happens with attorney generals who are also investigating or have sued the company. The company is already being sued by the Texas attorney general’s office for violating state spyware laws, and its copy-protection initiatives are the focus of investigations by the attorneys general in New York and Florida.

The attorneys general could accept the terms of the New York settlement to resolve their investigations.

The class action suit on which the settlement is based was filed Nov. 14 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York and led by Scott Kamber of Kamber & Associates.

Sony BMG issued a Dec. 29 statement that read, "We look forward to the court approval process."

MUSIC LOVERS SAY YAHOO

Music and musicians topped the list of most popular terms on Yahoo’s search engine for 2005. Music stars dominated almost every category that did not exclude it (such as sports), stealing at least seven of the top 10 spots for images, video and celebrity searches.

SENATE PRESSES RUSSIA ON PIRACY

The U.S. Senate passed a joint resolution Dec. 21 continued on >>p8

New Mary J. Album A Sales ‘Breakthrough’

As Mary J. Blige sings on her new album, "You can’t hold a good woman down.">

That was certainly the case for the R&B superstar during Christmas week. Her album "The Breakthrough," sold 727,000 units, making it the best opening week for a solo R&B female artist in the Nielsen SoundScan era. The uplifting album marks Blige’s third project to hit No. 1 on The Billboard 200.

The feat is all the more remarkable given that the Dec. 20 release moved 441,000 units more in its debut week than her last studio set, 2003’s "Love & Life."

Geffen Records faced the daunting task of setting up "The Breakthrough" in six weeks after deciding to postpone a planned greatest-hits set and slot in the new studio album. As Geffen GM Jeffrey Harleston says, "We put this project on microwave and got it together."

Blige attributes the album’s success to her album being in a much better place than before and to the power of prayer.

"My goal was to make my fans happy, and I knew that ‘Love & Life’ was something that dis-appointed them," she says. "None of us were in a good place. Too many cooks spoiled the soup. You had [Diddy] saying, ‘Do this, do that,’ and I wanted something else. I have to give the glory to God for giving me the strength and guidance to do this.”

At 944,000 units, "Love & Life" is Blige’s lowest-selling studio release. Her best seller is 1992’s "What’s the 411," which has sold 3.1 million copies.

While Harleston is quick to give credit to the music on "The Breakthrough" and Blige’s tireless work ethic, he also notes that a hit song, multiple high-profile TV appearances and releasing a project during the busiest sales week of the year ratcheted up the first-week numbers.

The album’s opening single, "Be Without You," is No. 1 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs this issue, making it Blige’s first topper on that chart since 2001’s "Family Affair." Geffen will begin working the song to top 40 later this month.

Switching from the greatest-hits set to the studio album created challenges to meet the street date. Blige turned in the album at summertime’s end.

"There was talk of it not being ready and ‘Let’s put out a greatest hits,’ “ she recalls. "I was like, ‘Do whatever you want to do,’ but I knew in my heart it was ready."

Interscope Geffen A&M chairman Jimmy Iovine agreed with Blige. One week after the press release trumpeting the best-of collection came out, the decision was made to switch to the studio album. Geffen used the Internet and Blige’s TV appearances on "Today," "The View" and other outlets to ensure that fans knew about the change.

Since retailers were already expecting a Blige album, Universal Music & Video Distribution had already secured price and positioning. Aiding first-week sales was album pricing of less than $10 at a number of discount chains.

Even with everything in place, the sales potential for "The Breakthrough" may have been higher. The street date, Dec. 14, Umvd had shipped 750,000 units, with most accounts selling through quickly and some stores outages occurring. Umvd rapidly put another 600,000 units in the field, which left most stores with stock in place before Christmas.

"We ran out of Mary J. Blige, but Umvd got it right back in," says Thay Ngo, VP of purchasing for Anaheim, Calif.-based Super D.

"I must admit the consumer response was greater than we anticipated," Harleston says. As for the greatest-hits set, Harleston says, not surprisingly, it is an indefi-nite hold.

Additional reporting by Keith Caulfield in Los Angeles and Ed Christmas in New York.

MARY J. BLIGE has set a sales record for solo female R&B artists with her new album "The Breakthrough."
Nominated for two GRAMMY® awards.

Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals -CHRISTINA AGUILERA-
Best Pop Instrumental Performance -TREY ANASTASIO-

HERBIE HANCOCK
POSSIBILITIES

FEATURING
CHRISTINA AGUILERA
TREY ANASTASIO
SANTANA & ANGÉLIQUE KIDJO
JOHN MAYER
ANNIE LENNOX
PAUL SIMON
DAMIEN RICE & LISA HANNIGAN
STING
RAUL MIDÓN
JONNY LANG & JOSS STONE

“There is not a dud track in the pack—rarely the case with these all-star projects. High marks go to Hancock’s pop-perfect pairing with John Mayer on the impromptu “Stitched Up” and Christina Aguilera’s version of Leon Russell’s “A Song for You”.

“The impressive result feels like one big jam session with Hancock presiding; there’s a real collaborative spirit at work as they push boundaries - and each other - reimagining old songs and creating new ones”. -People

“[Possibilities] makes its crossover without condescension.” -New York Times

“Jazz, pop in spirited harmony.” -Los Angeles Times

“Hancock never stoops in his accompaniment and arrangements... His gently complex runs and ticklish fills lift each participant to a higher, soulful challenge.” -Philadelphia Inquirer

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Spitzer Goes Digital

New York AG Subpoenas Majors Regarding Download Pricing

NEW YORK—New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer has jumped into the debate over the price of digital downloads. Warner Music Group disclosed in its Dec. 23 Securities and Exchange Commission filing that it was served with a subpoena three days earlier "in connection with an industrywide antitrust investigation over the pricing of digital downloads." Sony BMG and EMI Music were also served with subpoenas. Universal Music Group could not be reached for comment.

Although Spitzer's office declined to state the basis for its investigation, published reports focus on public discussions between three of the four major labels and Apple Computer. Both Federal and New York antitrust laws prohibit any contract—or any combination in the form of a trust—that restrains trade or commerce. Certain types of price fixing can be prosecuted as a felony. But it is not illegal for companies to copy the pricing of market leaders.

EMI Group, Sony BMG and WMG have publicly and privately urged Apple CEO Steve Jobs to adopt variable pricing for iTunes downloads. Older songs that are less in demand could be sold for less than 99 cents while more popular hits could be sold for more, but Jobs has been reluctant to change the pricing.

It remains unclear how these discussions may have broken laws. One antitrust expert says that Spitzer has his work cut out for him.

"It's a tough case to prove," says Makan Delrahim with Brownstein, Hyatt & Farber in Washington, D.C. The former No. 2 antitrust lawyer with the Department of Justice says that Spitzer must either prove that two or more labels agreed to set prices or must disprove any possibility that prices were independently determined by the labels.

In the music industry where so few companies control so much of recorded music, however, "public nods" from one label to another can be some evidence of a violation, Delrahim adds.

Industry sources expect the digital music services to be served with subpoenas shortly. In 2002, major music distributors and retailers settled an antitrust lawsuit brought by the attorneys general of 41 states and three U.S. commonwealths. The AGs claimed that the companies conspired to inflate CD prices. The parties did not admit any wrongdoing, but paid $143 million saying they settled to avoid protracted, expensive litigation.

FRANCE SAYS 'OUI' TO P2P

PARIS—French lawmakers took a late-December step toward making their country the first to legalize unlicensed peer-to-peer downloads.

Three days before Christmas, during discussion of a new digital copyright bill, parliament passed an amendment, 30-28, that introduced the concept of an "optional global blanket license" system for content on the Internet, creating a legal framework for home-use file sharing.

The bill was intended to moderate France's copyright legislation. The French government faced fines for not complying with a 2001 European Union directive that mandated copyright protections.

The plan backfired as a coalition of dissidents pulled for the amendment, which considered downloading as "private copy," similar to the U.S. concept of fair use.

The amendment introduces an exemption for home copying for downloaded works from online services to Internet users who agree to pay "a consideration"—widely interpreted as a fee—through their Internet service providers. File sharers who do not pay could face sanctions.

The fee is expected to be fixed at five euros ($5.92) to seven euros ($8.28), but it is unclear how and by whom this fee will be set. Opponents to the amendment call the wording vague and decry the system as impossible to control or enforce.

The amendment applies to music only, films, software and games have so far been exempted. Artists and music groups Adami and Spedidam, together with consumer groups, had backed the amendment. Industry organizations representing trade groups for labels, publishers, retailers and authors fear a doomsday scenario.

Musicland’s Struggle

Fiscal Difficulties Could Mean Bankruptcy

NEW YORK—As 2005 wound down, the Musicland Group’s problems continued to mount, with the chain on a path that could lead to a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

In late November Musicland began a major restructuring that included asking vendors to forgo about $125 million in product payments for three years; it became a moot request as Musicland’s banks reined in the chain’s ability to draw funds from its $200 million revolving credit facility.

According to sources familiar with the company’s finances, the banks supplying the facility—Congress Financial and Fleet Retail Finance—told Musicland it was in violation of the loan agreement and stopped it from accessing any funds unless approved by the bank.

For the remainder of December, Musicland was forced to pay upfront for needed product, sources say. If the banks continue to hold the purse strings tightly, a Musicland Chapter 11 filing seems likely in January, according to execs in the vendor community.

Musicland president/interim CEO Mike Madden acknowledges Chapter 11 is a possible outcome, but says the company is evaluating options. "Our focus has to be on a solution that is right for our vendors, bank partners and employees." The banks’ credit tightening caught vendors off guard.

Sun Capital assumed ownership of Musicland in June 2005, brought in Congress and Fleet, sources say, and told vendors that the banks would support Musicland if it hit trouble.

The revoler did not come with the usual financial performance covenants, sources say, that often trigger Chapter 11 proceedings. The loan agreement, however, included formulas for availability of funds, and sources say, this is where Musicland has run afoul of the banks.

The first banks appeared to lose confidence in Musicland in October, when Sun Capital announced plans to raise $50 million in equity and bank execs reportedly wanted more, leading to the restructuring.

In addition to asking vendors to forgo $125 million in product payments, Musicland began liquidating the 61-unit Media Play chain, expected to be shuttered by the end of January.

Musicland also told vendors it would shutter another 110 stores if it could not get rent concessions. Musicland executives were already gambling that its vendors would not force the chain into a Chapter 11 filing. But the music industry’s disastrous start to the holiday selling season apparently unnerved banking executives, leaving Musicland with an uncertain future.


Update: In early January, the bill to resume Jan. 17 that passed, the bill will resolve the first version of the bill. As amended, the bill will then go to the Senate.
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Tomlinson Tops Sony/ATV As Hilley Retires

The presidential baton at Sony/ATV Music Publishing Nashville has been passed from 31-year company veteran Donna Hilley to Troy Tomlinson. Hilley is retiring, according to Sony/ATV. Tomlinson served under Hilley as VP of creative.

Tomlinson says his first priority as president/CEO is securing—or in some instances extending—deals with half a dozen writers whom he believes are among the best talents in country music. This is part of his long-term goal of creating an environment where top country music talent—including creative executives and business reps—feel they must work with Sony/ATV Nashville to be completely fulfilled.

"Donna has already laid an awesome foundation for our company," Tomlinson says. "Nashville is not in need of a revolution; we are in constant need of evolution. It is an honor, a privilege and a great responsibility to follow an executive like Donna—one who knows how to run a business with a heart."

Tomlinson, whose publishing career spans more than 20 years, believes that the needs of Nashville writers are sometimes different than those in other places.

"For example, he says it is important for Nashville writers to feel comfortable spending time in the company’s offices, to be around the people working at the company and to have a designated place where they can write and record. To that end, the operation has an in-house studio.

"I want them to feel comfortable to come in and write and demo, but also to know that when their songs are recorded, a premier administrative team takes care of them." Tomlinson will be responsible for supervising all creative elements for Sony/ATV Nashville, including the signing of new writers. He will also develop and implement strategies to create and exploit the catalog. He will report to Sony ATV Music Publishing chairman/CEO David Hockman, who recently joined the board of the National Music Publishers’ Assn.

Hilley could not be reached for comment. She joined Tree Music in 1973 and in 1969 engineered the sale of the company (then called Tree International) to CBS—her proudest triumph. In 1994, she became president of Sony/ATV Nashville.

GLOBAL CROP: The Orchard, an online content ag- ree-gator, launched the Orchard Music Services in September. Since then it has been offering its crop of indie labels services that “ew, if any, aggregators provide—assisting indie labels and on-line services to clear U.S. rights from publishers worldwide.

“It’s important that our licensing is done properly in the U.S. so that the foreign publishers can get paid for their digital sales,” Orchard founder and chairman Richard Gotttehrer says. OMS has set up a structure to secure U.S. rights by dealing with the Harry Fox Agen 12, which has begun acting for some of its foreign publisher members, or locating and securing rights directly from foreign publishers.

The service has also been setting up deals with major publishers to be able to license compositions recorded for indie labels that want to offer the recording for master ring tones and audiovisual uses.

REACHING OUT: SESAC has expanded its use of Nielsen BDS resources. It has added monitoring of jazz, gospel, college radio and America-formats in addition to webcasts and streaming services. Nielsen BDS captures more than 100 million song detections annually on more than 1,400 radio stations in about 150 U.S. and Canadian markets.

Small’s Big TV Splash

Heather Small may finally get her due in the United States. The incredibly photogenic Small was recently featured on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” where she performed “Proud,” the title track from her 5-year-old solo debut album. And we have seen what happens when Oprah Winfrey champions an artist. Cash registers become active, again.

In the case of Small, such exposure may finally catapult her into the pop spotlight. We have been keeping an eye on Small since her days with ’90s British pop-outfit M People. The quartet scored global hits with “Moving On Up,” “Excited,” “Open Your Heart” and other buoyant jams.

“It has been an experience,” Small tells Billboard. “And I must give thanks to one of the show’s producers.”

According to Small, a “Winfrey” producer heard “Proud” in a workout class. “She thought the song might work for an upcoming theme on the show,” Small says. The producer played it for Winfrey, and voila! This transpired in October, when Small was on vacation in Bali. “My manager sent me an e-mail that said, ‘You’ll never guess who I heard from.’” Small says. Pausing for a moment, she adds, “When Oprah calls, you go.”

The album “Proud” was originally released internationally via Arista in the United Kingdom. Small may now find herself with a label to call home in the United States—particularly if the track “Proud” becomes a bigger seller at places like the iTunes Music Store.

Following Small’s performance on the show, Winfrey told viewers what the song meant to her and that it was available at iTunes for 99 cents. According to Nielsen SoundScan, the track had about 200 digital downloads during the week prior to Small’s appearance on Winfrey’s show. Fans have since paid for 3,300 iTunes downloads of the track, which now total 12,000.

The impact of the performance also was felt by Small’s management team—Brian Lane and Kate Allen of Bandana Management in London. Lane and Allen received numerous inquiries about Small from U.S. record labels. Because of this, an artist showcase is being planned for February in New York.

Meanwhile, Small is working on her sophomore solo set for British label Private & Confidential. Small is amazed by what she calls “the power of Oprah,” which she says “you don’t fully comprehend until you experience it.”

“Proud” is no stranger to TV viewers, though. Minneapolis/St. Paul’s third-largest health-care provider, HealthPartners, has been using the track in its TV and radio spots for several years. (Minneapolis ad agency Quasimodo created the campaign.)

The anthemic song was also selected as an official song of the 2012 Olympics in London. It has also been heard on NBC reality show “The Biggest Loser.”

Our fingers are crossed that Small will come out the biggest winner.

THE EYES HAVE IT: Virgin president of urban music and in-demand producer Jermaine “JD” Dupri recently joined forces with Carter to raise money for the Hurricane Relief Fund.

The two brands have linked to create two styles of eyewear available in wood or chrome, the limited-edition series features Dupri’s signature etched in the lens, while the frame is adorned with Carter’s “C” logo.

Both styles retail for $1,500 and are available exclusively at the Carter boutique in Atlanta’s Lenox Square Mall. A percentage of the proceeds will go to the Atlanta Community Food Bank and City of Refuge—two Atlanta-based foundations for the Hurricane Relief Fund.

“I’m a big fan of Carter,” Dupri tells Billboard. He says the idea for an eyewear line came to him when he was getting a piece of jewelry repaired at the Carter boutique in Atlanta. “That got me thinking about a limited edition that would benefit victims of the recent hurricanes.”

Looking ahead, Dupri says he is interested in extending his JD and So So Def brands into other fashion areas. “I can see myself collaborating with brands I like,” he says. In other words, brands that embody “the lifestyle I like to live.”
A Message of Thanks!

...to the wonderful and talented artists who helped create "Thanks & Giving: All Year Long"

2005 Grammy Nominee for Best Children's Album, Spoken Word
(Marlo Thomas and Christopher Cerf, Producers)

JENNIFER ANISTON ★
THE BACON BROTHERS ★
ANTONIO BANDERAS ★
BERT & ERNIE ★
WAYNE BRADY ★
JIMMY BUFFETT ★
BILLY CRYSTAL ★
SHERYL CROW ★
HILARY DUFF ★
AMY GRANT & JOHN HIATT ★
FAITH HILL ★
JAMES EARL JONES ★
KERMIT THE FROG ★
UNCLE KRACKER ★
SARAH JESSICA PARKER ★
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All royalties from Thanks & Giving: All Year Long benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

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The Apple Of Their Eyes

With This Year’s Wireless Products, Someone At CES Hopes To Have An “iPod Killer”

As they have at the past few gatherings at the annual International Consumer Electronics Show, Apple Computer’s competitors who will gather Jan. 5-8 in Las Vegas will once again have one little device in their cross hairs: the iPod.

Past challengers have had little success, as Apple extended its lead in 2005. Former CES exhibitors Virgin Electronics, Rio and Olympus — each of which used the last CES to showcase their “iPod killers” — have all pulled out of the MP3 player race.

But this year’s competitors are bringing a new capability to the table — wireless.

“MP3 manufacturers are looking at a lot of features to differentiate themselves to compete against Apple,” IDC analyst Susan Keverian says. “We expect to see not only WiFi devices, but also mobile and satellite support as well.”

Heavy pashow buzz is already brewing around Verizon Wireless, which is expected to introduce a mobile music download service as well as several music-optimized mobile phones at a Jan. 5 press conference.

Details about the new service are slim at this time, but Verizon is likely to experiment with bundling and packaging after getting beaten to the punch by rival Sprint — hinted that Verizon may offer customers the ability to download tracks only to their phone or PC for a lower price.

Entering the game this year for the first time is a new class of devices that lets users browse, buy and even trade music wirelessly when in range of a local WiFi hot spot.

MusicGremlin is one such company using CES to take the wraps off its much-delayed, self-titled device and integrated digital music service.

MusicGremlin offers what it calls a PC-free digital music experience, meaning users have no need to sync with an Internet-connected computer. Instead, it ships with a music store interface loaded on the unit. Users can browse through available tracks and recommended playlists from the device, even when not connected to a WiFi network. They can select the songs they wish to download.

The MusicGremlin actively searches for available WiFi hot spots, and when in range automatically begins downloading any tracks selected. It also updates the store’s database with new music and playlists when available. Users can either buy tracks a la carte or subscribe to the MusicGremlin Direct monthly service, both powered by MusicNet. Subscribers can use the WiFi feature to connect to other MusicGremlin subscribers and send music recommendations or browse songs stored on each device, with permission.

A similar device is being showcased by Giant International subsidiary Tao, which also makes the XM2go portable receiver for XM Satellite Radio. The Tao Wireless Media Player is similar to the MusicGremlin, except it does not operate its own music service. Instead, it works with partner Soniconset to embed access to existing music stores into the device. To date, only PassAlong Networks supports it.

Other wireless products being showcased at CES include XM’s combined satellite receiver/MP3 player with time-shifting capabilities, made by Samsung, and a similar one marketed by XM rival Sirius Satellite Radio.

Although these various forms of wireless features are the new weapon of choice for anyone hoping to put a dent in the iPod’s dominance, Apple seems ready to fight fire with fire.

The company’s first stab at a wireless iPod was the much-maligned ROKR-iTunes capable phone developed in conjunction with Motorola. But analysts and Apple rumor sites almost unanimously expect a wireless iPod of some sort in 2006.

