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Industry Initiatives Like MusiCares Help Bring New Orleans' Musical Heritage Back To Life

MUSIC'S BIG NIGHT
AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK INSIDE THE PRODUCTION OF THE GRAMMYS

JAMES TAYLOR
A REVEALING Q&A WITH MUSICARES' PERSON OF THE YEAR

TWEEN CRAZE
'HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL' SCORES DISNEY A RECORD FIVE HITS IN THE TOP 40
Best Country Song
Bart Baker
John Rich
Greg Koch
Natalie Stuckers
Odie Blackmon

Best Country Album
Brad Paisley
Natalie Stuckers
Trisha Yearwood

Best Bluegrass Album
The Grascals

Best New Age Album
R. Carlos Nakai Quartet

Best Jazz Instrumental Solo
David Sanborn

Best Large Jazz Ensemble Album
John Hendricks Large Ensemble
The Bill Holman Band
The Chris Walden Big Band

Best Latin Jazz Album
Caribbean Jazz Project Featuring Dave Samuel

Best Gospel Song
James Harris III
Terry Lewis
James G. Wright
Eric Campbell
Jol Campell
Trecina Campbell
Warren Campbell
James Moss

Best Rock Gospel Album
Audio Adrenaline
Day Of Fire

Best Pop/Contemporary Gospel Album
Jars Of Clay
Out Of Eden
Michael W. Smith
Third Day

Best Southern, Country, or Bluegrass Gospel Album
Amy Grant
The Oak Ridge Boys

Best Contemporary Soul Gospel Album
Kerry Washington
Candice Glover
LeToya Luckett

Best Gospel Choir Or Chorus Album
Gladys Knight

Best Latin Pop Album
Ricardo Arjona (GEM)
Jorge Drexler Orquesta
Laura Pausini (LADAM)

Best Latin Rock/Alternative Album
Molotov (GEM)
Orishas (GEM)
Vico C

Best Traditional Tropical Latin Album
Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra w/ Arturo O'Farril
Tropicana All Stars w/ Israel Kantor

Best Tejano Album
Little Joe Y La Familia
Joe Posada

Best Traditional Blues Album
Marcia McMillan

Best Contemporary Folk Album
Tim O'Brien
Tom Paxton
Joel Smirnoff

Best Contemporary Folk Album
Rodney Crowell
Nickel Creek
Bruce Springsteen

Best Native American Music Album
Randy Wood

Best Hawaiian Music Album
Kapono Beamer
Sonny Lim
Daniel Ho

Best Reggae Album
Burning Spear (PRR)
Damian Marley
Sean Paul
Shaggy

Best Traditional World Music Album
Mamadoou Diabate (BHANO)
Masato Of Persian Music (GEMAS)
Ali Parka Touré (BAMA)
Tourman Diabate (BUNJ)

Best Contemporary World Music Album
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LadySmith Black Mambazo (GEMAS)
The Strings Of The English Chamber Orchestra
Anoushka Shankar

Best Musical Album For Children
Red Grammer
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Cathy Fink
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Best Spoken Word Album
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Best Comedy Album
Rick Moranis (GEM)
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Best Musical Show Album
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Ciara
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GREEN DAY
"BULLET IN A BIBLE" DVD SPECIAL
The Grammy Awards play to a tough crowd. I got a taste of that one year ago, when I was interviewed on NPR about the annual awards show.

After handicapping the likely winners, we opened the phone lines for questions. Immediately the callers brought up those four dirty words: Milli Vanilli, Jethro Tull.

Naturally, I explained how the Recording Academy has learned from past fumbles and has improved its practices in recent years. Then, more pouting. A caller wanted to know why the Grammys were out of touch with hip-hop. I dutifully described the academy’s efforts to bring in younger members. OK, so why aren’t more hip-hop acts exposed on the telecast?

It is with such scrutinizing in mind that the Grammy production crew must prepare for the Feb. 8 show.

But no matter how much they spend, no matter how much they prepare, no matter how fabulous their list of performers and presenters, the Grammy audience at home will be most absorbed by the show’s shortcomings and gaffes.

This is, after all, reality TV. Despite all the rehearsals and teleprompter presentations, once each envelope is unveiled, the seal gets out of the door. That’s the up artists. And that’s why we are reminded that musical talent and oratory skills are often mutually exclusive.

So, we say good luck to Neil Portnow and the team. Let’s hope that all of this year’s Grammy moments are great ones. Still, it’s hard to see how things could have been any different—Honey beat out Elvis Costello for best new artist in 1978?

---

Digital Music: Make It Cool And Make It Easy

The following is excerpted from EMG Group chairman Eric Nichol’s opening keynote speech Jan. 21 at MidemNet in Cannes.

Since I took on the chairmanship of EMG six-and-a-half years ago, it’s been clear to me that digital distribution would play a massive and expanding role in our industry. EMG’s philosophy throughout that period has been to make the legal acquisition of music content easy and [at] good value in consumers’ eyes—and to make stealing it very difficult and an “un-cool” thing to do.