Powering the rumor mill is PortalPlayer, a major iPod component supplier that has made some eyebrow-raising wireless-related moves in recent weeks. In November, it added former Vodafone executive Thomas Isaksen to its board of directors. The following month, it licensed Sun Microsystems’ Java Micro Edition technology specifically for the purpose of managing wireless media traffic.

Citigroup analyst Glenn Yeung in a December research note said the company is seeking to acquire a wireless-technology firm as well in anticipation of supporting wireless iPods.

“We’re excited that there continues to be innovation and investment in these areas,” Universal Music Mobile GM Rio Castella says. “There’s a lot of energy still being spent trying to figure out how to circumvent copyrights. If only a fraction of that energy were focused into trying to create new models and new devices and increase ease of use, that would be better for everybody.”

BITS & BRIEFS

NAPSTER, iPOD MOST TOP OF MIND

Apple Computer’s iTunes Music Store and Napster ended 2005 in a virtual tie in terms of consumer awareness, according to a recent study by global marketing research firm Ipsos Insight. According to the firm’s quarterly TEMPO poll, U.S. music downloaders age 12 and older listed Napster as the most top-of-mind brand, at 31%, with iTunes close behind at 27%. However, iTunes was listed as the best music service, at 33%, followed by Napster at 22%. In terms of <a href="http://www.americanradiohistory.com">http://www.americanradiohistory.com</a> at BET promoting its exclusive ringtones. Meanwhile, myspace.com is featuring a streaming video feed of an interview with the late rapper’s mother.

P2P IMESH NOW SELLING RINGTONES

Warner Music Group is pulling out all digital stops in its promotion of “The Notorious B.I.G. Duets: The Final Chapter,” which bowed Dec. 20. The label is providing different exclusive ringtones from the album to wireless operator Virgin Mobile and independent ringtone service Jamster. Virgin will receive six ringtones of tracks remixed by Paul Wall. Jamster, meanwhile, is featuring Bad Boy Worldwide Entertainment Group founder and CEO Sean “Diddy” Combs in TV ads on BET promoting its exclusive ringtones. Meanwhile,(my)space.com is streaming a featuring video feed of an interview with the late rapper’s mother.

The lead single of Eminem’s greatest-hits collection “Curtain Call” bows on top of AOL’s Top Songs chart.

Madonna’s live performance of “Hung Up” from her AOL mini-concert is still riding high on AOL’s Top Videos chart, coming in at No. 2.

AOL Music

Top Songs


The lead single of Eminem’s greatest-hits collection “Curtain Call” bows on top of AOL’s Top Songs chart.

Top Videos


Madonna’s live performance of “Hung Up” from her AOL mini-concert is still riding high on AOL’s Top Videos chart, coming in at No. 2.

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New Year, New Labels For Ryko

New York-based Ryko Distribution heads into 2006 carrying a slate of new labels on its roster. Among the additions are electronic- and jazz-leaning Thirsty Ear Recordings and David Sylvian’s previously online-only Samadhi Sound.

Ryko also added France’s the Recall Group and world music label Gemini Sun. The latter was with Ryko last year via an agreement with Megaforce/MRI, which has since switched to RED Distribution.

Samadhi Sound, which will issue a new Sylvian album in 2006, comes to Ryko via a previous distribution agreement with Robert Fripp’s Inner Knot. It is the same sort of setup that brought the newly formed Wheat Recording Co. and Bill Laswell’s Innerhythmic to Ryko, as both will go through Peter Casperson’s United For Opportunity.

Since losing MRI, Ryko has turned to some of its distributed labels to act as a quasi umbrella group, giving the distributor a less risky way to work with tiny labels. “If a label can’t hit the criteria to be self-sustaining, then we try to hit them up with one of the reliable umbrellas,” Ryko GM Jim Cuomo says. “This is what we did with MRI. So what we’ve done now is taken the same design and applied it with other very very honorable labels.”

Certainly the largest name among the crop of new Ryko labels is Thirsty Ear, which was previously distributed by Alternative Distribution Alliance and had a relationship with Beggars Group in the ’80s. The label brings Ryko a catalog that includes releases by such acts as El-P, DJ Spooky, Meat Beat Manifesto, Mat Maneri and Matthew Shipp.

Since about 2000, Shipp has served as artist director of Thirsty Ear’s acclaimed Blue Series, which often pairs together hip-hop and jazz artists. Shipp will issue a new album, “One,” Jan. 24.

Looking ahead to 2006, Cuomo offered a grave prediction. “Armageddon is coming, as far as the closure of more retail outlets,” he says. “This is done. There will continue to be less storefronts and less SKUs, and that’s the heart of the challenge.”

PATIENCE: Shout Factory’s Jewish Music Group has earned some radio play with Chutzpah’s “Chanukah’s Da Bomb.” The timely track, taken from the act’s RED-distributed debut, “Eponymous,” also scored the group an appearance on local Fox morning show “Good Day New York,” and a New York Times piece ran the week of Hanukkah. Jewish Music Group head David McLees says yet the success and buzz RED has had with Matisyahu has thus far eluded the siller Chutzpah. Not to worry, McLees says, as there are more holidays to come.

“We’re working toward a Passover song with them that can be downloaded,” McLees says. “It’ll be free if you purchase the album, and the holiday theme is a way to market the record.”

Matisyahu’s accomplishments likely mean more Jewish hip-hop is on the way, but more than one artist will have to appeal to a non-Jewish audience to get retail excited. Just don’t call Chutzpah a novelty, McLees says, even if the act features actor George Segal.

“This is no more of a joke than a lot of mainstream hip-hop,” McLees says. “Gangbangers sort of make fun of a lot of the things that go on in gang, and they talk about an extreme personality that they aren’t. It’s not that far from that.”

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GLOBAL NEWSLINE

SPAIN FUNDS ANTI-PIRACY ADS

Spain launched its first government-funded national anti-piracy campaign during the Christmas period. The country's culture ministry spent 1 million euros ($1.2 million) on the Dec. 19-Jan. 5 multimedia campaign under the banner "Defend Your Culture From Piracy."

Most of the funding went to 250 national TV advertisements, with other ads appearing in cinemas, on radio and in magazines. The campaign was a long-awaited part of an integrated anti-piracy plan unveiled by Culture Minister Carmen Calvo in April. Her proposals included coordinating the efforts of 15 government ministries, local/regional governments and police with a media campaign.

The IFPI cites Spain—the world's ninth-biggest music market—as one of the 10 countries worst affected by CD piracy.
—Howell Llewellyn

SONY BMG TURNS TO TV

Sony BMG Music Entertainment Australia has set up a TV production division to develop music and entertainment programming.

The label's partner in the venture is Sydney-based Crackerjack Productions, which produces the weekly "So Fresh!" music show on the national free-to-air Nine Network. The two companies have previously collaborated on DVDs and TV commercials.

Sony BMG Music Entertainment Australia is recruiting an executive to head the division, reporting to chairman/CEO Denis Handlin. "Our plan is to extend the boundaries of music and entertainment TV production through creative new programming ideas that we are developing," Handlin says.

In a statement, Sony BMG says the move was necessary because "restructuring and intensifying competition in the CD-manufacturing field make it difficult to reduce production costs."
—Christie Eliezer

TOSHIBA-EMI SELLS CD PLANT

Tokyo-based label Toshiba-EMI has sold its CD-pressing plant in Gotemba, Shizuoka Prefecture, in line with parent EMI Group's global policy of divesting its manufacturing operations.

The Toenni Media Solutions consortium—comprising optical disc maker MemoryTech, Kinyo Shousa Printing, Goldman Sachs Group and magnetic tape/optical disc maker Altec—took over the manufacturing division Dec. 26, a price was not quoted for the sale.

In a statement, Toshiba-EMI says the move was necessary because "restructuring and intensifying competition in the CD-manufacturing field make it difficult to reduce production costs."
—Steve McClure

JAMBA FOUNDERS QUIT

Marc and Oliver Samwer, the brothers who launched German mobile entertainment company Jamba, have exited the firm.

The co-managing directors will stay on as consultants until June. A statement from Berlin-based Jamba cites personal reasons for their departure.

Deputy managing director Berger de León and finance director Dirk Hoffmann step up into the managing director roles.

Jamba is credited as being the first European firm to make the sale of ringtones a mainstream business, in part through mass-market TV advertising campaigns. The company was established in 2000 and sold in 2004 to U.S. Internet company Verisign. Jamba currently has 520 employees in more than 20 countries.
—Wolfgang Spahr

SONY/ATV BUILDING EMPIRE

London-based artist manager/label firm Empire Management is entering the music publishing field.

Effective immediately, Empire Management co-founders and directors Neale Easterby and Richard Ramsey are working exclusively with Sony/ATV Music Publishing U.K. to source new and existing songwriting talent and copyrights for a new company, Empire Artist Music. Sony/ATV U.K. will subpublish Empire Artist Music globally. Terms were not disclosed.

Easterby and Ramsey manage a roster of acts that includes sibling pop stars Daniel and Natasha Bedingfield, the Feeling, Lucie Silvas and Estelle.
—Lars Brandle

GLOBAL BY PAUL SEXTON

Michael Grows Support Ashore

Sony BMG Tapping Into Europe's Love For 'Visionary' Michael Jackson

LONDON—An imminent cross-media campaign from Sony BMG underlines Europe's undimmed appetite for the vintage work of Michael Jackson.

Between February and June in the United Kingdom, the company will begin a series of weekly releases of 20 of Jackson's best-known songs as limited-edition singles. The project is reminiscent of a highly successful Elvis Presley campaign that Sony BMG launched 12 months ago.

The Jackson series, under the banner "Visionary—The Video Singles," will see each single released on DualDisc with its original video. Sony BMG claims Jackson is the world's first artist to have DualDisc singles released. The Official U.K. Charts Co. confirms the singles are chart-eligible.

Sony BMG's Presley series was based around his 18 U.K. chart-toppers. All the reissues reached the top five and three reached No. 1, generating total U.K. sales of 625,000 units, according to the OCC.

The Jackson project is due to begin Feb. 20 with two singles, "Thriller" and "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough." A limited, numbered box will also be sold to house all 20 releases. The series will conclude June 26 with "Blood on the Dance Floor." Sony BMG U.K. VP of commercial marketing Darren Henderson believes total sales could outnumber the Presley campaign, claiming Jackson's commercial status in Europe has not been adversely affected by negative publicity surrounding his personal life and last year's 14-week U.S. child abuse trial.

"The media have more of an issue [with that] than the British record-buying public," he says. Further, the DualDisc aspect lets the company focus on Jackson's innovative visual work.

Henderson notes that while Sony BMG's international companies initially felt the Presley campaign was inappropriate for their markets, they noted the British sales and media impact with interest. Consequently, Sony BMG in France and in Germany will run with the Jackson series week by week. Other territories will release the singles in "batches." There were not any firm plans at press time for a U.S. campaign.

Retail reaction so far is positive. London-based HMV U.K. & Ireland singles buyer Stewart Allan describes Jackson as "one of the few artists with the depth of singles, recording heritage and dedicated fan base to make such a project work."

Allan points out that the label and retail can draw upon the Presley experience to make the campaign work effectively. "[This] also presents a perfect opportunity to further test and develop the DualDisc format," he adds.

Sony BMG says the 2005-Track Epic double CD "The Essential Michael Jackson" is platinum in the United Kingdom (300,000 shipments). In the United States, however, the label has had negative publicity. In Spain, piracy is the world's worst affected market. In France, Sony BMG's Presley series appeared June.

MIAMI—Despite continuing struggles against piracy, it was a year of cautious optimism for music in Latin America, with an increase in new-artist signings, the opening of digital stores in several countries and a surge of sales in key markets, including Mexico and Argentina.

The year ended with multiple raids across the continent, executed by the IFPI in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, several of whom have stepped up to the plate in an unprecedented degree in the fight against piracy.

The most relevant anti-piracy operations were seen in Argentina and Mexico.

Argentina kicked off an aggressive online anti-piracy effort in November that coincided with the launch of the country's first online music store, Epsu Digital, an arm of indie label/distributor Epsu Music. Launched its online music store in December. Other companies are expected to follow suit in the coming months. They hope to capitalize on an incipient digital market whose potential has exploded thanks to the growth and availability of broadband.

According to a study that market consultant firm Quartier Consumer released in April, 286 million tracks were illegally downloaded in Argentina.

Mexico also launched its first online music stores—Tarátu and Beon—in 2005, even as anti-piracy efforts centered on physical piracy.

In that arena, Mexico was a pioneer, thanks to its Mexico Plus project, that seeks to convert illegal street vendors into legitimate music retailers. The project, which brings together local, state and federal officials, not only applied sanctions to vendors of counterfeit music, it offered alternatives, including lower-priced products from labels.

All those factors, compounded by a healthy release schedule and a surge of new acts, contributed to a rejuvenation of the local market.

Unit sales rose 14.3% for the first 10 months of 2005, compared with the same time period in 2004. In those months, 37 million units were sold. Sales for the first
10 months of the year were also up in Colombia (5.1%), Chile (20.6%) and, most notably, in Argentina, by a dramatic 25.6%, compared with the same time period in 2004. The biggest black mark for the region was giant Brazil, where unit sales dropped by 23% for the first 10 months of the year, and market value dropped 15.5%. The commonly cited culprit was physical piracy.

But Brazil grew digitally, thanks to online music store iMusica, launched in 2004. Likewise, the country is now among the top five biggest mobile subscription markets worldwide, although the low penetration of music-capable phones is restricting the growth of mobile music.

On the bright side, innovative thinking helped boost the market and foil pirates. One of Brazil’s success stories for 2005 was singer Ivete Sangalo, who has sold nearly 500,000 copies of “As Super Novas” (Universal), released in fourth-quarter 2005. The bulk of sales came via a partnership with Avon in Brazil, which has its sales force selling Sangalo’s album door to door in remote regions where there are no music retailers. Other top sellers in Brazil include singer/songwriter Ana Carolina (Sony BMG) and newcomer Banda Calypso. Both acts currently have two albums each on Brazil’s sales charts. Most surprising was Mexican pop group RBD, which is topping Brazilian charts with Portuguese and Spanish versions of its album “Rebelde” (EMI).

The RBD phenomenon extends through Latin America and highlights the continuing power of TV to launch musical acts in the region. (Teen soap opera “Rebelde” is the program that spawned RBD.) Other TV-generated acts include Yuri diia in Mexico, Floricienta in Argentina and Jorge in Colombia.

Beyond TV, the biggest releases belonged to two Colombians: Shakira, with her “Fijación Oral Vol. 1” ( Epic), and Juanes, with the continued success of his 2004 release “Mi Sangre” (Universal).
2006: Global View Of A Digital World

At 2005 drew to a close, Billboard polled top global music industry executives about what 2006 might bring in terms of business developments and artist breakthroughs.

Optimism about the improving state of legal digital distribution was the main theme to emerge, along with a list of developing talent that emphasizes the perceived potential of domestic repertoire in 2006.

The questions:
1) What are you looking forward to in 2006?
2) Who are the acts to watch in 2006?

Gero Caccia, COO, Warner Music International (London): 1) “Our challenge is to have the intellectual ability to create new business models that will give more value to our content through all the opportunities digital distribution offers. If we manage them well, these opportunities will deliver incremental value to our creative content.”
2) “Madonna and Laura Pausini—and [Atlantic-signed British rock act] Hard Fi, who are in the process of becoming really huge.”

2) “Arctic Monkeys, Orson, Jack Johnson, Guillemots.”

Denis Handlin, chairman/CEO, Sony BMG Music Entertainment Australia (Sydney): 1) “2006 should be the most formative year in digital sales, with the growth of [third]-

Entertainment (Tokyo): 1) “Online distribution [downloads] will go up dramatically. iTunes will see many try to follow its path, and CD sales will continue to lag. There will be further downsizing and reorganization of the record industry as a whole.”

Harry Hui, president, Universal Music South East Asia (Hong Kong): 1) “The digital consumption of music will become more innovative. We will see very cool music products and new services introduced to the market. New hits and new artists will be discovered from the new media sphere as well.

and Silverchair—and also great singer/songwriter albums due from Bob Evans, Kasey Chambers and Shane Nicholson.”

Denis Olivennes, president/CEO, FNAC (Paris): 1) “I expect the music industry to be less short-sighted than it has been [and] put an end to the erratic pricing our consumers don’t understand. It’s also time to make the maximum number of titles available to all the legal download services in the minimum amount of time.

I’m hoping labels—majors or indies—will cultivate the talent of established or up-and-coming artists rather than go for formatted recipes.”

John O’Donnell, managing director, EMI Music Australia (Sydney): 1) A year of great music—2005 has been great for new and emerging artists, and 2006 is shaping up even better. There’s a bunch of big Australian artists releasing albums next year which will excite the market, and I’m looking forward to digital and mobile sales really taking root.”


Tony Wadsworth, chairman/CEO, EMI Music U.K. & Ireland (London): 1) “Seeing we [still] have unrestricted access to, and the only thing that really counts is great music and good marketing ideas. I hope that in 2006 many online labels will launch, enabling young artists to develop before they have to face the cruel world of physical distribution.”

2) “Voom Voom, a new project by Peter Kruder and Fauna Flash on K7.”

Reporting by Emmanuel Legrand and Lars Brandle in London; Christie Eliezer in Melbourne, Australia; Asméric Piccinin in Paris; Larry Le Blanc in Toronto; and Steve McClure in Tokyo.
Behind The WEA Reorganization

WEA continues to redefine itself in order to remain ahead of the changing landscape. In the wake of the departure of executive VP of sales and marketing John Madison, WEA has been reorganized into four distinct units, with some of its top executives promoted and given new responsibilities. There were no cuts in the realignment.

Madison's exit gave management a chance to “redefine” WEA, president/CEO John Esposito says. “We live in a day and age of managing disparate accounts and new emerging distribution channels,” he says. “I'm confident these changes will better serve our customers, label partners and their artists, and better situate WEA to fulfill our mission to get the right music in the right place at the right time.” In other words, to be the “best in class” supply chain.

Consequently, Mike Jbara, formerly senior VP of production and media operations, has been promoted to executive VP/COO, overseeing operations and administration. Matt Signore, who previously was CFO and before that CFO/GM at Island Def Jam, has been promoted to CFO/GM, overseeing sales analysis, credit and finance.

Also, Todd Van Gorp, formerly VP of field sales, has been promoted to senior VP of sales and marketing, overseeing those two areas as well as developing markets; and the e-commerce unit continues to be led by senior VP Adam Mirabella.

All four executives report to Esposito.

In addition to positioning WEA to more efficiently seize opportunities in the evolving physical and digital music retail environment, the changes were also made to allow Esposito to better address WEA's mandate within the Warner Music Group. During the past several years, WEA's role as WMG's retail sales and distribution arm has grown to include the oversight of the company's independent distributor Alternative Distribution Alliance; WMG's incubator labels, Asylum and East West; and its digital-only label Cordless, as well as its global, digital assets and e-commerce group.

The latter companies all report directly to Esposito.

NEXT STOP: John Madison may have left WEA, but he is teaming up with Jim Caparro again as executive VP of Entertainment Distribution Co., which the former Island Def Jam Music Group chairman has been given up.

"These changes will get the right music in the right place at the right time."