That’s why we licensed our content to legal digital distributors before most; we experimented more than most with new technologies and forged alliances with many companies across the value chain; and we’ve been at the forefront of industry efforts to contain online piracy since before mp3.com gave everyone a massive wake-up call.

And it’s exactly why we’ve partnered with Microsoft to help us undertake a major technology program. Among other things, this will allow us to respond even more quickly to meet consumer and customer demand for innovative music products and services anywhere in the world.

Notwithstanding the challenging times that the music industry has had in the past five or six years, the accelerating development of technology is presenting with a truly massive opportunity. And if we grasp it, there can be no doubt that the industry will return to growth soon, and we may even see unprecedented growth rates at some point in the not-too-distant future.

The fact is that digital distribution is still very much in its infancy—indeed, I’m not even sure that it’s out of the delivery room yet. The potential for its expansion is unimaginably large. Thanks to the industry’s collective efforts, digital music is now a meaningful proportion of the global recorded music market—about 6% and rising, in fact—and it’s enjoying explosive growth.

The day is surely within our sights when digital growth outstrips physical decline and we can all compete for share of a growing pie.

Exciting as the growth opportunities are, I want to stress the importance of our working together to ensure that theft of intellectual property is minimized, even if we can’t eradicate it.

Since we gathered at MIDEM last year, we’ve seen some fundamentally important developments in the fight against piracy. The landmark court rulings on Grokster and Kazaa sent extremely clear signals to those on intent on facilitating theft for any reason, and the music industry’s efforts to raise awareness of illegal activity and to discourage theft on a grand scale have certainly had a positive impact.

All that said, I’ve never been in any doubt that by far the most effective anti-piracy measure is to develop attractive legal alternatives. And to illustrate the point, EMG, together with Avario Mobile, announced the first-ever European legal peer-to-peer music service on Jan. 20.

So let’s make sure we provide not just legal ways for consumers to acquire content, but compelling ways. When it comes to music, consumers want value for money that compares favorably with other forms of entertainment. They want to have access to, and be made aware of, the full breadth of music that already exists and when new work is available.

They want to be able to acquire music in ways that are quick and convenient, and many want the freedom and facility to create their own songbooks for different aspects of their lives. Perhaps most importantly, they want to be able to play these on any portable device.

That brings me to the thorny subject of interoperability. The benefits of it are obvious, and the risks of not having it are equally obvious. If consumers want their devices to talk to each other, I’d like them to have that facility.

Disappointed consumers these days tend not to struggle on, but they switch to something that isn’t disappointing, and if that means that we lose them from the marketplace, I respectfully suggest we will have failed.

So please, let’s innovate and grow through closer cooperation, and let’s focus on providing consumers with stunningly attractive experiences. Between us all, we have the creative and technological means to delight consumers—so let’s apply them.

It’s still very early days for digital music and other content—and the landscape is constantly shifting, which makes accurate predictions extremely difficult. But it also makes for a hugely exciting future.

And we’re all fortunate to be part of it. Create, cooperate, experiment and remember… the consumer is the boss!!
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NETTWERK BACKS FAN IN FILE-SHARING SUIT

Nettwerk One co-owner Terry McBride wants to raise their voices against labels suing peer-to-peer file sharers.

In mid-January, his Vancouver-based label and management company, which manages such artists as Avril Lavigne and Sarah McLachlan, decided to foot the legal bill for David Greubel, a father of four, to fight an RIAA-initiated lawsuit in Texas.

"I’ve gone from silent opposition to vocal opposition," McBride says. "This really has to stop, because Avril Lavigne would never sue a music fan. [The labels] are protecting the interests of the copyright holder. They’re not protecting Avril’s best interests."

McBride says his initiative began after Greubel’s daughter, Elisa, wrote to Nettwerk One artist DJ Lars, who recorded the song "Download Me." She loved the song’s message and lamented that her family “won the lottery”—they were sued for files she shared two years ago when she was 13.

David Greubel tells Billboard that McBride offered to cover the litigation costs and any settlement. Greubel says he does not watch much TV and is not aware of educational efforts to help people understand what may be copyright infringement.

He did say he remembered the record labels shutting down the original Napster. “Subsequently, I didn’t know if [other file-trading applications] were doing something differently than Napster was.”

The complaint, filed last August and served on Greubel in November, lists more than 500 audio tracks.
tracks plus artwork and videos downloaded from Kazaa. Many tracks are by artists known to draw young fans, such as Lavigne, Sublime and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Other tracks are by artists who typically appeal to an older listener, such as Deborra- McIntyre, Willie Nelson, Chicago-based lawyer Charles Mudd Jr., who says he has represented more than 100 people sued by the labels since 2003, is defending the suit.