—JOHN ESPOSITO, WEA

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Alternatively call Paul Barbaro or Christophe Chiappa on + 33 1 41 90 44 60 or e-mail us on info.midem@reedmidem.com
Top DVD Sales

**Distributing Labels**

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<th>Label</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>MEET THE ROCKERS (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>Universal Studios Home Video</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>WALT DISNEY HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>Buena Vista Home Entertainment</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>WARNER HOME VIDEO</td>
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<td>UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO</td>
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<td>FOX VIDEO</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>COLUMBIA TRISTAR HOME ENTERTAINMENT</td>
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**Top DVD Sales**

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<td>RAY (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>Universal Studios Home Video</td>
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<td>NATIONAL TREASURE (FULL SCREEN)</td>
<td>Walt Disney Home Entertainment/Buena Vista Home Entertainment</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ROBOT (WIDESCREEN)</td>
<td>20th Century Fox</td>
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<td>CHAPPELLE'S SHOW: SEASON 2</td>
<td>Uncensored!</td>
<td>Paramount Home Entertainment</td>
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**Top DVD Game Rentals**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>LUCAS ARTS ENTERTAINMENT</td>
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<td>ACTIVISION</td>
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<td>SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT</td>
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<td>PS2: GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS</td>
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<td>PS2: NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 2</td>
<td>Electronic Arts</td>
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<td>PS2: MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION</td>
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<td>XBOX: HALO 2</td>
<td>Bungie</td>
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<td>Lucasarts Entertainment</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>PS2: HADDEN NFL 2006</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>PS2: WWF SMACKDOWN! VS. RAW</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>PS2: GRAN TURISMO 4</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>XBOX: MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION</td>
<td>Rockstar Games</td>
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**Billboard Comprehensive Music Videos Sales**

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<td>2</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL MUSIC &amp; VIDEO</td>
<td>(54)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td>(30)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>SONY BMG VIDEO</td>
<td>(36)</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>RHINO HOME VIDEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(29)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>WARNER HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>(20)</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>(13)</td>
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All In The Family

Year's Top Sellers Put The Home In Home Video

LOS ANGELES—Family entertainment reigns supreme on the 2005 year-end home video charts.

While the widescreen edition of "The Incredibles" (Walt Disney Home Entertainment/Buena Vista Home Entertainment) earns the No. 1 position on the Top DVD Sales Titles year-end chart, the top 10 also includes six other family-oriented titles.

"Elf" (New Line Home Entertainment/Warner Home Video) is No. 2, and the full-screen edition of "The Incredibles" is No. 3. The widescreen "Shrek 2" (DreamWorks Home Entertainment/Home Video) is No. 5, with its pan-and-scan version at No. 8. Separate editions of "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" (WHV) hold the No. 7 and No. 10 spots.

The year-end DVD sales results are not surprising, according to industry executives.

"Family titles always end up being in the majority of top five and top 10 titles each year," says Kelly Sooter, domestic head of DreamWorks Home Entertainment. "As DVD broadened and player prices decreased over the last few years, families were buying home video product in full force. Action has been the No. 2 genre for years now because DVD was initially driven by men. I don't think it is anything different than the last few years."

Indeed, the other sell-through DVD titles in the top 10 are mainly action titles, with the widescreen special edition of "Spider-Man 2" (Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment) at No. 6 and the special extended edition of "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" (New Line/WHV) at No. 9.

Because of the appeal of family DVDs, Buena Vista Home Entertainment ends the year as the No. 1 DVD Sales Distributing Label. (That chart is available online at billboard.com.)

The runaway success of "Napoleon Dynamite" and "Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith" (No. 14, widescreen and No. 4, full screen on the Top DVD Sales Titles chart) earned Fox Video No. 1 slot on the Top DVD Sales Labels chart.

The family-friendly year is also reflected on the Top VHS Sales Titles chart.

Nine out of the top 10 titles in the format are family movies, including the No. 1 "Shrek 2," the No. 2 "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban" and the No. 3 "Shark Tale" (DreamWorks).

Though VHS is certainly a dying format—industry executives rarely mention it anymore—the players are likely to end up in kids' rooms because of their ease of use before they are permanently retired.

"The price of DVD players has fueled the hardware penetration across the U.S. and is killing off VHS at a very fast pace," says Dave Alder, executive VP for Los Angeles-based Virgin Entertainment.

WHV is the No. 1 VHS Sales Distributing Label of 2005.

In the music DVD category, a variety of musical genres ended the year at the top of the charts.

The Jay-Z/Linkin Park CD/DVD combo "MTV Ultimate Mash-Ups Presents: Collision Course" (Roc-a-Fella/Warner Bros./Warner Music Vision) rules the Top Music Video Sales Titles chart, while projects from Creed, Josh Groban, U2 and the Eagles hold the No. 2 through No. 5 positions, respectively.

Bryan Everitt, director of music operations for the Amarillo, Texas-based Hastings chain, says, "Music DVDs continue to be exciting to customers. The category was pretty much right about where we were last year sales-wise. The releases aren't as strong as last year, but the overall selection is broader."

"The widescreen and pan-and-scan versions of 'Shrek 2' are among the top 10 DVD sales titles for 2005."

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"I AM THREE"

Mingsus Big Band, Orchestra & Dynasty

Grammy Nominated: Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album

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JANUARY 7, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 19
Johannesburg — More than a decade after the end of the apartheid era, during which many acts shunned South Africa, the country is becoming a key destination for many international performers.

U.S. R&B artists John Legend, Missy Elliott and Leela James all played in the country in December. In March 2006, several overseas acts will arrive for a major festival series. And in April, Robbie Williams will open his global tour here.

Cape Town, South Africa-based Big Concerts owner Attie Van Wyk credits the increased activity to local promoters’ growing experience and the establishment of an infrastructure appropriate for major live events.

South Africa is now “the best-kept secret on the touring circuit,” Van Wyk says. “Why else would we be able to bring Bryan Adams back here four times since 1994?”

Big Concerts is promoting Adams’ four arena and outdoor shows during March. “He loves it here,” Van Wyk says. “And someone like Bryan will talk to his buddies — word-of-mouth helps predispose artists towards playing here.”

Johannesburg-based Morris Roca Productions booked Legend for December shows in Johannesburg (in a 5,000-capacity venue) and Cape Town (a 3,000-seat hall), as part of the ongoing multi-artist Pan-African MTV Base Live concert series.

“Everyone I knew who’d been [there] said [South Africa] was beautiful, the people were beautiful, and it was a nice mixture of Africa and Western culture,” Legend says. “I knew from friends that my music was popular [there], so I was excited to go.”

MTV Networks Africa VP/ GM Alex Okosi says the MTV shows provide a platform for local acts to perform alongside global names, “building bridges between themselves and international artists.”

There is also a practical objective, he admits, with MTV recording the concerts to compensate for a dearth of quality music videos featuring African artists.

The South African live music market is now “coming of age,” says veteran Johannesburg-based promoter Mike Fuller, who is managing director of Famous Concerts.

“During the apartheid years,” Fuller says, “we were isolated — correctly so, because it helped to bring change. We’ve had to catch up.” Indeed, many artists boycotted playing South Africa until apartheid was abolished.

Fuller insists that nowadays for international artists, the country is “at the same level as playing London or Berlin, whether you’re talking hotels or technical equipment or the business dealings of the top promoters.”

Internationally, South Africa is becoming “a real force,” Van Wyk says. However, he adds, “it’s still a question of an artist being in tour mode and us being able to make a bid that is accepted.”

In late 2001 the value of the South African rand fell sharply on global currency markets, but a stronger exchange rate now makes the market more attractive, Van Wyk notes.

In March, Big Concerts is promoting a multi-artist, Coca-Cola-sponsored, one-day festival series with national public top 40 radio station 5FM as a media partner. The Coca-Cola Cola8 MassMix festival will visit the 40,000-capacity Supersport Park in Centurion, near Pretoria, on March 18; the 52,000-capacity ABSA Stadium in Durban on March 21; and the 45,000-capacity Point Stadium in Cape Town on March 25.

The lineup is not yet finalized, but such home-grown acts as the Finkelensteins and Prime Circle will share the bill with U.S. rock act Seether, Canada’s Simple Plan, Finland’s the Rasmus and British DJ Fatboy Slim.

5FM program manager Nick Grubb says a final decision has not been made on how much of each show will be featured on-air. He adds that a key role for 5FM in a festival like MassMix lies in helping promoters reach sponsors.

“We’re able to provide airspace to the promoters to create really attractive sponsorship packages,” Grubb says.

South Africa’s post-apartheid standing remains a strong draw for many artists, including jazz saxophonist Kirk Whalum, who appeared Dec. 17 at Limpopo Province’s Mapungubwe Jazz Festival.

Whalum originally visited the country 11 years ago as part of Whitney Houston’s band. “The biggest moment in my life and career so far happened in South Africa,” he says, “when I stood onstage with Whitney Houston in the year of the country’s first democratic elections.”

Fuller admits the travel time to South Africa remains off-putting for some international acts. But, he says, “artists thoroughly enjoy playing here. We’ve got a wonderful new democracy and a population that loves concerts — and shows that they enjoy them.”

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LOS ANGELES — Cirque Du Soleil is taking its artistry out from under the big top for “Delirium.”

The new show will be the French-Canadian troupe’s first tour staged in arenas and its first to feature musicians and singers in center stage, as opposed to its usual focus on acrobatics.

“This show will be quite spectacular with big effects for the arenas, but at the same time, will be very touching,” says Michel Lemieux, creator and director of “Delirium” with partner Victor Pilon. “The skeleton of the show is music with an urban, tribal beat. After 20 years, Cirque Du Soleil is not sitting on their success.”

Lemieux says that Cirque Du Soleil founder and CEO Guy Laliberté and Clear Channel Entertainment approached him and Pilon to create “Delirium” after the duo produced a 20th-anniversary show in honor of the troupe at the Montreal Jazz Festival last year.

They were asked to take that show — an homage to the music of Cirque Du Soleil featuring multimedia elements and musicians — and enlarge it for a tour. Jonathan Hochwald, executive VP of creative development for CCE, says that his company had been seeking a partnership with Cirque Du Soleil for years, but had to wait for the right opportunity.

“Cirque Du Soleil is the Pixar of live entertainment,” Hochwald says. “They’ve never had a show that didn’t work.”

Indeed, Cirque Du Soleil currently has 11 different shows running: six big top tours and five resident shows.

Hochwald says that CCE was brought in to provide expertise on how to market an arena show. Cirque Du Soleil’s traditional big top presentations typically stay in a market for six to eight weeks, while “Delirium” will go to markets that support shorter runs in larger venues.

“Delirium” will revolve around 21 musical compositions that have been featured in previous Cirque Du Soleil shows.

“The story of the show is a character who escaped his world because he found it too formal,” Lemieux explains. “He goes on this dreamscape trip, in which he meets lots of different characters who tell him to find his heartbeat. When he comes back to his planet, he changes the people there with the new things he has learned.”

The set was specially designed to give all seats a clear view. The 140-foot stage is narrow and divided into two parts, with 80 feet of projection on both sides. Lemieux says it “is like the equivalent of four IMAX screens” on the main sides of the arena.

Patti-Anne Tarlton, director of programming and event marketing at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto, which is hosting “Delirium” Feb. 20-21, expects the show to sell out quickly. The average capacity of the venues on the tour’s first leg is 10,000.

“I expect that we will see a large number of new fans,” Tarlton adds. “And, fans that have seen Cirque under the big top and in the theater setting in Las Vegas will welcome the opportunity to see the new Cirque concert experience.”

Tickets will be available for roughly $100, a price that Hochwald says “reflects the size of the show,” which is a 20-truck production.

“Part of our responsibility is to get a message across that there is value for that price when you see what we’ve built,” Hochwald says.

CCE is garnering advance press for the show by giving tours of the rehearsal space, an abandoned car factory in remote Canada. Additionally, an animated TV spot will announce on-sales.

The first leg will begin Jan. 26 at the Bell Centre in Montreal, and runs through Feb-March in Toronto.

Upcoming legs will be announced soon.
Kevin Lyman

As the founder and "camp counselor" of the Van's Warped tour, Kevin Lyman has been bringing punk music to skater kids around the world for more than a decade.

A fierce independent who has survived outside the touring industry mainstream, Lyman and his 4Fini Productions (named after Warped he him promote amateur and supported circuit, York cab, now on 700,000 Q:
exploded weren't you the second year I. J.
Vans at I. D.

Q: What was the concept in launching Warped?
A: The concept was trying to go back to the roots, supporting skating and music. A lot of bands were touring the club circuit, and I didn't think they were getting a lot of support. There wasn't quite a scene, and I thought that if we all went out and supported each other with a cheap ticket price, we could maybe go build something.

We almost didn't make it past the first year. I was lucky enough to have a 15-minute meeting with the CEO of Van's at the time and convinced him that I could help him promote amateur skating if he would be part of this event, and in 1996 it became the Vans Warped tour. They allowed us to get to the second year financially. For the promoters that lost money on the first year we pretty much had to go play for nothing the second year to get there.

Q: In 2000, Warped was sold to Launch. What brought that on?
A: During the dot-com craze, if you didn't make a dot-com entrepreneur deal, I guess you weren't an entrepreneur. Which exploded in our face.

Q: What went wrong?
A: After the crest in the dot-com boom, I guess we were on the brink of potentially going out of business and they had an opportunity to be purchased by Yahoo, and they were still with Yahoo. It was just crazy. The night before the tour started we were sitting in the parking lot thinking the whole concept and tour would be dragged into potential bankruptcy with them. But we ended up getting the rights back to the tour in 2004. They owned us a bunch of money this crazy deal where the only people that made money were the lawyers — and we owed a bunch of money for taxes on the deal, and that's when Vans came in and purchased a large chunk of the equity from us so we could keep going. Me and Darryl still own part of the tour, and Vans is the majority owner.

Q: You have said that Warped turns its audience over completely every three to four years. What are the challenges in this?
A: By the time the Warped kid hits 18, 19 years, they're moving on to other things. That's fine, because we're getting their younger brothers and sisters who want to see what their siblings had such a great time at.

But it forces you not to rest on your laurels. I'm accused of being a workaholic sometimes, but you can't sit back. I think that's what happens with some of these other properties, everyone sits back and takes things for granted.

Q: What's the key to breaking live entertainment properties in international markets?
A: When we took Warped overseas in 1997, we met some resistance. I felt, from the establishment in some territories. It's hard to build a package that crosses borders. A lineup in Paris doesn't make sense when you cross into Germany.

We just finished an international run of "Taste of Chaos," and I really felt like because we brought a band like Funeral for a Friend from the U.K. around the world with us that we were embraced by the industry in the U.K., the agents, the record labels, the managers. They really stepped out and supported the project and are talking about next year already. We were able to take bands like Story of the Year, who had never been overseas, and they just received an offer that was two-thirds of what we received for the whole package [for their second time into Australia in May].

Q: So industry support is key first and foremost?
A: Absolutely. It's hard to break bands on a worldwide level; labels aren't having much success in this niche world. It's about getting them to understand maybe our tours are a good thing to support and be part of.

Q: The Vans Warped relationship is the longest-running in touring. What makes it a sponsorship work?
A: I think it's about delivering value... I think that's about delivering value... I think that's about delivering value... If you look at the [Billboard] Boxscores, our ticket price is $23.75, and the average of the top 20 shows was $43. If we were going to have gone with a $43 ticket, we would have been one of the top [gigging] tours in the country last year.

For the sponsors, we deliver. We don't overprice our packages, we're very competitive. And we're a tour that can tell you we're going to be around in 2007.

Q: How healthy is the touring business right now?
A: I think the club business is very strong. But there are so many bands trying to fill these clubs, people are holding club dates all the way into June and July now. Kids are going back to live music—they like going to shows. And I think Warped turned a lot of them on to it for the first time.

HIGHLIGHTS

KEVIN LYMAN
1983: Joins Southern California promoter Goldenvoice as stage manager at Fenders Ballroom in Long Beach, becomes promotion manager for Goldenvoice
1995: Launches the first Warped tour in partnership with Creative Artists Agency's Darryl Eaton
1996: Vans comes onboard as sponsor. Lyman opens 4Fini, a multifaceted entertainment property that includes the Warped Tour, along with management and label concerns.
2000: Warped tour sold to Launch Media for a reported $12 million. $10 million
2004: CAA and Lyman buy back Warped tour, with Vans as a financial partner. Taste of Chaos and Crusty Demons tours are born, but only Taste survives.

Q: Are multi-act tours like Warped or Taste of Chaos the best way to break an act now, if you don't have a TV show?
A: Absolutely. There are too many bands trying to tour right now. With Warped, you put them all together, it takes the traffic out of the market.

But I never wanted Warped to be the end all, with the pressure sometimes I'm getting from kids in bands calling me saying if they don't get on Warped they'll get dropped from their label. That's not really fair, either. That's a lot of pressure. We had over 1,000 bands submit this year through CAA, and we ended up booking about 125 throughout the tour.

We look bands sometimes, then the record doesn't come out, but we honor our word and bring them out on the tour because I believe these bands should be able to make a career touring. A lot of these bands aren't dependent on selling records now. And our marketing is so viral through the Internet now, and the kids are so tuned in that we just have to get the word out. We went on sale with Taste on the Internet presale and without spending a dollar sold almost 2,000 tickets in Los Angeles.

Q: What is the key to breaking a live entertainment property into internationals?
A: When you talk about the revenue streams of Warped, how is it divided between ticket sales and sponsorships?
A: We've never quite broken even on our ticket sales. We had 800 people on the road last year. If we make any money, it's through the sponsorships. I'd say about 35% of gross revenue comes from sponsorships.

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Unique Resolutions
Touring Biz Promises Professional, Personal Improvement

"This is the season for resolutions. For those of us who do resolve to make personal or professional changes on the cusp of a new year, the resolutions tend to uniquely reflect individual perspectives.

For instance, a manager's resolution tends to center on clients' accomplishments and goals. Here is the new year's resolution that Principle Artists managing director Paul McGuinness, manager of U2, e-mailed to me:

"This was such a great year for U2. A No. 1 album in 20 countries, 110 shows all sold out, 3.3 million tickets sold, 100% of the tickets we put on sale. Nine million plus sold of the current record, 3 million catalog. 2 million DVDs. U2 have never been bigger or better. Next year after Mexico, South America, Australia, New Zealand and Japan, we will end the Vertigo tour in Honolulu.

"Then it will be fun to concentrate on Principle's other artists," McGuinness continues. "PI Harvey will be making a record. Also, the Rapture will record and tour. Paddy Casey will break out of Ireland, where he is quintuple-platinum, a challenge for Sony.

"The most unusual client project is the CBS network series with magician Keith Barry. 2006 is going to be a great year for Principle Management."

Similarly, corporate heads tend to single-mindedly focus on their businesses and realizing their potential, while constantly looking ahead. Ticketmaster chairman Terry Barnes resolves: "I look forward to expanding our new Ticket Exchange Program in order to provide a safe, secure, event-authorized secondary-market channel for fans to buy and sell valid event tickets. The after-market isn't going away, and we're taking an active role in helping to legitimize it so our clients and consumers can enjoy the benefits of ticket resale without risk of fraud."

Promoters seem to think about self-preservation. "My new year's resolution is [to] break some new headliners so that I will have a job in five years," says Randy Phillips, president/CEO of AEG Live. Artists, on the other hand, tend to be a little more philosophical. Rock legend Steve Miller offers this resolution: "Since happiness is not a destination, it's a way of traveling. I plan to treat my guitar 'Tuffy' better on the road in 2006."

Patterson Hood of Drive-By Truckers sounds like a guy who wants to treat himself a little better on the road. His resolution for 2006 is: "To have more time off, at least during my 'off' time," the singer/guitarist/songwriter says. With a new DBT album and a solo album in the can and a long stretch of dates booked, good luck with that, sir.

As for myself, I can proudly say I stuck to my own resolution for 2005, namely not to say "yeah, yeah, yeah" really fast. I had previously dropped "absolutely" from my written and spoken vocabulary.

For 2006, I resolve not to preface any sentence by saying "clearly." If it is so clear, I do not need to state the obvious. And I also pledge not to say "of course" inappropriately or repeat people's questions back to them. And I will not, under any circumstances, say something "is what it is."
BY ANTONY BRUNO

ON THE COUCH

Home Entertainment Systems Will Grab CES Spotlight

It is big, loud and incredibly crowded. But the annual international Consumer Electronics Show remains the place to be every January to see the latest entertainment products and trends.

The home entertainment market is the focus of this year’s event. At the 2005 conference, major players like Sony, Samsung, Microsoft and others pledged to create products that would free digital content from the confines of the computer hard drive and shift it to wide screen TVs and surround sound systems.

At the event taking place Jan. 5-8 in Las Vegas, attendees will see how they have delivered on that promise.

“Whatever content I have, I’m going to be able to use it, view it and watch it any way I want it,” says Karen Chupka, VP of events and conferences for the Consumer Electronics Assn., which produces the event. “While there’s been a lot of promise of that in the past, this is the year you’re really going to see it on the show floor.”

For consumer electronics manufacturers, the digital home is an opportunity to compete in a fresh market. With Apple Computer’s iPod still dominating the portable MP3 space for the foreseeable future, the consumer electronics battle for digital music has now shifted to the home.