He believes there are other alternatives to litigation against file sharers for labels to protect copyrights. "The litigation tactics that have been adopted are aggressive and aren’t accomplishing their goals," Mudd says. "They are putting people in extremely difficult positions—they can’t afford to pay attorneys or settlements and there is no real flexibility [in settlement negotiations]. The process is to demand monetary amounts that are not warranted.

An RIAA representative says that while there may be special circumstances—which he says are then responded to—there must be consistency in the way copyright infringers are treated. The settlement program has evolved and continues to evolve to try to be as effective as possible. The RIAA says that the labels would not be pursuing such an expensive way of protecting their rights if there were any other way that was nearly as effective.

McBride takes a stronger position than Mudd on the lawsuits, calling them hypocritical. "Music has been shared since the invention of the cassette tape," he says. "How can one sue another music fan who’s doing the exact same thing, but based on a paradigm of this generation versus their generation?"

McBride says that all music should be made available in return for a $2-$5 monthly fee paid by mobile phone and Internet subscribers. "Music is not a product," he says. "It’s a utility. It’s ubiquitous. Music is like water, and you must market music the same way you market water.”

LONDON — Live Nation and Nokia have sealed a partnership that aims to provide U.K. concertgoers with a wireless and ticketless environment.

Live Nation is the leading international live music promoter. Nokia is the world’s biggest mobile phone maker. Together they have launched U.K. digital ticketing service ticketmaster.co.uk.

The venture’s short-term goal is to enable customers to make ticket purchases with their handsets.

Within a year or two, Live Nation and Nokia hope to replace hard tickets with two-dimensional bar codes that will be downloaded to phones and scanned for entry into venues. It is the first time anyone has announced plans to roll out a mobile ticketing service.

(Ticketmaster will test wireless ticket delivery this year, beginning in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Verizon is testing such a service for a Feb. 5 Fugees show. See story, page 1).

For now, tickethub.co.uk subscribers will receive text message or e-mail alerts informing them of ticket availability for new Live Nation shows. Registration of the service is free. Such service already is offered to cell phone users in the United States by ticketmaster.com.

Ultimately, the same technology could be used to buy drinks, programs, food and merchandise at the venues. "It’s about demonstrating that technology can give all handset owners the opportunity to buy by mobile phones and reach many more people," says Jenni Cairns, Live Nation’s London-based marketing director.

Cairns adds that reaching the consumer directly enables promoters and venue owners to bypass illegal ticket sellers. However, standard service fees will still be charged.

The alliance is the latest in a stream of deals between live event promoters and new technology companies. It comes less than a year after European telecommunications giant Orange signed an agreement with Live Nation competitor Anschutz Entertainment Group. They will relaunch London’s much troubled Millennium Dome as a major multimedia entertainment venue called the O2.

In the United States, Live Nation and its Instant Live CD operation work with U.S. wireless operator Verizon to offer concert downloads to phones. Nokia has ties to venues owned by Anschutz’s AEG. Live division, including sponsorship of the Nokia Theatre Times Square in New York.

Paul Latham, Live Nation’s U.K. CEO of music, does not foresee any conflict in these various partnerships.

He adds that the live-music sector has a lot to gain from such links. "The more we use technology to create demand, the busier we are," Latham says.

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Verizon Pilots U.S. Mobile Ticketing With Fugees Gig

Verizon Wireless has partnered with Columbia Records and the reunited Fugees for a series of industry firsts designed to promote Verizon’s new VCast music service.

Most significantly, music from the upcoming new Fugees album will be made available exclusively to the service. Although “Take It Easy,” the first track from the reunited album, is currently available at a number of digital services (including iTunes and Rhapsody), subsequent singles will be limited to VCast.

And while record labels have made a standard practice of debuting singles as ringtones, this is the first time that studio masters to an unreleased album will debut exclusively via a wireless full-song music download service.

The titles of the upcoming exclusive singles have not yet been released, nor has the street date of the new album.

Additionally, Verizon is using a pre-Grammy Awards Fugees concert as a pilot program for mobile ticketing. The operator sent select subscribers a text message inviting them to the free concert taking place Feb. 5 in Hollywood. Those responding received a multimedia message containing a bar code that can be scanned at a special entrance to the venue in lieu of a paper ticket.

Verizon is evaluating a rollout of the service throughout its Verizon Wireless concert venues nationwide, as well as integrating it into its Music Unleashed concert series for the acts it sponsors.

Clips from the Fugees concert will be available for free to VCast subscribers as well, also an exclusive.

The use of exclusive content is considered essential to drive awareness and adoption of mobile music services. The VCast service will generate live online last month, with competitor Sprint operating a similar service since last November. Sprint is making the live performance of the Rolling Stones’ Super Bowl halftime show available as an exclusive download of its music store, powered by Groove Mobile.