For content owners, focusing on the home allows them to market digital music to new users—those not interested in carrying the music on portable devices.

The result is a symbiotic relationship that has brought the two camps closer than ever before.

“It helps bring new players into the market,” Chupka says. “As technology evolves and as new players start testing the waters, it brings in a whole new audience to the show.”

On the consumer electronics side, Sony Electronics is making perhaps the biggest splash, booking a 25,000-square-foot booth billed as the show floor’s largest—and for the first time bringing every product division to the event. CEO Howard Stringer is even giving the opening keynote address.

For Sony, this CES is the launch pad for several initiatives across a range of categories. From high-definition TVs to cellular phones to its Walkman line of MP3 devices, Sony is using the event to regain momentum in the face of increasing challenges from Samsung, Microsoft and Apple.

The Sony-led Blu-ray consortium will unveil its plans to launch high-definition DVD, hoping to seize the advantage over the Toshiba-led HD-DVD format.

Another central feature of Sony’s presence will be revelations about its much-anticipated PlayStation 3.

Microsoft’s Xbox 360 game console, introduced Nov. 22, has stolen the early spotlight. But Sony is expected to release new details about its upcoming platform at CES in hopes of convincing consumers to wait for its 2006 release.

Intel also will be a closely watched participant. The company in August introduced its Viiv (rhymes with “five”) media center technology that bundles a number of digital entertainment elements in one package. They include a remote control, easy on/off controls (no logging on or loading), Windows Media Center Edition operating system and software, home-theater-quality sound support, access to online entertainment services and a TV tuner card. The card will allow users to record, pause and rewind live TV and store programming on the hard drive.

So far, only a handful of consumer electronics manufacturers and services have voiced support for the new platform, the most notable being TiVo and Movielink. But Intel says it is working with a number of computer, consumer electronic and content partners to set interoperability standards so media can move from Viiv computers to home entertainment systems.

More details are anticipated at CES.

Microsoft, meanwhile, will give a preview of its new Vista operating system, as well as the many computer electronics devices that now feature different versions of Windows software.

According to Windows digital media VP Amir Majidimehr, the range of...
ON THE COUCH
from >>p23

devices now supporting Windows software is an indication that the battle over whether the PC or the TV will be the hub of the digital living room has ended. “Our partnerships with consumer electronics customers are the strongest they’ve ever been,” he says. “Everybody put down their swords 12-18 months ago.” What you’re seeing is that the two are being married together in sort of a peaceful manner.

The upshot of this collective focus on digital entertainment is that content owners have gained powerful new marketing allies in the effort to convert consumers to digital services. “That is going to be instructive and helpful in terms of raising awareness across the mass consumer market,” Gartner G2 analyst Mike McGuire says. “If done properly, it can help broaden consumer awareness of digital media overall and music specifically. Those are going to be important messages for consumers to hear, to see beyond just the offerings from the online music services and the industry itself.”

But record labels and other content owners also are keeping a close eye on these announcements, because they desperately need to expand the availability of digital entertainment.

For digital music to grow from the 5% of global music sales it is today to the 25% predicted by 2010, more devices and products that let consumers access their library throughout the home are required. “It needs to move beyond a simple, portable music playing experience,” McGuire says. “That will be very important to build up the environment for digital music and digital media overall.”

As a result, more representatives from the content industry are expected to attend the upcoming CES than ever before.

“The thing that happened between last year and this year is that media got on board,” Forrester Research analyst Ted Schadler says. “The joint partnerships, agreements and announcements make it clear media companies are getting with the digital transition.”

Not wanting technology to pass them by, TV networks are experimenting boldly with new digital distribution models. For instance, ABC and NBC are offering downloads of hit shows and classics via iTunes and cable video-on-demand outlets. Fox is planning to offer original episodes of “Family Guy” exclusively online. According to Schadler, this is an encouraging sign, as consumer electronics manufacturers and content producers must work together more closely if they are to attract consumer attention.

“They need to sell digital experiences, not products,” he says. “Consumers want products plus content.”

And therein lies the challenge. Despite all the attempts to create interoperable home entertainment networks, adoption remains low because consumers feel they are still too costly and too complicated.

A worldwide consumer survey conducted on behalf of consulting firm Accenture found that 80% of consumers listed cost as the primary barrier to buying a digital home system. Only 4% said they could afford a converged system today, and 24% said they believe they never will.

But even as the costs drop, consumers say the complexity of setting up a home network, let alone connecting it to a home entertainment system, is not worth the bother.

The problem is that vendors still make it more difficult to incorporate a compelling product into their system in order to promote the ease of use of their own.

Although the company will not have a presence at CES, Apple has its own for the digital living room that may overshadow the news coming from the conference.

Apple-watching Web site Think Secret, which has successfully predicted such announcements as the iPod Shuffle and the video iPod, says Apple will introduce its new content delivery strategy in conjunction with its media-centric Mac Mini at the Macworld Expo conference, to be held just a few weeks after CES.

The new system reportedly will have TiVo-like recording capabilities and also allow users to buy content to either download directly to an iPod or stream to a connected TV, not store on the hard drive.

Given Apple’s ability to offer the kind of compelling digital media experience that so far has eluded other providers, some question whether the home entertainment system will cut into the iPod’s market at all.

“That’s the argument, but it just hasn’t been true yet,” Schadler says. “Do people need an open system to enjoy digital media, or are they just as happy to get something from just one provider?”

BY ANTONY BRUNO

CES: BY THE NUMBERS

The 2006 International Consumer Electronics Show will feature 199 panels and “SuperSessions,” 1.5 million square feet of exhibit space, more than 2,500 exhibitors, and 130,000 expected attendees over the course of the four-day event.

As usual, Microsoft chairman/chief software architect Bill Gates will deliver the proshow keynote address at 6:30 p.m. on Wed. Jan. 4. Many expect a preview of the new Vista Windows operating system, among the other announcements and demonstrations.

Sony Corp. chairman/CEO Howard Stringer will make the opening keynote address at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 5. Intel CEO Paul Otellini will deliver his keynote later that day at 4:30 p.m.

Yahoo chairman/CEO Terry Semel will take the keynote stage at 9 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 6. Google co-founder and president of products Larry Page will close the keynote program at 4 p.m.

The Industry Insider series, part of the conference’s Innovations Plus program, will kick off with Dell founder and chairman Michael Dell at 2:30 p.m. on Jan. 5.

Other noteworthy panels include “The Return of Radio” on Jan. 5, which will focus on the evolution of the radio market through satellite and high-definition radio. Moderated by IDC analyst Susan Kevorkian, panels include iBiquity Digital’s Bob Struble, XM Satellite Radio’s Hugh Panero, Texas Instruments’ John Gardner and Clear Channel Radio’s Jeff Littlejohn.

The digital home is a major theme of the show, highlighted by the Connected Home Entertainment TechZone—a showcase of the latest in media servers and whole-house audio and video. Individual TechZones also will highlight achievements made in the audio industry, focusing on such segments as portable audio, mobile audio, accessories, speakers and components, Internet audio and digital content storage.

Finally, the Studio@Home TechZone, part of the Innovations Plus program, will feature home studio products like home recording and editing products, electronic music creation software, “prosumer” recording and editing products and video edit ng and production tools.

On the Agenda: CES will host nearly 200 panel discussions.
LET THERE BE MUSIC.

Over a million songs. 5 bucks a month. THIS IS HUGE.
2006 is going to be a hot year for new talent. These 10 faces to watch represent our picks. We have put our musical ears to the test and found rising stars across all genres—country, Christian, pop, classical, Latin, dance, R&B, jazz and rock. These multitalented artists either have a highly anticipated debut album ready to come out in the first quarter or have been under-the-radar and are expected to explode at any moment. Enjoy!

—TAMARA CONNIE

ARCTIC MONKEYS

DOMINO RECORDINGS

Of the coolest British newcomers to emerge in 2005, Sheffield’s ArctiMonkeys climbed to the top of the heap.

"Far and away, there hasn’t been a band which has created this kind of a buzz amongst record companies and publishers this year," says Mike Smith, EMI Music Publishing U.K. senior VP/director of A&R. Smith was instrumental in signing the band to a long-term, worldwide, exclusive publishing deal this year.

Domino Recordings, home to Franz Ferdinand, came out on top amid frenzied label interest to ink the four-piece to a recording contract.

Lifted by a dedicated fan base and an online marketing campaign, ArctiMonkeys’ Oct. 17 debut single, “I Bet That You Look Good on the Dancefloor,” vaulted to the top spot at home and to No. 7 on the Billboard Eurochart Singles chart.

Because of that success, interest is building for the band’s forthcoming album, “Whatever People Say I Am, That’s What I’m Not,” which will be released locally Jan. 30. The album will be preceded by a second single, “When the Sun Goes Down.”

Details on the act’s U.S. push will be released this month. —Lars Brandle

SHANNON BROWN

WARNER BROS.

After 11 years in Nashville, Shannon Brown is not a newcomer to the country music industry. But Warner Bros. is launching her label debut with all the energy and innovation usually associated with a promising new artist.

In a creative initiative, Warner Bros. teamed up with AOL Music to introduce Brown to the online audience through a six-part web video series. Titled “This Is Shannon Brown,” it launched on AOLmusic.com last summer.

In bite-sized video snippets, the series offers a behind-the-scenes look at everything involved in releasing a new album and introducing an artist who has not yet become a household name.

Big & Rich’s John Rich produced Brown’s new album, due Feb. 28. “She’s been around the block a couple of times and hasn’t been able to break through,” he says, referring to her time on Anista Nashville and sister label BNA Records between 1997 and 2002. “Shannon and I finally captured musically what she is all about. We wrote some big old hits. Her head’s in the right place, and she’s going to come out and absolutely rock’till she’s 160.

The Iowa native’s debut single, “Corn Fed,” is currently on the Billboard Hot Country Songs chart. —Phyllis Stark

DECEMBER RADIO

SLANTED

Spring Hill Music Group’s new Slanted imprint gained critical kudos for introducing torchy rock vocalist Charity von, but in 2006 look for December Radio to put the scrappy indie label on the dial in a big way.

Formed in 1998, this Blacksburg, Va.-based rock outfit cites such influences as Aerosmith, Lenny Kravitz and the Black Crowes, and serves up hard rock with a Southern flavor.

The group is the resident worship band for Camp Boreas’ Deep Freeze youth camps near Concord, N.H., where it has developed a rabid teen fan base. It was voted breakout band of the year by radio stations attending the 2005 Rock Summit, and it has already scored slots on Atlanta Fest and Rock the Universe, two of Christian music’s largest festivals.

“You meet these guys and think, ‘Wow, great guys.’ You see and hear them play and go, ‘Wow! They rock!’” says David Ecrement, director of marketing for Slanted. “We will be placing heavy emphasis on the live aspect of what they do. That’s where the dots really connect.”

Produced by Scotty Wilbanks (Third Day, Overflow, NewsSong), the band’s debut is slated for late summer/early fall. Slanted is distributed by Warner Bros.-owned Word Distribution. —Deborah Evans Price

TEDDY GEIGER

COLUMBIA RECORDS

Teddy Geiger’s debut album, “Underage Thinking,” does not come out until Feb. 28 on Columbia Records, but the 17-year-old from Rochester, N.Y., is already poised to be everyone’s next musical sweetheart. His songwriting and guitar work are drawing comparisons to a teenage John Mayer for good reason. Geiger’s tunes are full of smart—but not precocious—lyrics and catchy melodies.

First single “For You I Will (Confidence)” goes to radio this month.

Producer/songwriter Billy Mann discovered the self-taught musician during auditions for ViTV’s “In Search of the New Partridge Family.” Geiger did not land the coveted role of Keith Partridge, but got something much better: a recording contract.

In the meantime, Geiger, who was featured in Teen People’s “What’s Next” issue, has found another vehicle to make him a TV personality. He has a recurring role as a rising young pop star—talk about type-casting—in the new CBS series “Love Monkey.” The drama, which stars Tom Cavanagh and Jason Priestley, debuts Jan. 17. The initial episodes will feature a number of Geiger’s songs.

The singer is also scheduled to appear on “CBS Saturday Morning” Jan. 28. —Melinda Newman

ANJA HARTEROS

RCA RED SEAL

In the opera world, the focus is on rising 32-year-old German soprano Anja Harteros. Winner of the 1999 Singer of the World competition in Cardiff, Wales—a prize given in other years to such singers as Karita Mattila and Dmitri Hvorostovsky, who have achieved international success—Harteros has gone on to sing at the Vienna State Opera, the Salzburg Festival and the Metropolitan Opera, where she made her debut in the 2003-04 season. She has remained a hidden gem, but that is all about to change.

Last month, Harteros went into the studio to record a disc of Mozart opera and concert arias (plus Haydn’s “Scena Di Berenice”) with the Vienna Symphony and conductor Pinchas Steinberg. Her debut album is slated for release on RCA Red Seal this summer.

“She has an incredible voice, but she also possesses a stage charisma and a charm that we believe will connect directly to the hearts of both opera aficionados and the broader public,” says Gilbert Hetherwick, president of Sony BMG Masterworks. “We believe that for her, all of the planets are lining up for a major career.”

—Anastasia Tsouloucas

www.americanradiohistory.com
JEREMÍAS
UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATINO

In December, Venezuelan singer/songwriter Jeremías played an impromptu show at the offices of his label, Universal Music Latino. Armed only with an acoustic guitar, he showcased his compelling voice—reminiscent of Joan Manuel Serrat and Joaquin Sabina—strong melodies and beautifully crafted, often wity lyrics. (One song was about a man who catches his wife and best friend in a compromising situation.)

Those were the elements that led Universal to sign Jeremías, whose real name is Carlos Eduardo López Avila. The label, which believes his songs will strike a chord with a broad audience, has made the singer a priority for 2006.

Prior to Universal, Jeremías had minor success with his self-titled debut on indie Avila Records. Some radio hits in Puerto Rico brought him to the attention of Universal VP of A&R Walter Kolm, who in turn took him to Universal Latino president John Echevarría.

"He is a quality artist with popular appeal," Echevarría notes.

This month, Jeremías’ first single, “Uno Y Uno,” will ship to radio simultaneously in the United States and Latin America. His as-yet-untitled album is due in the first quarter.

—Leila Cobo

MYLO
BREASTFED/RCA

Dance music execs are always searching for an artist that they can respectfully cross over, one that can satisfy the expectations of dance fans and a pop audience. In Mylo, they get both.

Mylo, aka Myles Machines, creates original music that merges dance’s reigning electro sound with rock and pop, sometimes literally. His biggest overseas hit is a fully licensed mash-up of Miami Sound Machine’s puffy “Doctor Beat” and his own bleepy “Drop the Pressure.” Expect it to do some damage on the Hot Dance Club Play chart upon its U.S. release.

The Scot’sman’s debut album, cheekily titled “Destroy Rock’n’Roll,” is already a grass-roots smash in the United Kingdom, having sold close to 300,000 units on Mylo’s own Breastfed label. Those numbers prompted major-label interest statewide, and Breastfed/RCA will release “Destroy” Feb. 7 in the United States. If Europe is any indicator, potential for sales is great.

A conceptual cousin to Madonna producer Stuart Price (aka electronic artist Les Rythmes Digitales) and LCD Soundsystem frontman/DFA co-founder James Murphy, Mylo mixes formats as well as genres. He tours as a DJ, but also has a full band, which he will take on the road in the United States. —Kerri Mason

NE-YO
DEF JAM

Nicknamed Ne-Yo after the movie character Neo in "The Matrix," the 22-year-old R&B singer has already made people sit up and take notice of his skills.

With super producer Scott Storch and Kaz Housh, he co-wrote Mario’s long-running R&B/pop hit “Let Me Love You,” which recently coped two Billboard Music Awards. In addition to writing credits for Mary J. Blige, B2K, Faith Evans and Musiq, Ne-Yo (born Shaffer C. Smith) is ready to add another milestone to his résumé. On Feb. 28, his Def Jam album will debut, under the fitting title “In My Own Words.”

Meanwhile, the Arkansas-to-Las Vegas transplant already has two successful singles under his belt. "Stay" featuring Mary J. Blige, B2K, Faith Evans and Musiq, Ne-Yo (born Shaffer C. Smith) is ready to add another milestone to his résumé. On Feb. 28, his Def Jam album will debut, under the fitting title “In My Own Words.”

"Stay" featuring Peedi Crack peaked at No. 36 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart, while "So Sick" is currently No. 22.

His brand of melodic R&B has been featured on BET Style, MSNBC and MTV, where he was profiled on "You Hear It First." After wooing fans last summer on a Teen People-sponsored listening-lounge tour with labelmates Rihanna and Teairra Mari, which was hosted by Def Jam honcho Jay-Z, Ne-Yo went on to open for John Legend.

—Gail Mitchell

THE SWORD
KEMADO RECORDS

There will be no shortage of hard rock bands primed for stellar success in 2006, with big things expected from Victory’s Hawthorne Heights, Century Media’s Lacuna Coil, Trustkill’s Bleeding Through and Epitaph’s My Chemical Romance, among others. But old-fashioned metal will not be left out, and new act The Sword is expected to wave the flag for the genre.

The Austin-based quartet owns a monstrous sound, one that echoes the riffs of Black Sabbath and the psychedelic sludge of stoner rock heroes Kyuss. Thanks to nine guitar anthems that slash and hack their way through the band’s self-titled debut, which is due Feb. 14, the set is already turning heads with songs like “Winter’s Wolves” and garnering rave reviews both locally and nationally.

The band first won over fans and critics alike at last year’s South by Southwest music conference and earned a touring slot with . . . And You Will Know Us by the Trail of Dead. Signed to the hipster-friendly Kemado Records, the Sword should find itself embraced by the same fan base that follows such acts as Sub Pop’s Comets on Fire and Matador’s Early Man.

—Todd Martins

CHRISTIAN SCOTT
CONCORD JAZZ

While dozens of technically proficient artists get churned out of jazz programs each year, a rare few express themselves with creativity and vision. Enter Christian Scott.

The 22-year-old trumpeter tops the class of upstarts with his exhilarating March 28 debut, “Rewind That,” on Concord Jazz.

With a maturity engendered by his mentoring uncle—jazz saxophonist Donald Harrison—Scott boasts a singular breathing tone. He sounds intent on breaking straight-ahead jazz codes with his funk- and rock-infused style, marked by odd meters, urgent grooves and passionate romancing.

Scott is getting the royal treatment at Concord. The label’s marketing plan calls for club showcases and inclusion on free sampler discs at retail outlets. In addition, his debut CD will be sold at the developing-artist price of $12.98.

“We’re pricing Christian’s album aggressively to encourage the cost-conscious consumer to discover a young artist who plays with conviction,” Concord Music Group GM Gene Runsey says. “We feel Christian can capture the imaginations of jazz fans and music lovers.”

—Dan Ouellette
The Secrets Of Voting

The Grammy Awards. How do legacy artists get bundled with rap stars? Who decides the nominees for the coveted album of the year? Does it make sense to have Mariah Carey, Paul McCartney, Gwen Stefani, U2 and Kanye West all up for the same award? Your questions answered right here.

BY TAMARA CONNIFF
It is that Grammy voting time of year. Those nominated were the Recording Academy’s wisdom and prowess, while those shunned cry fraud and favoritism. Yet the voting process has been a mystery, until now.

In fact, it is obsessively woven in by Diane Theriot, head of awards, and a 17-year Academy veteran. She has held strong through numerous regimes (from the hated Muddie Green to the loved Neil Portnow).

In early summer, Grammy entries are solicited from Recording Academy members and registered record labels. This group submits approximately 15,000 initial entries for Grammy consideration online between June and August. Theriot and her awards team then assess all the entries to make sure they are actually eligible.

In late September, Grammy screening meetings are held to ensure all recordings have been entered into the correct categories. For example, to assess whether U2 should be considered rock or pop, etc.

This is no small task given there are 108 categories. The Academy invites member experts in each genre to make these assessments. The Academy prides itself in that the Grammy Awards are based on peer voting. These experts are chosen based on what area—producer, artist, etc.—of the recording business qualified them for membership.

Screening committees for Native American music, soundtracks, world music and children’s music are held at the Recording Academy’s Santa Monica, Calif., headquarters. All other committee meetings are held during a two-day off-site, usually at a swank hotel, where experts labor in nine different screening rooms.

Now it starts getting complicated. Enter the craft fields. (As a refresher, the 108 categories are contained in 31 fields; for example, the pop field has seven categories.) Craft field categories are deemed so because they require a distinct amount of hands-on research and expertise. They include album package, album notes, best historical album, remix and surround sound. It is important that those voting on album package actually see the album package, etc. The Academy sets up expert craft committees in each chapter city made up of voting members. The chapter boards recommend committee members who then have to be approved by the full board of trustees. These craft committees do not go out to invite voting. The craft committees go through a two-step voting process to determine the semi-finalists, which are given directly to accounting firm Deloitte.

Non-craft committee categories are included on the general ballot, which is based on the 15,000 entries. Grammy voters send their ballots to Deloitte, which then tabulates the data and prepare the awards department for the next round, which is even more complicated.

The general ballot determines the semi-finalists for yet another set of craft fields: composing, arranging, engineering and producing. This process is the same as the other craft committees, it just happens at a later time.

The general ballot also gives the Academy the semi-finalists for the jazz, classical, Latin and music video fields as well as the general field, aka the BIG ONES: album of the year, record of the year, song of the year and best new artist.

Nomination review committees comprised of voting members who have been approved by the trustees then scrutinize these semi-finalists. Yes, trustees are eligible to be on these committees. Theriot assures Billboard that these committees are in fact top secret and rotate every year.

Why have nomination review committees? Theriot says these committees began for classical and jazz in May 1989 and May 1992, respectively, because it is not mainstream music. The Academy wanted to make sure that members did not cast their votes based on popularity or name recognition, but truly on the quality of the recording. The nomination review committee listens to all semi-finalists recordings from beginning to end before casting their votes. Latin was added to this list in May 2002, and the general field was added in 1995.

Yes, the general field is the most contentious. But shocking enough, the Academy had good reason to do it. Theriot confesses that not all Academy members know the difference between song of the year and record of the year. Song of the year is a songwriter’s award and needs to be judged based on melody, lyrics and writing aptitude. Record of the year is an artist’s award and can be judged more on performance and delivery. Once again, the top-secret experts have to be called in. Committee members cast their individual votes directly to Deloitte, whose representatives come on site. Each committee, including the craft committees, range in size from 15 to 40 people.

This is how the Academy gets to the final nominations. And for the naysayers who say members can vote in too many fields—not so. For the first ballot, members can vote in only nine fields; and for the second ballot, in only eight fields. The production, composing and arranging fields are voted on by people who qualified for membership in these respective areas.

The final nominations are due Jan. 11. Then, on Feb. 8, representatives from Deloitte, under police escort, will bring the winning envelopes directly to the Staples Center in Los Angeles, in time for the live telecast.

Is the process perfect? No. People complain that the nominees, especially for album of the year, song of the year and record of the year, are either too commercial or not commercial enough.

Is the process perfect? No. People complain that the nominees, especially for album of the year, song of the year and record of the year, are either too commercial or not commercial enough. Theriot says the awards department is always working on ways to make the process better.

Who are these people who get to sit on committees? They are peers of the nominees and winners, they are experts, and, we all hope, they care more about music than record business politics.
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Diversity Marks Album Noms

Grammy Category Includes Mostly Veterans, But Varying Styles Of Music

LOS ANGELES—A comeback story, a living legend, an established frontwoman making her solo debut, the world’s biggest rock band and an opinedated rapper recorded the projects that make up a diverse album of the year slate for the 2006 Grammy Awards.

The nominees are largely music industry veterans, though their styles could not be more different.

Mariah Carey’s blend of pop and R&B is competing with Paul McCartney’s songwriting prowess, Gwen Stefani’s dance-oriented solo foray and U2’s rock anthems, while Kanye West offers up fresh, socially conscious rap.

Here is a rundown of each nominated album and its success on the Billboard charts.

• “The Emancipation of Mimi,” Mariah Carey: Carey’s eighth studio album is her best-selling since 1995’s “Daydream,” which has sold 7.5 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. “Mimi” has sold 4.4 million copies in the United States since its April release, and Island Def Jam reports total worldwide sales of more than 7 million units. The project debuted at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 with 404,000 units. It stayed at No. 1 for two weeks.

Carey co-wrote the project’s 14 tracks—including hit single “We Belong Together”—co-produced most of the tunes and was executive producer of the album with Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio “L.A.” Reid. The album emphasizes her octave-defying vocal talents through collaborations with Jermaine Dupri, the Neptunes, Snoop Dogg and fellow nominee West.

“This is a comeback if you want to be technical about it,” Carey told Billboard in November, “because it’s an album of songs that have come from my heart that I didn’t have to battle the record company about. It was like, ‘We support you as an artist.’ ”

• “Chaos and Creation in the Backyard,” Paul McCartney: McCartney’s 10th post-Beatles album and his...continued on >>p32

Race For Record Of The Year
A Close Call

This year’s Grammy Award nominees for record of the year have collectively logged 28 weeks at No. 1 on The Billboard Hot 100. Out of the five contenders, Mariah Carey had the biggest success. Her smash ballad “We Belong Together” spent 14 weeks ruling the chart, more than any other single in 2005.

To take home an award, she will have to beat out four acts with top 20 hits. Among the other nominees, Kanye West, Green Day and Gwen Stefani have all won at least one Grammy in the past, and Gorillaz will try for their first award. Here is a closer look at the nominees.

• “We Belong Together,” Mariah Carey: The first single from Carey’s “The Emancipation of Mimi” (Island) became her 16th No. 1 on The Hot 100. It was her first No. 1 since 2000, when “Thank God I Found You” featuring Joe and 98° reached the summit.

Carey told Billboard she had an early sense this song would stand out: “I had the chills. I had a great feeling about it when we finished writing the song, and I was flying back from Atlanta at some crazy hour of the morning... But we were listening on the plane ride on the way home, and even from the demo, I really felt something special.”

• “Gold Digger,” Kanye West: As the second single from West’s “Late Registration” (Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam), “Gold Digger” quelled any fears of West hitting a sophomore slump.

The song was the closest challenger to “We Belong Together” for pure chart dominance, as it spent 10 weeks atop the Hot 100. The single gave West his second No. 1 on that chart, and, like his 2004 hit with Twista, “Slow Jamz,” it features a cameo from Jamie Foxx.

“I look at voices as instruments,” West told Billboard in 2005. “I wasn’t going after the person or the name. I wanted the voice.”

• “Boulevard of Broken Dreams,” Green Day: This is the second single from Green Day’s “American Idiot” (Reprise) to earn a record of the year nomination. The title track received a nod last year, but did not win, although the trio took home a trophy for best rock album.

“Boulevard of Broken Dreams” peaked at No. 2 on the Hot 100 in March, giving the act its first top 10 hit on the chart. Additionally, it spent 16 weeks at No. 1 on Billboard’s Modern Rock chart....continued on >>p32

MARIAH CAREY is up for Grammy Awards in the album and record of the year categories.
from p.31
first studio set in four years in many ways marks a return to form. The Capitol Records project, which has scanned 377,000 units, features the artist playing multiple instruments—the first time he has done so since 1980's "McCartney II." The album also includes some of his most critically acclaimed songs in years such as "Fine Line." The artist won a Grammy in this category in 1967 as a member of the Beatles for "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band."

"Chaos" peaked at No. 6 on The Billboard 200 when it was released in September. McCartney told Billboard around the time of the album's release that after meeting with producer Nigel Godrich (Radiohead, Beck), he discovered that their ideas were "surprisingly similar. I suggested a couple of possible things that I was listening to that we might draw off. And he said, 'No, we've got enough to draw off. People want an album that sounds like you.'"

- Love, Angel, Music, Baby. Gwen Stefani: The 80s-inspired dance album from Stefani—her first as a solo artist—includes collaborations with Dr. Dre and Eve, the Neptunes, Outkast's André 3000, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis and her No Doubt bandmate Tony Kanal. The Interscope project has scanned 3.3 million units since its November 2004 release and reached No. 5 on The Billboard 200 thanks to a slew of hits including "What You Waiting For?" "Rich Girl" and " Hollaback Girl."

This success follows almost 10 years of hits from No Doubt, which have collectively sold 15 million units in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"[My inspiration] was so strong with Love, Angel, Music, Baby," Stefani says. "I knew exactly what I wanted to do, and it was just like I had such a fire of inspiration."

- "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb." U2: The Irish quartet's 11th studio album debuted with a bang at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 in November 2004 with sales of 840,000 units. The project has scanned 2.9 million copies in the United States on the strength of such tracks as "Vertigo," "All Because of You" and "Sometimes You Can't Make It on Your Own."

Some critics called the album the group's best effort since "The Joshua Tree," which won a Grammy in this category in 1987. It follows on the heels of its popular 2000 project, "All That You Can't Leave Behind."

ALBUM OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Album of the year (awarded to the artist, producer, recording engineer/mixer and mastering engineer, if other than the artist):

- "The Emancipation of Mimi" (Island)
  Artist: Mariah Carey
  Producers: various
  Recording Engineer/mixer: various
  Mastering engineer: Herb Powers

- "Chaos and Creation in the Backyard" (Capitol)
  Artist: Paul McCartney
  Producer: Nigel Godrich
  Recording Engineer/mixer: Darrell Thorp
  Mastering engineer: Alan Yoshida

- "Love, Angel, Music, Baby," (Interscope)
  Artist: Gwen Stefani
  Producers: various
  Recording Engineer/mixers: various
  Mastering engineer: I've Always Wanted to Touch the Sky

- "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb" (Interscope)
  Artist: U2
  Producers: various
  Recording Engineer/mixer: various
  Mastering engineer: Etta Green

- "Late Registration" (Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam)
  Artist: Kanye West
  Producers: various
  Recording Engineer/mixer: various
  Mastering engineer: Vlado Meller

ALBUM OF THE YEAR (cont.)

from p.31
"American Idiot" has proved to be a steady generator of radio hits. Its five singles have all appeared on the Modern Rock chart, with "Jesus of Suburbia" currently climbing the list.

- "Hollaback Girl," Gwen Stefani: A song that was inescapable all summer, "Hollaback Girl!" arrived on the Hot 100 at No. 82 in April and hit No. 1 six weeks later. The cut then spent four weeks at the top.

- "I'm really proud of the song, because it's really fun to have a hit," Stefani told Billboard, "but a hit that kind of transcends cultural and language barriers is just extraordinary."

If it takes home a Grammy, it will not be the first time a Stefani single has earned that honor. Her duet with Eve, "Let Me Blow Ya Mind," won the best rap/sung collaboration honor in 2004.

- "Feel Good Inc," Gorillaz: The first Gorillaz cut to make the Hot 100 is the act's second to be nominated for a Grammy.

The song peaked at No. 14 on the singles tally, and was No. 1 for eight weeks on the Modern Rock chart.

- "Feel Good Inc" is the cartoon act's biggest hit since "Clint Eastwood" peaked at No. 3 on the Modern Rock chart in 2001. It is still going strong, having been on the chart for more than 30 weeks.

Gorillaz's current single—"Dare," which features Shaun Ryder—has been on the rock chart since November, and is hovering in the mid-20s.

RECORD OF THE YEAR

RECORD OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Record of the year (awarded to the artist, producer and recording engineer/mixer, if other than the artist):

- "We Belong Together" (Island)
  Artist: Mariah Carey
  Producers: Mariah Carey, Jermaine Dupri, Manuel Seal
  Recording Engineer/mixers: Brian Garten, John Horesco IV, Phil Tan

- "Feel Good Inc" (Virgin)
  Artist: Gorillaz featuring De La Soul
  Producers: Jason Cox, Danger Mouse, Dajon, Gorillaz
  Recording Engineer/mixers: Jason Cox, Danger Mouse, Dajon, Gorillaz

- "Breakdown of Western Civilizations" (Reprise)
  Artist: Green Day
  Producers: Rob Cavallo, Green Day
  Recording Engineer/mixers: Tom Biller, Andrew Dawson, Mike Dean, Anthony Kilhofer

Chris Lord-Alge, Doug McKean
"Hollaback Girl" (Interscope)
Artist: Gwen Stefani
Producers: the Neptunes Recording Engineer/mixers: Andrew Coleman, Phil Tan
"Gold Digger" (Roc-a-Fella/Def Jam)
Artist: Kanye West
Producers: Jon Brion, Kanye West
Recording Engineers/mixers: Tom Biller, Andrew Dawson, Mike Dean, Anthony Kilhofer
The Beat

MELINDA NEWMAN mnewman@billboard.com

After The Gold Rush
Green Day Seeks Some Well-Deserved Quiet After A Fab Year

Green Day hopes 2006 brings the sounds of silence. One of the big winners at the Dec. 6 Billboard Music Awards, the band headed to Australia after the awards show for two concerts before officially putting an end to the "American Idiot" era.

And, as Green Day’s Billie Joe Armstrong admits, putting concert, going on tour and recording "will be the best year of our career," he says. "It's going to be kind of sad for it to end, but, you know, we don't have any regrets.

Finally coming off the road means the band can "get back to some of the other aspects of what we do," bassist Mike Dirnt says, "whether it's recording or just getting back into the creative process again."

Although Armstrong says discussions about the next album will begin in January, he says not to expect anything too soon. "We'll start with silence and that's how we'll be able to find the inspiration to find another record," he says.

Part of that inspiration comes from knowing when to stop touring. "A lot of people just keep going and going and going," Dirnt adds. "It's important, he says, to know "when to call it quits for awhile and go home and rejuvenate and detox and write another record."

Already, Armstrong says, individual ideas for new songs are germinating. "We always share everything that we're doing. Right now, it's a lot of writing for ourselves and it's staying right there for right now and then we'll start to put the puzzle together and then try to put the ante a little bit."

As the band members look back at 2005, Dirnt says the high-light, in a year filled with them, was their stadium shows. "It's just something that we worked really hard to get to and the fact that we were able to do that is something to be proud of."

Green Day grossed 53.5 million from 76 shows, according to Billboard Boxscore. Its tour landed at No. 10 in the year-end ranking of top treks.

The band continues to be managed by Pat Magnarella, who recently left Mosaic Media Group to form Pat's Management Company.

Other clients of the Los Angeles-based firm include Goo Goo Dolls and the All-American Rejects.

LOOKING BACK: As we turn the calendar page to a new year, a number of other artists shared their highlights of 2005 with Billboard.

Gwen Stefani: "It's hard to even pick just one, but since I'm on tour right now, I'll have to say meeting some of the people who have just been so supportive to me have made [the success of her solo album] all feel very real. It's not just some number on a chart."

Clara: "Selling 3 million albums worldwide. Also, traveling around the world was really a highlight for me, seeing different cultures and different festeres."

Kelly Rowland: "The World Music Awards. They did a good-bye presentation to Destiny's Child with Rihanna, Teaira Mari and Amerie doing 'Lose My Breath' with Patti LaBelle.

We were all a mess! That was the Lord's way of telling us that this is only the beginning. It goes way beyond just now."

Mario: "Being on tour with Destiny's Child. And going to Australia. That was my first time there. With no promotion, I went straight to 20,000-seaters."

Chingy: "When everybody was giving back for Hurricane Katrina. It was the highlight of my life to make some people happy."

Bo Bice: "Between the birth of my son and then receiving the Jim Croce 20th Annual Music Award [presented by his wife and son] and being named top reality star at VH1's 'Big in 2005,' it's all been so crazy. It's hard to narrow it down, but definitely my son has been a real life-changing experience."

Ryan Cabrera: "Saved by the Bell. Season Two coming out on CD. If you mean about me, it was getting my own TV show on MTV. It's just kind of unreal to realize that four years ago, I was sitting watching MTV and now I have a show on MTV."

Additional reporting by Jonathan Cohen in New York.

Rhythm & Blues

GAIL MITCHELL gmitchell@billboard.com

R&B Icons, Up-And-Comers Kick Off New Year

Welcome back! Let's get the new music year started with a few updates and a look ahead.

As 2006 rolls in, singer/songwriter Johnta Austin re-signs with his longtime publisher, Chrysalis Music Publishing. He has been with the company since 1997.

The 24-year-old is also a double Grammy Award nominee (for song of the year and best R&B song), thanks to his co-writing credit on Mariah Carey's "We Belong Together.

In addition to penning songs for Fantasia, Mario and Ciara, Austin's most recent co-writing credits include Chris Brown ('Yo') and Mary J. Blige ('Be Without You'). Austin's album debut on Virgin Records is due early this year.

D'Angelo will resurface Feb. 28 as a producer/guest vocalist on Roy Hargrove's two-CD set of new recordings. D'Angelo appears on disc one with Hargrove's band, RH Factor, which includes saxophonist Mark "Fathead" Newman. The second CD in the Verve Records set will feature the Roy Hargrove Quintet along with a special guest, trombonist Slide Hampton. Also on the Verve tip: R&B icon Gladys Knight will do her standards thing for a CD on the label due in June.

Sixties singer soul Howard Tate goes live on Shout Factory's "Howard Tate Live," out Feb. 21. Recorded June 26, 2004, in Denmark, the set encompasses cuts from his 2003 Grammy-nominated album "Rediscovered."

Speaking of R&B legends, the career of Roberta Flack is encapsulated in Rhino's 17-track "The Very Best of Roberta Flack." In addition to signature hits ("The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face") and memorable pairings (with Donny Hathaway and Peabo Bryson), the Feb. 7 release features the rare B-side "Trade Winds."

Universal/Motown Records has inked a multi-artist deal with T-Town Music. The Dallas-based independent label's flagship act is the Dirty South Rydaz. The group comprises Big Tuck (whose club joint "Tussle" first earned T-Town buzz), Tum Tum, Fat B, Lil Ronnie, Double T, Addiction and Big Tite. The first release under the new pact will be Big Tuck's currently untitled album, due in March. T-Town is headed by principals Alan Powell, George Lopez and Trinidad Delgado.

NEWCOMER ALERT: Keep an ear out later this year for new Atlantic Records recruit Hope. Discovered while as a street performer in Santa Monica, Calif., the singer/songwriter/musician most recently toured with Seal, while her song "The Rain Don't Last" was featured on the American Red Cross' public service announcements for hurricane relief.

Another artist to keep within close earshot is 12-year-old inspirational singer Spensha Baker. The young pro wowed the audience Dec. 10 with her performance of "Love's In Need of Love Today" during the Recording Academy's Grammy Jam saluting Stevie Wonder. The Texas-born Baker is working on her first album for A&M, which is due at the end of the first quarter.
Strokes Out To ‘Impress’

NEW YORK—In 2001, the Strokes transcended the New York club scene in a flash. They became international rock stars, selling 1 million copies of their RCA debut “Is This It” in the United States alone, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The photogenic quintet were tagged poster boys for a much-hyped new, energetic rock movement that included the Hives and the Vines, and the Killers.

But when the group offered up more of the same on 2003’s “Room on Fire,” sales suffered. The set has shifted 575,000 units to date domestically, and it raised the question were the Strokes a casualty of hype, or was it just the sophomore slump?

RCA is hoping to reverse gears as it praps a new Strokes album, “First Impressions of Earth,” for an unusual Jan. 3 street date. The set has enjoyed strong prerelease buzz thanks to the single “Juicebox,” which is No. 15 this issue on the Modern Rock chart, and its accompanying video, which stars comedian David Cross.

The label and band decided that on this go-round, time would be on their side: time to record without deadlines looming and time to properly set up the album at retail and radio, regardless of street date.

“The first record was done quickly because we didn’t know any better. It was our exact set list, in order,” guitarist Albert Hammond Jr. recalls. “The second one, we were trying to get something different, but we didn’t have the time.

“This one, we didn’t want to do that again,” he adds. “We said, ‘Let’s get our own equipment and just sit in the studio. If it takes a month or two years, whatever.’

At the urging of producer David Kahne, vocalist Julian Casablancas is clearly audible above the instruments for the first time, singing with previously unheard power on tracks like “Juicebox” and “Fear of Sleep.” Meanwhile songs like “You Only Live Once” and the ultra-poppy “Razorbath” are classic Strokes, others are quite different than their predecessors.