Verizon Wireless was the first wireless carrier to premier a music video on its network before any other medium with John Legend’s “Number One.” Verizon has also aggressively sponsored tours through Music Unleashed, making live footage from these events available exclusively through VCast.

Most recently, Verizon taped a live Yellowcard performance Jan. 5 at the VCast launch party at the Hard Rock Cafe in Las Vegas. It began selling the live tracks from this show Jan. 17, a week before the band’s debut album bowed Jan. 24.

Verizon, through consulting partner Tribal Brands, is in discussions with some 30 artists for similar in-studio and live exclusives throughout the year. The company is also backing VCast with a print, TV and outdoor advertising campaign valued in the tens of millions. According to VP of advertising John Harrobin, the bulk of the effort goes to promoting the participating acts, which in the past have included Green Day, Shakira, the Black Eyed Peas and Gwen Stefani.

“When we do these things, we want to do it in an authentic way where the artists’ brand is championed,” he says. “We’re not a lifestyle brand, we’re a technology brand. We allow the artist to be the lifestyle brand that makes our service more compelling.”

LAURYN HILL’S reunited group THE FUGEES will have its music used in VCast’s promotions.

Morris To Keynote Music & Money

Doug Morris, chairman/CEO of the world’s largest major label, will join Billboard’s Music & Money Symposium for an afternoon keynote. He will engage in a Q&A session with Billboard executive editor/associate publisher Tamara Conniff.

The Music & Money Symposium, in association with law firm Loeb & Loeb, will be held March 2 at the St. Regis Hotel in New York. The event showcases top technology, music and financial executives discussing investment climates and strategies, along with trends in the music and technology industries. Scheduled panels will explore such issues as venture capital trends, the acquisition of publishing catalogs, how to make money in the mobile and tech spaces and 2006 venture forecasts.

CKX chairman Robert Silberman will provide the morning keynote. His company owns a controlling share of Elvis Presley Enterprises and 19 Entertainment, the firm responsible for the “American Idol” and “So You Think You Can Dance” TV shows.

For more information or to register for the Music & Money conference or for other Billboard events, go to billboardevents.com.

Radio Promo Shift

Labels, Trades Must Adjust As Cox, Cumulus Stop Reporting Adds

If record executives want to know which tracks are being added at radio—at least at the nearly 400 combined stations of Cumulus Media and Cox Radio—they better start tuning in. In a nine-day, mid-January span, both companies announced that they would no longer report music adds to trade publications.

Cumulus executive VP John Dickey first hinted at the possibility at last year’s NAB Radio Show in Philadelphia. “I’m hoping this will positively affect our business on the programming side,” Dickey says. “It’s designed to give our program directors and our music directors more discretion and, ultimately, more creativity and leeway to add and play music that they have strong convictions in for reasons above and beyond charts and callout research.”

Cox CEO Bob Neil says the policy switch makes life more simple for stations. “It puts the onus back on the trade publications if they want to monitor,” Neil says. “And on the record companies to pay attention to what the stations are playing instead of us reporting to them.”

Billboard and Billboard Radio Monitor charts will not be affected. Billboard airplay charts are based entirely on electronic monitoring of actual station broadcasts provided by Nielsen BDS. The move affects publications that rely on such reporting to compile weekly most-added titles and airplay charts.

As for the labels that relied on such reports, they are already expressing concern and uncertainty about how to know if a new single is gathering steam.

“We’re still guided by the spins,” Roadrunner Records senior VP of promotion Dave Loncado says. “We’re going to have to come up with a new way of finding out if the spins we initially see are test spins or actual commitments to the record. It seems to me that the trades have to take over control as to whether something is an add or not.”

Bottom line, Loncado added, “we just need to know if we’ll be seeing a steady stream of these spins or if [early spins are] just a one time thing.”

Calls to Clear Channel Radio and CBS Radio regarding their policies on reporting adds to the trades were not returned by press time.

Additional reporting by Paul Heine in New York and Tony Sanders in Washington, D.C.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GAME
- 2006 Grammy Nominee “Hate It or Love It” -
- Best Rap Song -
- Best Rap Performance By A Duo Or Group -
From the Multi-Platinum Album “The Documentary”
Sanctuary’s Second Life
Stock Plummets, But Company Secures Fund-Raising Facilities

LONDON—Beleaguered British independent music firm Sanctuary Group is looking to a future that, until recently, few industry observers believed existed.

The company—which represents such artists as Elton John, Morrissey and James Blunt—has secured new funding that it says will re-energize its multifaceted business model.

On Jan. 27, Sanctuary announced it had received indications of support for about £110 million ($195 million) in new equity, but warned it would be at a substantial discount to its current share price. The company had not named the backers as Billboard went to press.

During trading Jan. 30, Sanctuary shares fell 19% to less than 1 pence (1 cent), giving the group a market capitalization of roughly £3 million ($5 million). The cash injection represents something of a “rebirth” for the company, explains Sanctuary founder Andy Taylor, who admits that the past financial year represented the most “awful” in its 30-year history.

Taylor says the company will see its sights on “organic growth” in the coming year. “Over the next 12-24 months I would see it getting back to where it was,” Taylor says. Sanctuary’s share price peaked at 45 pence (80 cents) within the past 12 months.

The company also had a £35 million ($62 million) debt canceled, and has secured an additional £3 million loan to cover immediate working capital requirements.

The disclosure stunned analysts. “I am a little surprised that existing shareholders are putting hand in pocket to take part in a heavily discounted and dilutive issue to bail this company out, particularly after the company has said that such an event would not happen,” one London-based media analyst says.

BridgeWell Securities analyst Patrick Yao wants to know “how much of the deal has been underwritten by Evolution, the company’s broker. And more crucially, how much they are taking onto their own book.”

The future direction of the company, Taylor concedes, will not feature urban music.

Sanctuary entered the urban sector in September 2003 with the £6.6 million ($10 million) acquisition of Mathew Knowles’ Music World Entertainment, but now calls the move a mistake. In its preliminary financial report, issued simultaneously with the fund-raising announcement, Sanctuary isolated its Urban Records Group as contributing to “substantial losses” and has shuttered the fledgling unit.

“Mathew had overall responsibility for the urban division, but that doesn’t mean we should blame Mathew,” Taylor says. Knowles will stay with the company as an artist manager.

Sanctuary Urban Records Group was expected to pull in £24 million annually for the group, Taylor says. For the year ending Sept. 30, 2003, sources say the division generated revenue in the single millions of dollars as a slew of releases failed to materialize. For the financial year, Sanctuary’s group balance sheet reported an anticipated group loss of £142.6 million ($252 million), up from £26.7 million ($47 million) in the corresponding period a year earlier.

At the same time, net borrowings almost doubled to £140.4 million ($249 million). Revenue fell to £156 million ($277 million) against £167 million ($297 million).

Meanwhile, sources close to Sanctuary say that talks continue with five potential investors interested in Sanctuary’s publishing business. And Taylor says that Sanctuary is negotiating final terms on the

LONDON—Universal Music Group International is streamlining some of its operations in the United Kingdom to put more emphasis on A&R.

In a move first unveiled on billboard.biz, UMG has begun a consultation process that could eventually result in the loss of 8% of its U.K.-based 1,150-strong work force. It will affect staff at Universal Music UK, as well as at UMG’s head office at St. James’ Square in London.

The changes are engineered by UMG chairman/CEO Lucian Grainge, who took over the position last July. Grainge is also acting president of Universal Music UK.

The restructuring comes as parent company Vivendi Universal unveiled its full-year results Jan. 30. UMG parent Universal Music Group’s revenue rose 16% to 5 billion euros ($6.05 billion) in 2005, despite a 17% drop in the final quarter of the year. But UMG sources are adamant that the restructuring has nothing to do with the most recent, declining quarter. UMG attributed the drop to a weaker last-quarter release schedule compared with 2004.

UMG sources are just as insistent that the moves will not affect front-line labels, but mostly the human resources or marketing departments. A source at UMG says that the reorganization is linked to redundancies between Universal Music UK and the office at St. James’ Square. “Lucian is having priorities as to where he wants to invest, which is A&R,” the source says.

A representative for UMG confirms to Billboard that “last September, we began a wide-ranging review of the head office structure of Universal Music Group International in St. James’ Square, London. The goal was to ensure that we continue to be best-placed to exploit the industry’s future opportunities and changes in the market and to streamline our U.K.-based resources.

“While the resulting reorganization will, unfortunately, lead to some job losses, we believe that it will further strengthen our market-leading ability to discover, nurture and break new and emerging music, while delivering the very best service to our artists.”

As part of a restructuring of the strategic marketing department, London-based Bert Cioeckaert, who until now was senior VP of strategic marketing and commercial affairs at UMG, is exiting the company; talks are under way regarding a possible consultancy role.

UMG’s best sellers in 2005 included new releases from Mariah Carey, 50 Cent, the Black Eyed Peas, Eminem, Kanye West and Jack Johnson and strong carryover sales from Gwen Stefani. Top debut releases came from the Game, the Pussycat Dolls, Fall Out Boy, Akon and U.K. act Kaiser Chiefs. Regional best sellers included Latin artists Juanes and Daddy Yankee, Germany’s Rammstein, Brazil’s Ivete Sangalo and France’s Chiréne Badin.

For the full year, UMG says that growth in North America and music publishing offset weakness in Asia. Digital sales reached 259 million euros ($313.7 million), representing 5.3% of UMG’s total revenue.

ROSEN, BERMAN START CONSULTANCY
Former RIAA executives Hilary Rosen and Jay Berman are launching a new-media and entertainment consulting firm.

The venture, Berman Rosen Global Strategies, will have offices in Washington, D.C., and New York. It will focus on communications and public affairs issues surrounding intellectual property protection, digital media technology and distribution, and international trade issues.