“These songs have definitely pushed all of our abilities,” Hammond says. “I felt like we had to find something that would make people listen to the songs more and not focus on the ‘sound.’

“When it became clear that ‘First Impressions’ would not be ready for the post-Thanksgiving retail rush, RCA decided to gamble with a Jan. 3 release.

“I really wanted to make sure we caught the wave of what college and high-school kids were still at home, to then take the record back with them and start a dialogue,” label executive VP/GM Richard Sanders says.

Further complicating the delay was that several new songs leaked to the Internet in the fall and spread like wildfire on music blogs.

“I honestly would have liked to have this album out now to capitalize,” Sanders says. “But we decided, ‘OK, let’s charge this up the radio charts and hope the video will give the single a second leg through the holidays.’

While “Juicebox” racked up spins at home, the Strokes were busy playing impromptu club gigs all over the world, trying to capture the word-of-mouth excitement that fueled the band’s early explosion. A handful of similar shows are on tap for January in North America.

“This is not a band that would ever rest on their laurels,” Strokes manager Ryan Genten says. “If anything, I don’t think we feel like we’ve accomplished anything special yet. Now it’s time

Hilliard Stays Frest

After 31 years, 21 albums recorded for the ECM label alone and a demanding tour schedule of more than 100 concerts around the world each year, how does the U.K.-based Hilliard Ensemble keep things fresh?

One answer for the vocal group—one of the foremost of its kind in medieval, Renaissance and utterly new music—is to keep uncovering masterly work.

Such is the case with its latest ECM release, which arrives in stores Jan. 18. The album consists of compositions by Franco-Flemish composer Nicolas Gombert (circa 1495-1550), including his Mass Media Vita and a few of some 160 extant motets.

The group’s current lineup of countertenor David James, tenors Roger Bay-Crumpl and Steven Harrold and baritone Gordon Jones was joined for tenor by tenor Andrew Hirstreiter and bass Robert Macdonald. Jones says that the lack of attention to Gombert’s music is a mystery.

“His music has such a sweetness and richness, and has such a sensuous quality,” Jones says. “It is so well-regarded, and there is so much of it that has survived. The textures of Gombert are fascinating too. He writes for low voices in a time when many composers were writing for high voices, and his music is very dark, very richly colored. So it is really very difficult to understand why he is so very rarely performed and even more rarely recorded.”

Another answer to how these singers keep their music-making so creative and vivid...
With Very Old Music

is in the way they rehearse and perform. “Our rehearsals are not phenomenally detailed, in stead, we just get to know the outlines of a piece,” Jones says. “We actually put the whole thing together only in the performance, which means that we have to be able to communicate very clearly with one another.”

Such technique keeps things lively. “The music never gets dull, of course,” Jones quickly adds, “but to say ‘This is how we’re going to do things every time’ would be so static and restricting. The way to perform a piece depends so much on the moment, what the audience is like, what the building you’re performing in is like.”

The ability to be spontaneous works best for the audience and the ensemble, Jones says. “The way we operate is different from many other groups, who prefer to work in much more fixed detail. But considering how much we do, we have to keep it interesting for ourselves one way or another.”

The group heads to U.S. shores later this month with tour stops in Los Angeles, Portland, Ore., Cincinnati, Lexington, Ky., Richmond, Va., and New York.

THE RACE TO FEB. 8: It is already clear that one label dominates the Latin Grammy Awards race in the classical field: Naxos.

With 15 nominations between its own releases and those of distributed labels CPO, Naive and Pentatone, Naxos handily surpasses its nearest competitors EMI Classics/Virgin Classics (with 10 nominations) and Universal Classics (with nine).

Of the Naxos nods, five feature music written by 67-year-old composer William Bolcom; three for the recording of his “Songs of Innocence and of Experience,” led by Leonard Slatkin; and two for a collection of songs featuring soprano Carole Farley, with the Michigan-based Bolcom at the piano.

Know is that Pérez and his 4-year-old Miami-based company Elastic People are also all-around image consultants with a client list that includes Montaner, Tahon and, most famously, Daddy Yankee.

Now, with the release of Yankee’s new CD/DVD combo, “Barrio Fino En Directo,” and the increasing success of his single “Rompe,” Pérez and his Elastic People are, quite literally, in everybody’s face.

Pérez directed the “Barrio Fino En Directo” DVD and the “Rompe” video, both released under Yankee’s new El Cartel/Interscope association.

To understand why Pérez is still in the picture, back to the album “El Barrio Fino” and the single “Gasolina.” That video was Pérez’s handiwork, and its merit was compounded by the fact that it was part of a broad, 360-degree image

“You have the opportunity to get a lot more intimate and personal as to what he is and represents,” Pérez says. “It’s an integrated approach to what you see on TV, what you see on the Web site. Everything has to make people understand that this guy [is not just about “Gasolina”].”

Pérez says that before he takes on a project, even if it is as basic as an album cover, he likes to listen to the music and meet with the marketing director, the A&R director and, naturally, the artist. He also uses the Internet as a marketing tool. For example, he will post photos to test market reaction.

The integrated approach that Pérez proposes in his projects is still relatively new in the Latin realm, where seldom does the same person take control of so many different imaging aspects. One of the few examples that comes to mind is Bebo & Galia’s “Lágrimas Negras,” co-produced by film director Fernando Trueba, who also directed the concert DVD and other video materials.

But the success of Yankee and other reggaetón artists, Pérez says, may be redefining the way Latin music is marketed.

“As independents, these guys were pushing serious marketing initiatives, whether they understood that or not,” he says. “I think a lot of major labels are looking and analyzing how they accomplished that in such a short time.”

BY THE WAY: Several weeks ago, we wondered if the reggaetón movement had legs beyond Daddy Yankee. Several year-end releases seem to point in that direction. Newcomers debuting on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart include Alexis & Fido with “The Pitbulls” and Calle 13 with its self-titled debut. Sony BMG is distributing both.
Capitol's Capital Year
Capitol Nashville Ended 2005 On Top In Several Categories

Despite a tumultuous year full of staff changes, Capitol Records Nashville finished 2005 as Billboard's Top Country imprint. Hot Country Songs imprint and Hot Country Songs label, ending the four-year reign by Arista Nashville in that last category.

Capitol landed six songs among the 50 most-played country titles in 2005, including three from Keith Urban and one each from Dierks Bentley, Jamie O'Neal and Trace Adkins.

VP of promotion Jimmy Harnen credits the combination of great artists, great songs and a great promotion team for his label's success.

After just four months as senior director of national promotion, Harnen unexpectedly found himself bumped up to the VP chair after longtime promo chief Bill Catino segued to Universal Music Group Nashville in March 2005. He likens his reaction to this chain of events to "seeing the Hoover Dam for the first time."

Capitol Records Nashville president/CEO Mike Dungan brought Harnen onboard in November 2004 with the idea that he might succeed Catino in four or five years if Catino decided to retire. Instead, Harnen remembers Dungan saying to him in March, "You've had four months. Are you ready?"

Harnen was.

"I've lived my whole life to be able to do this job," he says. "Failure was not an option..."

Catino's departure and Harnen's promotion set off a string of other changes in the department in what became an unusually turbulent year. Among the changes, Harnen promoted Steve Hodges to senior director of national promotion from the Southeast regional director post.

"There were a couple of planes in the air I had to land," Harnen says of the early days in his new position. "I remember our first budget meeting," he says with a laugh. "I think the investment of Normandy was easier to plan."

With all that going on, Harnen says he was not aware until late fall that Capitol was even in the race for Hot Country Songs label of the year, despite one particularly successful week midyear when his team nabbed the top three positions on the Hot Country Songs chart.

In addition to the changes within, the Capitol promotion department—like the rest of the music industry—was adjusting this year to a new way of doing business brought on by New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's payola probe and the resulting settlements with Sony BMG and Warner Bros.

"It's definitely a dynamic time with all the changes and settlements coming down," Harnen says, choosing his words carefully. While he says Capitol has always complied with the law, the result for his label and others is more busy work. "You're seeing a lot of labels trying to make sure they're doing things the proper way."

For instance, he says, if a station requests a box of CDs for on-air giveaways, it is now sent with a form indicating the CDs were not supplied in exchange for airplay for any Capitol act. "There's a lot of paperwork," Harnen admits, "but it's all for the best. We've had no problems adapting to it."

Through all the year's tumult, Harnen says, "Our motto has always been, 'Keep your head down and race.' He also encourages his team to live by another motto: 'Serious fun.'"

"We all really care about what we're doing and work hard," he says. "But I'm always telling our crew to put the 'show' in 'show business' because this is a fun job. We have the greatest jobs in the world. I'm always telling people to be appreciative of that."
MARY J. BLIGE
The Breakthrough
Producers: various
Geffen
Release Date: Dec. 20
First things first: "The Breakthrough" is no My Life," the 1994 album that remains Mary J. Blige's career high point. That said, it stands head and shoulders above her last couple of (uneven) records. Here, Blige returns to her storytelling roots, with a drama providing the tools needed to help one move forward and love of self leading the way. (A breakthrough, anyone?) Lead single "Be Without You" is a tale of real love, it is significant. It stands as the album's centerpiece, about "You" (featuring Will.I.am as well as a Nina Simone sample) and "I Found My Everything" (with Raphael Saadiq). Some tracks, like "Enough Cryin'" and "Gonna Breakthrough," are overloaded with vocals. But often times, less is more. Witness "One," a collaboration that finds Blige and P. Diddy beautifully revisiting a theme from U2's 1991 disc "Achtung Baby."—MP

DADDY YANKEE
Barrio Fino En Directo
Producers: various
EMI/Interscope
Release Date: Dec. 13
"Barrio Fino En Directo" is a live collection, culled from Daddy Yankee's recent U.S. and Latin American tour. It is also a bridge to his upcoming studio album, "El Carbón," due out in 2006. Five new tracks add weight to the set, plus an impressive DVD that includes documentary footage from the tour and videos. Even the most jaded listener will rise to the occasion generated by the live versions of "Lo Que Paso, Passo" and "Gasolina," and, most important, a clear evangcs can be heard on the new material. The chart-topping "Rompé" is catchy radio fare with a mambo-esque baseline, while "Gangsta Zone" featuring Snoop Dogg showcases a thoughtful, edgy approach. This artist is no fad, and he displays staying power that should outlast the reggaetón craze.—LC

JAMIE FOXX
Unpredictable
Producers: various
J Records
Release Date: Dec. 20
Bumping booties (in the club or on the boudoir) is the overarching theme of Jamie Foxx's first album since 1994. With help from producers like Timbaland and Mr. Collipark, Foxx has crafted an album that does not reinvent the genre but will have you rocking and/or rolling. The best club joints include the top 20 R&B title track with Ludacris and "DJ Play a Love Song" with Twista. And, there's no mistaking Foxx's bedroom bent, thanks to such titles as "Warm Bed" and "Three Letter Word." More noteworthy is a spirited cover of the 1978 Mother's Finest hit "Love Changes" featuring Mary J. Blige. You get a truer sense of Foxx the artist on "Wish U Were Here," a tribute to his grandmother, and "U Still Got It." With Common, an interlude that deserves full-song status. Foxx may not be the next Luther Vandross or Marvin Gaye, but there is still a lot to like here.—GM

BUN B
Trill
Producers: various
Rap-a-Lot/Bad Life/Axylum
Release Date: Oct. 18
The scene lorded over the mainstream in 2005, and Bun B's "Trill" makes a solid addition to a hometown roster that includes Slim Thug, Mike Jones, Paul Wall and Chamillionaire. One-half ofUGK (his partner, Pimp C, is serving time in Houston on an assault charge), Bun B adds a little melody (and the occasional array of guest stars) to the raucous bang of crunk. And while the formula dries up on the static "Keep It Gangsta," his "Trill" and "Where to Take U Down" and the needlessly long "The Story," it beats strongly on "Drapped Up" and "Trillize Your Zone." Most effective is the marital "Inauguration," where Bun B riffs over "Hail to the Chief" about the storms, both meteorological and cultural, that forced the flight of so many from the Gulf Coast to his hometown.—JV

HIP-HOP
THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
Duets: The Final Chapter
Producers: various
Bad Boy Entertainment
Release Date: Dec. 20
The compilation is bolstered by A-list rappers Clay-Z, Nas and producers (Scott Storch, Swizz Beatz), notably absent are B.I.G. cohorts Lil' Kim and the Lox. Eminem supplies beats and rhymes for "It has Been Said," featuring Obie Trice and the album's biggest hit. This tribute highlights B.I.G.'s ominous lyrics ("When I die, I wanna go to hell") from "Suicidal Thoughts." With the exception of "A Murder" and "I'll Be Missing You," a forced union with rock act Korn, the 22-track collection offers sensibly adaptations of B.I.G.'s legacy.—CH

ROCK
RYAN ADAMS
29
Producer: Ethan Johns
Release Date: Dec. 20
The hyperproductive Ryan Adams reunites with producer Ethan Johns for a mellow set full of December-ish melancholy. His third new release this year (written and performed without his band, the Cardinals), features nine stripped-down songs that focus on acoustic guitar and solo piano. With his trademark self-indulgence and dreamy sadness, Adams offers up a black rock ("29"), an eight-minute folk revver ("Strawberry Wine") and slide guitar-swirling "Carolina Rain," all without embracing one signature sound. Even he summons a string orchestra on the delicate piano ballad "Blue Sky Blues," one of the disc's strongest tracks. But it is "The Sadness," a furious flamenco-rocking spaghetti Western, that breaks open the muted crust and brings out Adams' most dramatic vocal performance to date. Slow, sparse and beautiful, "29" is a haunting epi-

POPS
LINDSAY LOHAN
A Little More Personal (RAW)
Producers: Kara DioGuardi, Greg Wells, Butch Walker, Ben Moody
Directo
Release Date: Dec. 6
There's anything left about Lindsay Lohan we do not know? Her tangled with her dad and her constant presence in the gossip media, one would think there is not much left to reveal on her sophomore album. Not so. On the
from p.37

catchy but depressingly single "Confessions of a Broken Heart (Daughter to Father)," she hits hard at her dad with the lyric "Tell me the truth/Did you ever love me?" She's quite as heavy elsewhere, whether tossing in a Cheap Trick cover ("I Want You to Want Me") or a fun Stevie Nicks redux ("Edge of Seventeen"). She further lightens the mood with dance numbers like the rockin' title track and the excellent thump-thump of "Who Loves You Get past the "Lindsay Lohan. Singer?" vibe, and there is an enjoyable album here.—KC

CLASSICAL

BEAUX ARTS TRIO

Shostakovich, Piano Trios Nos. 1 & 2

Producer: Da-Hong Seetoo

Warner Classics

Release Date: Jan. 10

While this will be a big Mozart year, there is another composer with a major 2006 anniversary. This year marks the centenary of Shostakovich's birth. A very strong early entrant in the festivities is this Beaux Arts Trio recording. Treating the youthful Trio No. 1 as a wistful look back at Russian romantics, these players have their guns out and blazing by Trio No. 2, and give the Allegro Non Troppo movement particularly delicious, wickedly sardonic edge. Rounding out the album is a most welcome addition: Alexander Blok's "Seven Romances on Verses," in which the trio is joined by voice-silver soprano Joan Rodgers.—AT

CHRISTIAN

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Second Chance—Original Motion Picture Soundtrack

Producers: Steve Taylor, Robert Beeson

Reunion Records

Release Date: Dec. 27

This strong set of songs precedes the Feb. 17 release of "The Second Chance," starring Christian music veteran Michael W. Smith in his film debut as a pastor sent from heaven to a wealthy church to serve an inner-city congregation. The music here is suitably rousing, beginning with Third Day's "Movin' On Up," a passionate anthem that showcases lead vocalist Mac Powell's incredible pipes. "Follow Me," performed by Smith and the legendary Andrae Crouch, is among the album's highlights elsewhere. "American Idol" alum Ruben Studdard serves up a soulful version of the classic "I Surrender All." Well-known as a gifted composer, Smith contributes fine instrumental work to the film's score as well as the end-title track "All in the Serve," which is a perfect pop hit.—DEP

BLUES

ZORA YOUNG

Tore Up From the Floor Up

Producers: Robert Koester, Steve Wagner

Delmark

Release Date: Nov. 15

Zora Young has been a dues-paying member of the Windy City's blues scene (and to a voice that has been to church and around the corner to the juke joint. The album features five Young compositions among its dozen tunes. They travel from the rockin' shuffle of the title track to the original slow blues "Slowly." Make note of Young's smoldering version of "Muddy Waters" "Two Trains Running," a definite highlight. The disc also features a four-minute interview with Young that is a nice touch as a final track.—PVV

PRINCE

Te Amo Corazon

(3:39)

Producer: Prince

Publisher: not listed

Universal (download)

"That is one that he held up the sun." In "our teen-age sky." It's instrumentation plays like a live band, along with a flutter of background vocals that contribute a dreamy quality to the song. "Shine" radiates light. Adult top 40, couldn't you use some?—CT

DANCE

JUDY TORRES Faithfully (4:08)

Producer: Valentin

Writer: J. Cain

Twist & Shout Music/Wixen Music Publishing/Love Boss Music (ASCAP)

Robbins (CD single)

In recent years, makers of dance music have had a field day revisiting rock anthems from days gone by. Judy Torres, with producer Valentin, is the latest artist to put a soulful, romantic spin on a classic. While it's a bombastic, arena-rocking ballad today, it is a peak-hour energetic stomper with trance flourishes beautifully colorizing a vibrant pop foundation. Front and center is Torres, who is best known as a Latin stylistic artist—a genre not necessarily known for having the most powerful singers. With "Faithfully," though, Torres displays a renewed vigor in the vocal department. In fact, she sings the song's timeless words as if her life depended on it. Remixer Giuseppe D. infuses her remix with angular electro beats. An absolute treat is Valentin's unpluged Candlelight Mix. Perhaps this time, the track will go top 10.—MP
Blige Leads Christmas Surge; Carey Passes 50 Cent

OK, so maybe dropping an album the week before Christmas is not such a bad idea after all, as evidenced by new Billboard 200 queen Mary J. Blige.

Once upon a time, conventional wisdom and my own unsolicited advice suggested that with stores busier than they are in any other week, it might be risky to release an album on shelves just days before Christmas. No worries this year, though, as Blige’s “The Breakthrough” rallies by far her biggest Nielsen SoundScan week, while two other Dec. 20 releases also put up handsome numbers.

Blige rules with 727,000 copies, more than double her prior best SoundScan frame, while Jamie Fox notches 597,500 and late rapper the Notorious B.I.G. adds another 438,000.

One could argue that this trio of new releases had more to do with the small rally in album sales during Christmas week than did the frame’s extra shopping day (see story, page 5).

Christmas fell on a Sunday this year, rather than Saturday, as it did in 2004. But subtract the 1.7 million that these three albums sold, and volume for the 2005 holiday stanza would have trailed last year’s peak week by 16%.

This is Blige’s third No. 1 on the big chart and her seventh on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. Her prior best SoundScan week had been 294,030 for “No More Drama” when it bowed at No. 2 on The Billboard 200 in 2001.

Her start is even more impressive when you consider there was little lead time for this album (see story, page 6). Geffen’s original intention had been to drop a greatest-hits album with a few new songs during this four-quarter drive.

Blige and Fox might have reached even larger numbers had stores not faced stock shortages on both.

There are only four other solo female artists who have mounted larger SoundScan weeks. Britney Spears did so twice, with “Oops!... I Did It Again” starting at 1.3 million and “Britney” at 746,000. Norah Jones’ sophomore set began with 1.02 million, Shania Twain’s “Up!” launched with 874,000 and Mariah Carey’s “Daydream” sold 760,000 during Christmas week of 1995.

All of which leaves Blige with the largest debut week in SoundScan history for an R&B album by a solo female.


Her game of catch-up is impressive, considering that “The Massacre” had a six-week lead start and was the only album this year to ring a 1-million-plus frame. The rapper’s set had already sold more than 2.9 million units before “Mimi” reached stores.

Although some pundits questioned whether Carey needed to launch a special edition, which added No. 1 hit “Don’t Forget About Us” to her impressive tally of chart-toppers, the title’s numbers have grown since that edition arrived, selling 1.1 million copies in those six weeks.