Rosen, who exited her role as RIAA chairman/CEO more than two years ago, will work out of Washington, while Berman—an other former RIAA head who was chairman of international labels body the IFPI until December 2004—will be based in New York.

The company is yet to announce clients. “There are lots of issues in digital distribution for companies that are either in the space now or that want to be in it, and we can help people navigate through that,” Berman says.

Additionally, Berman and Rosen plan to help clients manage piracy costs. The two have teamed with economist Barry Massarsky to develop a product that can help private equity and venture firms and investment banks value the costs of piracy on future deal multiples.

“We can help companies already operating in the entertainment space evaluate their investment in anti-piracy to make sure they are being cost-efficient and meeting their goals,” Rosen says.

The firm will look to leverage Berman’s IFPI background to offer international consulting services. He has spent the past six years working directly with governments in Asia, Latin America and Europe on piracy and market-access issues for the international recording industry and in cooperation with other entertainment industries.

Berman and Rosen will also maintain their respective current consulting clients. Rosen has most recently been working as an adviser to XM Satellite Radio, Viacom and Snocap. Berman will continue to serve as a consultant to the IFPI, among others.
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LOS ANGELES—Starbucks’ music retail strategy has included an exclusive release from Alanis Morissette, a co-release from Ray Charles and the creation of a record label, Hear Music. Now the coffee giant is hoping customers would like to see music as well as hear it. Beginning Valentine’s Day, Starbucks becomes a video retailer.

Its first release in the children’s music DVD collection “We Are . . . The Laurie Berkner Band.” The project includes a five-song CD and is a co-release from Razor & Tie Entertainment, Two Tomatoes Records and Starbucks Hear Music. It will be available at Starbucks stores in the United States.

Starbucks Entertainment president Ken Lombard says that more than 200 titles featuring a DVD element have been available at the chain’s three Hear Music Coffeehouses—outlets that feature record stores and CD-burning kiosks. Lombard says he felt that the family-oriented nature of the DVD merited widespread availability.

Lombard stopped short of linking the Berkner release to a concentrated DVD initiative. “Families are an important part of our customer base,” he says. “We will look at each project on an individual basis.”

Michael Krumer, senior VP of marketing for Razor & Tie, agrees. “The demographic of people that have bought Laurie Berkner in the past is a group that Starbucks serves,” Krumer says. “This was also a way to tap into a new audience for children’s music that had not been done before.”

The Berkner release features 11 music videos and the bonus CD. The videos should be familiar to viewers of Noggin, Nickelodeon’s preschool network. Berkner’s CDs have sold 359,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. DVDs appear to be becoming more critical to Starbucks’ entertainment strategies. The company recently announced a large-scale marketing initiative with Lions Gate and 20th Century Fox to promote the theatrical release of family drama “Akeelah and the Bee.” The coffee chain will carry the film’s soundtrack and the DVD when it is available later this year.

“We wanted to position our assets in a way that would help address the concern in the industry about declining box-office revenues,” Lombard says.

Starbucks will ultimately share in the revenue of the film, its soundtrack and the DVD release. Lombard also notes that Starbucks is searching for the right book to add yet another component to its non-coffee options.

Meanwhile, DVD retailers say they do not feel threatened. “If there’s not an exclusive window and things are available to all concerned parties, I don’t have a problem with it,” says Larry Mandsorf, senior buyer of home entertainment for the Brighton, Mass.-based Newbury Comics chain. “Starbucks is hitting a different customer, one that drinks coffee more than goes into record or DVD stores.”

KFE has been looking for an opportunity to expand its presence, Hoffman says. “We’ve certainly been trying to figure out how we can grow our national platform,” he says. “We love [Bravo’s] strategy of bringing bands in the 1,000- to 2,000-seat range to markets that simply don’t have those facilities.”

Bravo, based in New York and Los Angeles, has been focusing on smaller venues with a younger audience, building the company’s presence beyond New York and Los Angeles.

Billboard Taps Klenert As Creative Director

JOSH KLENERT joins the Billboard Information Group as creative director, effective March 6. In his new position, he will oversee creative direction of all Billboard-branded properties, including magazine covers and all inside pages, marketing and sales materials (including print, online, digital/video) branding, positioning and design.

Prior to Billboard, Klenert worked as art director for Don Morris Design. He began there as a senior designer in 1995 and since then has worked in numerous media, including print, online, film and video.

In recent years, Klenert has concentrated on branding and rebranding companies and designing and redesigning magazines. Clients have included the Sundance Institute, MTV Networks, Nick Jr. Family magazine, PC World, Entertainment Weekly, InStyle, Bloomberg Press, Budget Travel, InfoWorld and Smithsonian.

Most recently, he was art director of Biography magazine for A&E Television Networks and Hearst Custom Publishing. The publication won numerous design awards.

Klenert has also worked with Hearst Magazine Development and SmartMoney magazine. In 2005, he served as a judge for the Society of Publication Designers’ annual competition. He is a graduate of Rochester Institute of Technology.

Knitting Factory Buys Bravo, Plans Expansion

A January deal for Knitting Factory Entertainment to acquire a majority interest in regional concert promoter Bravo Entertainment will lead to the opening of a spate of new venues, according to KFE CEO Jared Hoffman.

opened his company in 1993, says Bravo has been approached in the past about selling but neither the timing nor the potential partners were right—until now.

“We’ve been growing at a good clip for the last six years, but being completely, personally funded, starting this company on my credit card 12 years ago and working two jobs to get it going, you get to the point where it’s nice to have a strong financial partner that says, ‘We believe in you and in what you’re doing, and we want to help you do it faster.’” Thornoton says. The move means KFE, which currently operates Knitting Factory venues in New York and Los Angeles, will be expanding with the development of several new 1,000- to 2,000-seat venues each year in secondary and tertiary markets.

The clubs will likely operate under the Big Easy Concert House brand “unless we all got together and decided we liked some different name better,” Thornoton says.

Bravo’s strength in small markets was a key factor for Hoffman. “They’ve found a great place to build and to grow away from the fire and overheated competitive markets in New York, L.A. and the other major cities,” he says. “So much of the music audience exists outside of New York and L.A.”

The fruits of what Hoffman calls a “green field opportunity” should become apparent soon. “We hope to make an announcement with regard to target markets within this quarter,” Hoffman says.

Thornton will continue to operate Bravo under its own name in Boise. The deal provides the company with a cash infusion that will allow it to be more active on the venue and the concert touring/promotion side. “We have every confidence with the help of our backing we can build a very formidable national presence,” Hoffman says.

Hoffman says the Bravo and Knitting Factory philosophies are similar. “We both share a fierce independence, we both share an incredible commitment to developing new artists and doing everything we possibly can to work with them and support them for as much of their career as possible,” he says. “It’s about bringing more music to a larger audience.”

Thornton adds, “Both of us agree we don’t like how corporate the business has gotten.”

Asking if the future might hold more acquisitions for the Knitting Factory, Hoffman responds, “We are cautious, very organic in approach, but we are in growth mode.”
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Artist: Kanye West
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Album of the Year
Emancipation of Mimi
Artist: Mariah Carey

Late Registration
Artist: Kanye West
Record Plant Engineers: Anthony Kilhoffer and Richard Reitz

Artist: Gwen Stefani

Song of the Year
Ordinary People
Artist: John Legend

Best New Artist
Artist: John Legend

Hollaback Girl
 Artist: Gwen Stefani

Best Female Pop Vocal Performance

Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group

Don't Lie
Artist: Black Eyed Peas

Best Rap Collaboration with Vocals

Gone Going
Artist: Black Eyed Peas
& Jack Johnson

A Song for You
Artist: Herbie Hancock
featuring Christina Aguilera

Best Pop Vocal Album
Artist: Gwen Stefani

Best Hard Rock Performance

Doesn't Remind Me
Artist: Audioslave

Production, Non-Classical
Artist: The Neptunes

Best Rap Song

Diamonds from Sierra Leone
Artist: Kanye West

Don't Phunk With my Heart
Artist: Black Eyed Peas

Best Rap Album

Late Registration
Artist: Kanye West

Best Rap Solo Performance

Gold Digger
Artist: Kanye West

Best Rap Performance by a Duo or Group

Don't Phunk With my Heart
Artist: Black Eyed Peas

Best R&B Song

Ordinary People
Artist: John Legend

Best Contemporary R&B Album

The Emancipation of Mimi
Artist: Mariah Carey

Best Male R&B Vocal Performance

Ordinary People
Artist: John Legend

Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance

Stay with You
Artist: John Legend

Best R&B Album

A Time To Love
Artist: Stevie Wonder

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My Grammy Campaign Nurtures Iconic Award’s Stature

The Recording Academy is up to something. And it started late last year.


Flipping through the layout, which included a back cover gatefold, it became readily apparent that the academy is in addition to honoring and celebrating music, pulling out all the stops to strengthen the Grammy brand.

Indeed, the six-page spread launched the My Grammy campaign. Recording Academy president Neil Portnow says it was created to reinforce the Grammys’ importance and iconic status around the world.

From the academy’s standpoint, it is important to get fans out of that “one-night, three- and-a-half hour” way of thinking. Portnow says to accomplish this, he says the academy will introduce a number of marketing ideas in the coming months to remind fans of the academy and the Grammys year-round.

A healthy by-product of the campaign will surely be an enriched relationship among the Grammys, the artists and the fans. With a personal and human touch, the My Grammy campaign is meant to strengthen the bonds among the three components.

Consider this stage one of the rebranding of the Grammys — and the Recording Academy as a whole.