Carey’s set has averaged 189,000 copies per week since the Thanksgiving frame, while “The Massacre” has averaged closer to 20,000 in that same window. This week, for example, she rises 7-6 on the Billboard 200 with 290,000 sold (up 52%), compared with 300,000 for 50 Cent (127-125, up 38%).

This week’s numbers nudge her ahead by the score of 4.87 million to 4.83 million. Last week, 50 Cent led release-to-date sales by 229,000 copies. So, unless some nefarious or otherwise incredible news event during the year’s final frame causes weekly sales for “The Massacre” to increase by a hundredfold, we can assume Carey will still hold the lead when next issue’s charts compile Nielsen SoundScan’s tracking year.

Questions to ponder: Some of the remaining singles from the original “Mimi” edition have the potential to be big multi-format radio hits. Had the label labeled one of those songs as a single, rather than adding “Forget” to a new edit, could Carey have mounted the same kind of end-of-year charge?

And, did the soundtrack to “Get Rich or Die Tryin’,” which has sold 1.04 million copies since its Nov. 1 release, in any way cannibalize the numbers for “The Massacre?”

**FOXX WORTHY**

“Unpredictable” is not the first album by auto-singer Jamie Foxx, but it is already his biggest. The album’s first 589,000 copies has the set cold in its first full week, practically eclipsing release-to-date sales by a 4-to-1 margin for his 1994 album “Prep This” (152,000).

**HIP-HOP HORAAY**

With the Notorious B.I.G.’s “Duets: The Final Chapter” following Mary J. Blige and Jamie Fox, respectively, the top three runs on The Billboard 200 are new entries that also reside on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums. Such a monopoly has not happened since the Nov. 29, 2003, issue, when Jay-Z’s “The Black Album” led 2Pac soundtrack and G-Unit’s “Beg for Mercy.”

**COMFORT AND JOY**

You can tell which week radio tracking occurred when 1 of the top 15 titles on Hot Christian Adult Contemporary Songs are Christmas titles (see page 4). Three of those in listening to MercyMe above, at Nos. 1, 9 and 10.

**MARKET WATCH**

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

**YEAR-TO-DATE 2004 2005 CHANGE**

**OVERALL UNIT SALES**

655,496,000 602,181,000 -9.5%

**Store Singles**

7,311,000 4,931,000 -32.7%

**Digital Tracks**

135,021,000 322,749,000 144.8%

**TOTAL**

303,685,000 930,297,000 158.8%

**ADJUSTED SALES**

650,794,000 602,181,000 -7.5%

**next week ending Jan. 1**

**SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT**

CD 617,594,000 582,988,000 -5.6%

Cassette 8,781,000 2,623,000 -69.1%

Digital 5,052,000 15,483,000 206.5%

Other 1,553,000 1,087,000 -30.0%

For week ending Dec. 25, 2005. Figures are rounded. Compiled from a national sample of retail store and rack sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.
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**SALES DATA COMPILLED BY**

Nielsen SoundScan

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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete data chart

Data for week of January 7, 2006
Reach your target audience through Billboard Feature Reports
In-depth and timely coverage of the music and entertainment industries' most important topics.

TOURING:
New Venues & Performing Arts Facilities
AD CLOSE: JANUARY 24

POWER PLAYERS:
30 Under 30
AD CLOSE: JANUARY 31

MUSIC & MONEY:
Billboard Music & Money Symposium Preview
AD CLOSE: FEBRUARY 6

BILLBOARD STARS:
LL Cool J
AD CLOSE: FEBRUARY 13

INDEPENDENT MUSIC:
SXSW Preview
AD CLOSE: FEBRUARY 13

BILLBOARD STARS:
Blondie
AD CLOSE: FEBRUARY 21

BILLBOARD STARS:
Tom Petty
AD CLOSE: FEBRUARY 28

Power Players:
Top 20 Music Publishers
AD CLOSE: FEBRUARY 28

MADE IN THE USA
Providing the backbeat to America’s backbone.
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**Circuit Promotions**

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<td>Relient K</td>
<td>Mmhmm</td>
<td>Epic</td>
<td>CD</td>
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<td>G'N'Winee</td>
<td>Back 2 Da Basics</td>
<td>Lyrical</td>
<td>CD</td>
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<td>Kenny Chesney</td>
<td>When The Sun Goes Down</td>
<td>EMI Nashville</td>
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<td>Jimmy Buffett</td>
<td>Live At Fenway Park</td>
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<td>Possibilities</td>
<td>Blue Note</td>
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<td>Who Is Mike Jones</td>
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<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
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**It's the singer-songwriter's third album of 2006.**

May 6 and September 26.


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**SALES DATA COMPILLED BY NEILSON SOUNDSCAN, INC.**

**Data for week of January 7, 2006**

**CHARTS LEGEND on Page 56**

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

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<td>2</td>
<td>RUN IT</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GRILLZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BE WITHOUT YOU</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>THERE IT GO! (THE WHISTLE SONG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>BECAUSE OF YOU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CHECK ON IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>STICKITU</td>
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| 9 | 12 | מול התי

**ADULT TOP 40**

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<td>4</td>
<td>YOU AND ME</td>
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<td>DIRTY LITTLE SECRET</td>
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<tr>
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<td>FIREMAN</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>TURN IT UP</td>
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<td>JINGLE BELLS</td>
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**ADULT CONTEMPORARY**

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<td>7</td>
<td>DECK THE HALLS</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN</td>
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<td>SOMEONE IS MISSING AT CHRISTMAS</td>
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**HOT DIGITAL SONGS**

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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>I'M A BELIEVER</td>
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**MODERN ROCK**

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<td>I'M NOT A THING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For complete chart data, visit www.billboard.com
**POP 100**

**Title** | **Artist** | **Label**
---|---|---
"Run It!" | Chris Brown | Coke Studio Atlanta
"You" | Leona Lewis | Epic
"Whataya Want From Me?" | Adam Lambert | Open Road Films
"The Best Damn Thing" | Avril Lavigne | Sony Music Canada
"Demi Lovato" | Demi Lovato | Hollywood Records
"Crazy in Love" | Beyoncé ft. Jay-Z | Columbia
"I Feel Like a Kid Again" | Bob Dylan | Columbia
"If I Ain't Got You" | Aretha Franklin | Epic
"I'm Not the Only One" | Sam Smith | Capitol

**Title** | **Artist** | **Label**
---|---|---
"Fire hydrant" | The Weeknd ft. DaBaby | Columbia
"Up Next" | DaBaby | Capitol
"Rogers" | Post Malone ft. Tyga | Republic Records
"Watermelon Sugar" | Harry Styles | Columbia
"Jesus Is Just the Answer" | Andrew Lloyd Webber ft. Sarah Brightman | Decca
"I'm Not in Love" | The Weeknd ft. SPICE | Sony Music Canada
"Dancing With a Stranger" | Sam Smith ft. Normani | Capitol
"The Middle" | Zedd ft. Maren Morris & Grey | Republic Records
"Higher" | Kygo ft. Justin Bieber | Capitol

**POP 100 AIRPLAY**

**Title** | **Artist** | **Label**
---|---|---
"Jingle Bell Rock" | Bobby Helms | RCA
"Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" | Jann Arden | Sony Music Canada
"I Wish It Could Be Christmas Today" | Michael Buble | Sony Music Canada
"I'll Be Home for Christmas" | Isley Brothers | RCA
"All I Want For Christmas Is You" | Mariah Carey | Epic
"I'll Be Home For Christmas" | Bing Crosby | Columbia
"Let It Snow" | Dean Martin | Columbia
"White Christmas" | Bing Crosby | Columbia
"The Christmas Song" | Nat King Cole | Capitol

**HitPredictor**

**Title** | **Artist** | **Label**
---|---|---
"Jingle Bell Rock" | Bobby Helms | RCA
"Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" | Jann Arden | Sony Music Canada
"I Wish It Could Be Christmas Today" | Michael Buble | Sony Music Canada
"I'll Be Home for Christmas" | Isley Brothers | RCA
"All I Want For Christmas Is You" | Mariah Carey | Epic
"I'll Be Home For Christmas" | Bing Crosby | Columbia
"Let It Snow" | Dean Martin | Columbia
"White Christmas" | Bing Crosby | Columbia
"The Christmas Song" | Nat King Cole | Capitol

**Data for week of JANUARY 7, 2006 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 56**
<table>
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**TOP REGGAE ALBUMS**

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<td>The Trinity</td>
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**A LARGE START FOR B.I.G.**

With street-date woes causing early bows for Mary J. Blige and Jamie Fox, Hot Shot Debut honors go to the Notorious B.G. with $480,000 sold, "Duets: The Final Chapter" enters that chart and The Billboard 200 at No. 3.

The posthumous album contains an all-star roster that includes Jay-Z, Nelly, Snoop Dogg and Eminem. Lead single "Nasty Girl"—featuring Diddy, Jagged Edge and Avery Storm—jumps 33-29 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs with more than 14 million audience impressions.

The Notorious B.I.G.'s last release, "Born Again," launched with 485,000 copies in 1999, good for a No. 1 debut on The Billboard 200.

—Rashad George

Data for week of JANUARY 7, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 47
### HOT R&B/HIP-HOP AIRPLAY

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<tr>
<td><strong>#2</strong> I WANNA BE LOVED</td>
<td>[Artist/Label]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>#3</strong> I M' IN IT</td>
<td>Grizz</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>#4</strong> LEAN ON IT, ROCK IT</td>
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<td><strong>#5</strong> WE BE BURNIN'</td>
<td>TI SHOULDN'T HAVE BEATEN</td>
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<td><strong>#6</strong> WE BELONG TOGETHER</td>
<td>Gone From Me (Digipak/Atlantic)</td>
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<td><strong>#7</strong> TALK FLY GOTTA LEAVE (TIRED)</td>
<td>DJ CHOCOLATE (M&amp;M RECORDS)</td>
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<td><strong>#8</strong> EVERYTIME I THINK ABOUT HER</td>
<td>Nelly feat. Pauley Perrette (Colcord/Columbia)</td>
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<td>Young Jeezy feat. Akon (Corporate/THUG)</td>
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<td><strong>#10</strong> I CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU</td>
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### RHYTHMIC AIRPLAY

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<td><strong>#6</strong> TALK FLY GOTTA LEAVE (TIRED)</td>
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<td><strong>#7</strong> EVERYTIME I THINK ABOUT HER</td>
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**Note:** The data for this chart is electronically monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and electronically updated daily. The chart is compiled by Billboard, a brand of VNU Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. The data is provided by Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. VNU Business Media, Inc. 2006. Billboard is a trademark of VNU Business Media, Inc. Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. is a division of The Nielsen Company. Nielsen SoundScan is a registered trademark of Nielsen Audio, Inc.
HOT COUNTRY SONGS

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<td>Montgomery Gentry</td>
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<td>I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN YOU CRY</td>
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<td>I'M HAVING ME</td>
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BETWEEN THE BULLETS

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<td>LET THE TEARDROPS FALL</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>DOWNTOWN</td>
<td>Emmylou Harris</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>THE ONLY WAY TO LOVE</td>
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<td>I'M ROCKING THE CRADLE</td>
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<td>I'M TAKING THE WHEEL</td>
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<td>TWENTY YEARS AND TWO HUSBANDS AGO</td>
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<td>PLEASE COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS</td>
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HOLIDAY SONGS

As holiday programming casts a chill on Hot Country Songs, only about one-quarter of the titles from the list awaken to bullets under the Christmas tree for the tracking period that ended Dec. 25.

The format's playlists are typically well-stocked with new holiday fare. The 2005 season has exceptions: Steve Azar's "Cathouse Christmas" (60-53) and "American Idol" finalist Josh Gracin, whose new takes on "Please Come Home for Christmas" (No. 51) and "O Holy Night" (No. 59) make their chart debuts.

Neither Azar's independent Dang label nor Gracin's Lyric Street shop took new holiday albums to market—the new tracks were serviced only to radio.

High atop the chart, Billy Currington defends his No. 1 title "Must Be Doing Something Right" for a second week.

— Wade Jessen
HOT LATIN SONGS:

1. **(1)** BAILANDO
   - **Artist:** Yanga y Katchoe Feat. Nina Sky
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (9.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

2. **(2)** PARA TU AMOR
   - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi Feat. Daddy Yankee
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (12.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

3. **(3)** NOVEMBRE SIN TI
   - **Artist:** Olvido...Los Horoscopos de Durango
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (16.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

4. **(4)** CONTRA VIENTO Y MAREA
   - **Artist:** Los Tigres del Norte Feat. Shuga
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (19.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

5. **(5)** LA TORTURA
   - **Artist:** Alejandro Fernandez
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (15.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

6. **(6)** ESO EMH...
   - **Artist:** Alesso & Fabo Feat. J Balvin
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (18.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

7. **(7)** NO PUEDO OLVIDARTE
   - **Artist:** Don Omar Feat. Romeo Santos
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (16.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

8. **(8)** SUELTAMÍA MANO
   - **Artist:** Chayanne
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (18.98)
   - **Genre:** Urban

9. **(9)** ESTOY PERDIDO
   - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.98)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

10. **(10)** NA NA NA (DULCE NINA)
    - **Artist:** Don Omar & Yandel Feat. J Balvin
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (19.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

11. **(11)** VOY Y VOY
    - **Artist:** Sean & Lenny White Feat. Daddy Yankee
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

12. **(12)** NUESTRO AMOR
    - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi Feat. Daddy Yankee
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (18.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

13. **(13)** POR TU MALDITO AMOR
    - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi Feat. Daddy Yankee
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (18.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

14. **(14)** PERE TÉ VAS A ARREPENTIR
    - **Artist:** K-Paz De La Sierra Feat. Jose Manuel Zambrano
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

15. **(15)** A CHILLAR A OTRA PARTE
    - **Artist:** Daddy Yankee Feat. Natti Natasha
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (16.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

16. **(16)** MALO
    - **Artist:** Bebe
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.98)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican


**TOP LATIN ALBUMS:**

1. **(1)** CALLE 13
   - **Artist:** Calle 13
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (25.00)
   - **Genre:** Urban

2. **(2)** SUENO DE AMOR
   - **Artist:** Esclavo Atento Feat. El Chombo
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (23.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

3. **(3)** CHANAYAN
   - **Artist:** Tito & Tono Feat. như Zuan
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (20.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

4. **(4)** BAILANDO
   - **Artist:** Yanga y Katchoe Feat. Nina Sky
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (22.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

5. **(5)** PARA TU AMOR
   - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi Feat. Daddy Yankee
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (21.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

6. **(6)** CONTRA VIENTO Y MAREA
   - **Artist:** Los Tigres del Norte Feat. Shuga
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (20.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

7. **(7)** NOVEMBRE SIN TI
   - **Artist:** Olvido...Los Horoscopos de Durango
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (18.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

8. **(8)** LA TORTURA
   - **Artist:** Alejandro Fernandez
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (18.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

9. **(9)** ESO EMH...
   - **Artist:** Alesso & Fabo Feat. J Balvin
   - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.00)
   - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

10. **(10)** NO PUEDO OLVIDARTE
    - **Artist:** Don Omar Feat. Romeo Santos
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

11. **(11)** SUELTAMÍA MANO
    - **Artist:** Chayanne
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (17.00)
    - **Genre:** Urban

12. **(12)** ESTOY PERDIDO
    - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (16.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

13. **(13)** NA NA NA (DULCE NINA)
    - **Artist:** Don Omar & Yandel Feat. J Balvin
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (16.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

14. **(14)** VOY Y VOY
    - **Artist:** Sean & Lenny White Feat. Daddy Yankee
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (16.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

15. **(15)** NUESTRO AMOR
    - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi Feat. Daddy Yankee
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (15.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

16. **(16)** POR TU MALDITO AMOR
    - **Artist:** Luis Fonsi Feat. Daddy Yankee
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (15.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

17. **(17)** PERE TÉ VAS A ARREPENTIR
    - **Artist:** K-Paz De La Sierra Feat. Jose Manuel Zambrano
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (15.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

18. **(18)** A CHILLAR A OTRA PARTE
    - **Artist:** Daddy Yankee Feat. Natti Natasha
    - **Label:** Sony BMG (15.00)
    - **Genre:** Regional Mexican

19. **(19)** MALO
    - **Artist:** Bebe
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**Latin Airplay Charts**

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**Regional Mexican**

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**JAPAN**

**SINGLES**

1. SNOW! SNOW! SNOW! (CD + DVD) (Japan, Sony Music Entertainment)
2. THE OFFICIAL UK CHARTS CO-Sponsored Chart Topping 'Hit & Run' (Sony Music Entertainment)
3. JCB SONG (JCB)
4. FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK (The Proclaimers Ft. Midler, Harper Bros)
5. WHEN YOU TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME (Bruno Mars Ft. Brandy, A&R Records)
6. WHEN I'M GONE (Bruno Mars Ft. Brandy, A&R Records)
7. JINGLE BELLS (Last Christmas) (Sticky Fingers Records)
8. HUNGRY (MADONNA Ft. Sean Combs, Warner Bros)
9. I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE (Elton John Ft. Mary J. Blige, Interscope)
10. COLDPLAY PARALYTIC (Coldplay)

**ALBUMS**

1. MAGNOLIADGA (Live At Stadialum) (Magnoliadga)
2. KATIE MELUA (Piece By Piece) (Wind Records)
3. MADONNA (Confessions On A Dance Floor) (Warner Bros)
4. ROBBIE WILLIAMS (Intensiva) (Capitol)

**FRANCE**

**SINGLES**

1. MON PLUS BEAU NOEL (Johnny Hallyday, Universal)
2. LA CAMARGUE NEIGE (James International)
3. SANTIANO (Santiano)
4. AIMEER JUSQU'A L'IMPOSSIBLE (Eric B & Rakim)
5. JINGLE BELLS/LAST CHRISTMAS (Sticky Fingers Records)
6. NOEL, QUE DU BONHEUR (Johnny Hallyday, Universal)
7. GHOSTBUSTERS (Paul McCartney, Island)
8. MA RELIGION DANS SON REGARD (Johnny Hallyday, Universal)
9. LES HISTOIRES DE L'INFINI (Johnny Hallyday, Universal)
10. LA BICYCLETTE (La Academy S, Virgin)

**ITALY**

**SINGLES**

1. HUNGRY (MADONNA Ft. Sean Combs, Warner Bros)
2. BIG CITY LIFE (Kylie Minogue, Warner Bros)
3. CE LA FANDE A (Antonio Fagala)
4. ADVERTISING SPACE (ivi Williams Chirilcal)
5. A PAIN THAT I'M USED TO (Ivan, Warner Bros)
6. SWAN (Rita Ora, Sony)
7. TURN YOUR CAR AROUND (Yves Saint Laurent)
8. ALL ABOUT YOU (i.aT's INTRODUCE)
9. WAKE UP (100% MIAMI, Hollywood Records)
10. TRIPPING (MADONNA Ft. Sean Combs, Warner Bros)

**SPAIN**

**SINGLES**

1. PRODIGY (PRODIGY)
2. JINGLE BELLS/LAST CHRISTMAS (Sticky Fingers Records)
3. MMNO OFICIAL DEL SEVILLA FC (El Arribo, Carpeta)
4. HUNGRY (MADONNA Ft. Sean Combs, Warner Bros)
5. A PAIN THAT I'M USED TO (i.P. D.A T.M. RECORDS)
6. WHO DO YOU LOVE ENGLISH FRENSH (i.P. D.A T.M. RECORDS)
7. POPCORN ( carácter, Warner Bros)
8. ALL BECAUSE OF YOU (i.P. D.A T.M. RECORDS)
9. TALK (i.P. D.A T.M. RECORDS)
10. TRIPPING (i.P. D.A T.M. RECORDS)

**DENMARK**

**SINGLES**

1. ARCHHH (Engi) (Engi)
2. UN RICE NICE GUY (T-Pain & Fabio)
3. ASHLEY B. UNPLUGGED (EP) (Ashley Benson)
4. A PAIN THAT I'M USED TO (Verden Storste Bornerk, Warner Bros)
5. JOHN LENNON (John Lennon)

**PORTUGAL**

**SINGLES**

1. TV2 (De Torre Madeira) (TV2)
2. BANSE (At My Best End)
3. ROBBIE WILLIAMS (Intensiva) (Capitol)
4. EMINEM (Noticia) (The Gods Photopraphy)
5. JOHN LENNON (John Lennon) (The Beatles Photopraphy)

**Greece**

**SINGLES**

1. ROBBIE WILLIAMS (Intensiva) (Capitol)
2. CALIFORNIA LOVE (2Pac Ft. The Dogg Pound, Ruthless)
3. EMINEM (Noticia) (The Gods Photopraphy)
4. JOHN LENNON (John Lennon) (The Beatles Photopraphy)

**EURO DIGITAL TRACKS**

1. HUNGRY (ALBUM VERSION) (MADONNA Ft. Sean Combs, Warner Bros)
2. FAIRYTALE OF NEW YORK (The Proclaimers Ft. Midler, Harper Bros)
3. WHEN YOU TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME (Bruno Mars Ft. Brandy, A&R Records)
4. WHEN I'M GONE (Bruno Mars Ft. Brandy, A&R Records)
5. JINGLE BELLS (Last Christmas) (Sticky Fingers Records)
6. HUNGRY (MADONNA Ft. Sean Combs, Warner Bros)
7. I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE (Elton John Ft. Mary J. Blige, Interscope)
8. COLDPLAY PARALYTIC (Coldplay)

**Data**

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

Data for week of January 7, 2006 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 56
### EUROCHARTS

#### SINGLE SALES

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#### ALBUMS

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### RADIO AIRPLAY

**EUROPEAN AIRPLAY REPORT**

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Data for week of JANUARY 7, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646-654-4533
Tracks for more than 20 weeks and rank below exceptions SoundScan from SoundScan. Sales data for weighted positives. Songs Promosquad using multiple listens and a nationwide sample tr

The SINGLES SALES CHARTS

Over least, 50,000 million of 200,000 units (Platino).

100 multi- platinum level. units (Diamond). Numeral within Platinum or Diamond symbol indicates album's

Compiled from, r

Titles with the chart's largest unit increase.

Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart's targeted unit increase.

Where included, this award indicates the title with the chart's targeted unit increase.

 albums with the greatest sales gains this week.

RECURRENT RULES

Songs removed from the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously for 25 weeks and rank below 25. Songs are removed from the Hot 100 and Pop 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Pop 100 for more than 25 weeks and rank below 25. The Hot 100 removes from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 25 weeks and rank below 15 in 10 descents or in audience, provided that they have been in the top 20 for gaining enough audience points to be in the Top 30.

Singles Sales Charts

The top-selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail store, mass merchant, and internet sales reports and are completed, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/Hip-Hop. Singles, sales data is compiled from a national outlet sample of core R&B/Hip-Hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan.

Singles with the greatest sales gains.

CONFIGURATIONS

CD single available. DVD single available. VHS video single available. Include date only if date is available.

HPTRIPDECTOR

Indicates title earned HPTripDector status in that particular format based on research data provided by Promosquad and is tested online by Promosquad using multiple listeners and a nationwide sample of carefully profiled music consumers. Songs are rated on a 1-5 scale. Final results are based on weighted positions. Songs with a score of 5 or more (75 or more for albums) are judged to have Hit Potential, although that benchmark number can fluctuate per format based on the strength of available titles. For a complete and updated list of current songs with Hit Potential, comments, polls, and more, please visit www.hptripdector.com.

DANCE CLUB PLAY

Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

Top songs with the greatest club play awareness over the previous week.

ALBUM CHARTS

Recording Industry Act. Of America (RIAA) certification for the net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold). RIAA certification for net shipment for 1 million units (Platinum).

RIAA certification for net shipment for 10 million units (Diamond) Numerical within Platinum or Diamond symbol indicates album's multi-platinum level. For boxed sets and double albums with a running time of 100 minutes or more, the RIAA multiplies shipments by the number of discs and/or tapes.

Certification for net shipments of 100,000 units (Gold). Certification of 200,000 units (Platinum). Certification of 400,000 units (Multi-Platinum).

SINGLES CHARTS

RIAA certification for 100,000 paid downloads (Gold). RIAA certification for 200,000 paid downloads (Platinum). Album sales chart is determined by sales of singles, a maximum of $16.00 at retail for thermally processed programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at suggested retail price. RIAA gold certification for sales of 130,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA platinum certification for sales of 500,000 albums or $3 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA diamond certification for sales of 10 million albums or $5 million in sales at suggested retail price.

Music Video Sales Charts

Riaa gold certification for net shipment of 25,000 units for video singles. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units for video albums. RIAA platinum certification for sales of 100,000 units for shortform or longform videos.

DVSALES/WS VIDEOSALE/VIDEO RENTALS

RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 25,000 units for video singles. RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units or $1 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA platinum certification for sales of 130,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA diamond certification for minimum sales of 120,000 copies or a dollar volume of $18 million at retail for thermally processed programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at suggested retail for non-thermally processed titles. RIAA platinum certification for a maximum sale of 250,000 units or a dollar volume of $36 million at retail for thermally processed programs, or at least 50,000 units and $2 million at suggested retail for non-thermally processed titles.

DVD SALES/WS VIDEOSALE/VIDEO RENTALS

Top Holiday Albums: All Christmas, Mariah, diva karaoke collections, including new ones and those released in earlier years, are eligible to appear on the Top Holiday Albums Chart. TOPHOLIDAYS.COM. The list is updated through Internet manner, based on data collected by Nielsen SoundScan. Catalog titles are includ-

www.americanradiohistory.com
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National Association of Recording Merchandisers seeks exec with minimum 7-10 years music/entertainment or tech industry experience. Must have proven sales background, preferably in new media, and be a creative and strategic thinker. Exceptional verbal, written, and interpersonal communications skills; strong sense of financial accountability; and good organizational/ supervisory abilities. EVP will develop and execute sales strategies for memberships, advertising, exhibits, and sponsorships; inform and enhance NARM's position in digital and mobile entertainment arenas and cultivate relationships with new companies. Also support day-to-day NARM management, including budget, facilities, convention, programs, and human resources; handle committees and special projects as needed. Non-profit or association management experience would be a plus. Resume, salary history and requirements by January 20 to: NARM EVP, 9 Eves Drive, Suite 120, Marlton, NJ 08053 or hrobak@narm.com. No calls!

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VNU Business Media publishes over 40 business publications, stages more than 70 trade shows and conferences and operates approximately 200 business-to-business electronic products. We operate around the globe, covering some of the most powerful industries in the world including entertainment, retail, media, travel and design.

Billboard, a VNU Publication, currently has the following openings for qualified candidates with a passion for music:

Director of Integrated Marketing & Brand Development - This New York-based position will direct the public relations, marketing, and promotional efforts for the Billboard Information Group portfolio of products. This individual will also be responsible for developing new business opportunities. Additionally this individual will manage the Billboard brand message by utilizing both internal and external media as well as through the development of partnerships and event promotions. The qualified candidate will be responsible for developing sales tools for the Billboard world-wide sales team as well as assisting the development of new revenue generating ventures.

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

Eastern Sales Director - This position is responsible for advertising sales across all Billboard Information Group properties - Billboard magazine, Billboard.com, Billboard biz on the eastern coast. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to phone sales, in-person sales appointments, and preparing sales presentations. Individuals will have existing business and cultivate new accounts. Emphasis will be on selling of frequency advertising schedules as well as cultivating large "portfolio partnership" accounts.

Qualified candidate must have a minimum of five years sales experience, preferably for publications with weekly deadlines, familiarity with on-line sales helpful. Must have exceptional verbal and written communication skills, competency with ACT and Excel preferable. Must have a college degree in a relevant area of study.

Please send resume and a cover letter including salary requirements to: entertainrecruit@vnubuspubs.com.

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

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF ASSETS
OF THE SONGWRITER COLLECTIVE, LLC

Notice is hereby given that Fortress Credit Opportunities I LP, a Delaware limited partnership, as a lender and as agent on behalf of the lenders (the "Agent") under that certain Loan Agreement, dated as of March 1, 2004, as amended (the "Loan Agreement"), among The Songwriter Collective, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, as borrower (the "Debtor"), the Agent and the lenders, having postponed the public sales scheduled for November 4, 2005 and December 14, 2005, intends to sell at public sale in accordance with the provisions of the New York Uniform Commercial Code, certain personal property assets of the Debtor, generally described as all of the Debtor's right, title and interest of every kind and nature in and to all accounts, chattel paper, deposit accounts, documents, electronic chattel paper, equipment, general intangibles, goods, instruments, inventory, investment property, payment intangibles and software belonging to the Debtor, in each case whether tangible or intangible, wherever located or situated, including all rights to a portfolio of musical compositions, copyrights, including, in each case, all rights of the musical compositions, the right to and interest in any and all revenues and licenses derived from such musical compositions, and all claims and causes of action related to the musical compositions accruing at any time and all other rights of the Debtor of any nature whatsoever in the musical compositions (the "Collateral"). A more detailed description of the Collateral will be provided to you upon execution of a confidentiality agreement.

The public sale will take place at the office of Sidney Austin Brown & Wood LLP at 787 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019, on Tuesday, January 31, 2006 at 11:00 a.m., New York time. The Agent reserves the right to cancel the sale, without notice, in its entirety, or to adjourn the sale to a future date. The Agent may further adjure the sale herein described to another date from time to time, before, during or after commencement of bidding, without written notice, by announcement at the time and place appointed for such auction, or any adjournment thereof, and, without further notice, such auction may be made at the time and place to which the auction may have been so adjourned.

Interested persons should take notice that the Collateral will be sold on the following terms and conditions:

1. All bids must be given orally at the public sale.
2. The Agent reserves the right to bid for and purchase the Collateral and to credit the purchase price against the expenses of sale and principal, interest and any and all other amounts due and payable to the Agent pursuant to the terms of any and all indebtedness secured by the security interest in the Collateral.
3. The Agent has sole discretion to determine which offer is the highest or best offer, and to reject any offer which it deems to be insufficient.
4. Concurrently with the acceptance of any bid, the prospective purchaser shall be required to execute and deliver to the Agent the Asset Purchase Agreement, a copy of which may be obtained by contacting the one of the person’s identification in the final paragraph of this notice, containing terms of sale and conditions precedent to the Agent’s obligation to sell, in each case, in addition to those set forth herein, including, without limitation, the requirement that the sale of the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement be consummated no earlier than 30 days following execution of the same by the Agent. Any prospective purchaser shall be required to deposit (the "Deposit") with the Agent, the estimated purchase price of the Collateral, and such deposit shall be non-refundable, in which case the Agent shall have the right to retain such Deposit. If such sale of the Collateral is consummated with such prospective purchaser, the full amount of such Deposit shall be applied to the purchase price. If such sale is not consummated, the Agent shall have the right, but shall have no obligation, to reoffer the Collateral for sale, without further notice. The prospective purchaser shall be entitled to any interest on the Deposit held by the Agent, whether or not the Deposit is required to be refunded to the prospective purchaser by the Agent pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement.
5. No bids may be withdrawn once made, but no sale is final until accepted by the Agent.
6. Only cash or cashier’s check or other immediately available funds will be accepted for the Deposit or for payment of the purchase price. The bid of any prospective purchaser who fails to tender proper payment may be rejected and the Agent may, subject to the other terms hereof, (i) accept any alternative bid made at the sale, in which case the Agent shall have no obligation to reconvene the sale, accept additional bids, or notify any other bidders of the acceptance of such bid, or (ii) reoffer the Collateral for sale without further notice, in each case, at the Agent’s option. Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, the Agent shall not be obligated to make any sale of the Collateral pursuant to this notice.
7. In the event the Agent is unable to consummate any sale and deliver the Collateral to a purchaser, then the sole liability of the Agent to such purchaser shall be to refund the purchase price, if any, previously paid to the Agent.
8. The Collateral will only be sold in its entirety unless the Agent announces otherwise at the outset of the public sale.
9. Subject to satisfaction of all of the conditions precedent to the Agent’s obligation to sell the Collateral pursuant to the Asset Purchase Agreement and the terms and conditions hereof, consummation of the sale of the Collateral will be made immediately upon receipt by the Agent of the purchase price and shall be evidenced by delivery of the Collateral to the purchaser identified in the Asset Purchase Agreement.
10. All bidders and other persons attending this auction agree that they have full knowledge of the terms set forth above and contained in the Asset Purchase Agreement and agree to be bound by the terms hereof and thereof.
11. The above terms and conditions of sale may be subject to additional or amended terms and conditions to be announced at the time of sale.
12. If any dispute arises between two or more bidders, the Agent may decide the same or put the Collateral up for sale again and resell to the purchaser submitting the best bid, as determined by the Agent. In all cases, the Agent’s decision shall be final.
13. All bidders and other persons attending this auction agree that they are bound by the terms hereof and thereof.
14. The Agent shall have the right to redeem the Collateral in accordance with, and only to the extent provided for, under applicable law.

December 31, 2005

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Recording Academy Honors

Grammy Award-winning artists Mariah Carey, Jay-Z, Yoko Ono & John Lennon and Howard Shore were recipients of the Recording Academy's New York chapter Honors 2005, which took place Dec. 7 at New York's Gotham Hall.

Billboard brand marketing editor Michael Pedetta congratulated Mariah Carey on her Honors Award.

E! Chairman Ted Martin Bandier left, who introduced Yoko Ono and Jay-Z enjoyed the night's festivities.

Sean "Diddy" Combs, flanked by Billboard's Todd Nye and Billboard Information Group executive editor Charlene Frazier Crook at the commemorative dinner gala.

Janet Fraser Crook, left, was recently honored with the U.K. music industry woman of the year trophy at the Park Lane hotel in London. Fraser Crook was recognized as the director and co-founder of BBC2's live performance series "Later With Jools Holland," which has run for 13 years. Pictured with Fraser Crook is Sharron Spliter, lead singer of Scottish band Texas.

The Spirit of Life Award at the Billboard Information Group executive VP of promotion Richard Palmese Dec. 6 at the Capitale in New York. The event raised funds for the City of Hope, one of the worlds leading research and treatment centers for cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and many other diseases. From left are Palmese, Universal Music Group's chairman/CEO, Universal Music Group's chairman/CEO, and Universal Music Group's chairman/CEO.

XM Satellite Radio premiered the XM Bravo Music Awards, honoring Keith Urban right, as country artist of the year and "artist who'd like to see cross over to film." The winners were determined by the 1.4 million votes cast nationwide. Categories were selected by XM's programming staff. XM's executive VP of programming Eric Logan presented Urban with two trophies backstage at the Kemper Arena in Kansas City, Mo.

Songwriter Paul Steele, left, received a gold disc for the soundtrack "Kill Bill: Vol. 2" from Universal Music Publishing France managing director Fabrice Benoît in Paris. Steele, along with Alan Rivey and Philip Bingham, wrote and performed the track "The Chaser." The soundtrack "Kill Bill: Vol. 2" debuted April 18, 2004, and charted at No. 6 on the Billboard 200 and at No. 2 on the Billboard soundtrack chart.

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www.americanradiohistory.com
LAST GIRL STANDING

U.K. R&B/pop trio Sugababes has experienced yet another change in personnel. As many people were departing their offices to be with family and friends for the holidays, Mutya Buena pushed the farewell button on group members Keisha Buchanan and Heidi Range. She was replaced by Anelme Berrabah.

According to the trio’s Web site, Buena desired a break from the promotional whirlwind surrounding the group’s fourth album, the No. 1 “Taller in More Ways,” which has spawned two hit singles (the chart-topper “Push the Button” and the top 10 “Ugly”). 

Those keeping score will recall that Range replaced original member Siobhan Donaghy in 2001. In other words, as the sole original member of Sugababes, Buchanan can assume the role of Mary Wilson for today’s generation.

SIN CITY

Sure, Kid Rock is booked to host the New Year’s Eve party at Las Vegas’ newest club, Jet at the Mirage. In fact, if what Track hears is true, the Atlantic Records rocker will take a break from his hosting duties to spin a live DJ set.

Meanwhile, a stone’s throw away at the Venetian’s Tao club, Paris Hilton will be holding court, hosting her own Dec. 31 soiree. Track would not be surprised if Hilton performs a track or two from her in-progress Warner Bros. album for the blinged-out partygoers.

TRYING TO GET LABELED

Track hears that ringtone pioneer Zingy wants to pair with an existing record label to form a wireless-only imprint. It is envisions as an entity where new talent would be distributed via wireless ringtones and full-song downloads, with successful acts graduating to a physical deal with the label. Sources tell Track that Zingy’s phone is not ringing off the hook with potential partners. The departure of Zingy founder and CEO Fabrice Grinda a few weeks back only raises questions over the future of the effort.

THE GIRL IS HIS

From what Track hears, Brandy is no longer being managed by her mother, Sonja Norwood. Jimmy Henchmen of Czar Entertainment in New York is now overseeing the artist’s career. Henchmen also manages the Game and Sharissa.

DIRECTOR’S CHAIR

Joaquin Phoenix was in Los Angeles the week of Dec. 19 directing the video for People in Planes’ “If You Talk Too Much (My Head Will Explode).” The song is the lead single from the Welsh band’s debut album, “As Far As the Eye Can See . . .” out March 28 via Wind-up Records.

MYA TO MOTOWN

Sources tell Track that Mya has signed with Motown Records. Formerly with A&R/Interscope, Mya is currently working on a new album.

CROSSING THE POND

U.K.-based nonprofit Youth Music, which provides music education to underprivileged British youth, has its eyes set on the American music industry. Founded in 2000, Youth Music is looking to partner with U.S. artists, labels and brands to help raise awareness about the organization’s musical mission.

Track hears that Music Youth has tapped Morris Reid of Washington, D.C.-based marketing and communications firm Westin Rinehart to helm this effort. Reid, who has worked closely with the VH1 Save the Music Foundation and Russell Simmons’ Hip-Hop Summit Action Network, appears tailor-made for the task.

POWER PLAYER ON THE MOVE

Stan Pierre-Louis is joining Kaye Scholer in New York in mid-January to co-chair the firm’s entertainment division. As the RIAA’s senior VP of legal affairs, Pierre-Louis has been leading the battle against unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing. Track wonders if he finished negotiating his compensation package before or after Billboard selected him as one of the winners on its 2005 Power Players list.

THAT’S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

A tribute to Dionne Warwick featuring more than 50 performers the tunes she made famous will be taped Jan. 26 at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles. The special, which salutes Warwick’s 45th anniversary in music, will include appearances by Stevie Wonder, Olivia Newton-John, Gloria Estefan, Smokey Robinson, Angie Stone, Ashford & Simpson, Yolanda Adams and BeBe Winans. Producer David Geist is in negotiations for TV airdates.

HOME VIDEO: Rhino Entertainment in Burbank, Calif., promotes Liz Goodman to senior director of marketing, video. She was director of marketing, home video. Rhino Entertainment also ups Kathy Rivkin to manager of A&R, video. She was coordinator, home video.

RELATED FIELDS: HIT Entertainment in New York names Bill Burke VP of brand management. He was assistant VP of marketing, global consumer products at Sesame Workshop.

Send submissions to shan@billboard.com.

FIELDS OF GOLD

Sting is confirmed to headline Tiger Woods’ ninth annual Tiger Jam benefit concert April 29. Presented by AT&T and held at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, the event raises funds for local charities as well as the Tiger Woods Learning Center, a youth education facility in Anaheim, Calif., that is scheduled to open early in 2006.

CHARITABLE STARS

More than 40 artists—including Peter Gabriel, Herbie Hancock, Kate Bush, Barry Gibb and Annie Lennox—are participating in a charity auction to raise funds and awareness for Witness, the human rights organization co-founded by Gabriel. On April 6, Fairlight will auction a vintage Fairlight CMI keyboard—a Witness fund-raiser in Los Angeles. Each white key of the digital synthesizer will be signed by the participating musicians, producers and composers.
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Congratulations to the Zomba Label Group artists for their 48th annual Grammy award nominations!

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Best Gospel Song
Lift Him Up: Hezekiah Walker & Love Fellowship Choir
We Must Praise: J Moss

Best Traditional Soul Gospel Album
Live From Houston...The Rose of Gospel: Dorinda Clark-Cole
Psalms, Hymns & Spiritual Songs: Donnie McClurkin
Be Exalted: Marvin Sapp

Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album
The J Moss Project: J Moss

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