With a major label now on her side — as well as a new manager (industry veteran Ray Cooper of Zuma) and the Oscar nod — more and more people are likely to connect the dots between York the recording artist and the faceless voice behind songs heard on big and small screens.

“Her voice has definitely been in the air,” Nadara senior VP David Neidhart says. “People have heard the voice in many places, and when they hear [this album], it all comes together.”

In addition to sticking the CD with the “In the Deep” / “Crash” connection, Nadara is educating radio and retail about York and her voice. Lifestyle marketing is also part of the game plan.

York, meanwhile, will do her part, whether performing at Hotel Cafe in Los Angeles or “playing to thousands at a UCLA benefit.” She views Nadara/EMI as a distribution arm, which she says helps her maintain her indie spirit. “I always look at what I can bring to the table,” she says.

Well, it is time to connect even more dots. The singer’s real name is Kathleen York, the actress who has appeared in numerous big movies, such as Paul Haggis’ film “Crash” that made most folks take notice.

York’s beautifully haunting “In the Deep” (equal parts Annie Lennox, Imogen Heap and Sarah McLachlan) was prominently heard in the Lions Gate film and appeared on its soundtrack. Now, it has been nominated in the music (song) category of the 78th annual Academy Awards.

“I like getting a free publicity budget,” York says of the nomination. “People around the world pay attention to the Oscars.”

“In the Deep” is one of numerous winning moments on York’s third album, “Wicked Little High.”

Due Feb. 21 from Nadara/EMI, the disc is a compendium of York’s two previously self-released CDs along with two new songs (“Freedom” and a cover of “Hold On, I’m Coming”). Larry Klein and Thom Russo are among the producers.

Additional reporting by Jill Kynis in Los Angeles.
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Numbers in photos indicate multiple nominations
EMI Music Publishing is taking the first commercial step toward changing the European licensing model for digital distribution. The publisher announced Jan. 23 at MIDEM that a "heads of agreement" — known as a deal memo to us bankers — had been signed by the publisher and two collecting societies (Billboard, Feb. 4). Britain's MCPS-PRS Alliance and Germany's GEMA agreed to form a joint entity to administer Pan-European licenses for online and mobile use of what EMI refers to as its Anglo-American repertoire.

The road to the deal began about two years ago, EMI executives told legal matters in Cannes. They recognized the difficulty faced by online and mobile services users that were forced to license rights from more than 25 societies to secure Pan-European and collect the money from companies located elsewhere. Many times this collection process is unsuccessful. As a result, not every user is licensed properly for all territories, users are infringing copyrights and publishers and songwriters are not getting paid.

A third hole in the revenue stream is caused by the lack of agreement over tariffs (i.e., royalty rates). Some online and mobile service providers are not paying the amounts requested. "They just use the fact that they know they will get a license," says Peter Ende, president/CEO of EMI Music Publishing Continental Europe. "They just say, 'You want 12%, and we'll only pay you 6.5%. The rest is going into a bank account, and once the rates are sorted out, you and your writers will get the money.'"

"Everyone responds to the same economic conditions. Either you provide the service, or it's serviced for you."

—ADAM SINGER, GROUP CEO of the MCPS-PRS/GEMA ALLIANCE

FEES charged by local societies that work with the joint entity would have to come out of the single administration fee agreed between EMI and the joint entity. This essentially makes the EMI deal an at-source arrangement. It should result in writers and composers getting their money quicker and with less deduction, EMI Music Publishing U.K. executive VP William Booth says.

Tax laws will likely dictate where the entity will be located. Look for tariffs to be set per territory, probably close to any current rates publishers request.

Companies that want to use songs co-administered by other publishers or songs other than the Anglo-American repertoire will still need to license rights from other publishers or societies. "A number of countries make it difficult for authors/songwriters who create their works in that country to register and license them except through the local society," EMI Music Publishing president/COO Roger Faxon says.

"We are galloping forward," says Adam Singer, group CEO for the alliance. "Everyone responds to the same economic conditions. Either you [provide] the service, or it's serviced for you. You have to take the experiment."

Some critics say the deal does not create a true one-stop shop for all licenses. Others note that similar deals could create a few huge societies exerting anordinate amount of power.

Still, the deal is in line with the European Commission's Oct. 12 recommendation to make collecting societies more competitive.

"When they made the move in Europe, they recognized that the existing structure was quite rigid. They would be wise to recognize that in their country as well," Ende says.
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Rockers Map Out Ticket Promotion

When red-hot pop-punk outfit Fall Out Boy was preparing to launch its upcoming U.S. tour, all involved knew the band needed to do something special to fill the arena-sized venues it had booked.

So they turned to the Internet—the medium largely responsible for catapulting the band from Chicago-area hometown favorites to an international major-label success. With the help of its label, Island Def Jam, Fall Out Boy added an interactive map to its Web site that turned a routine tour kickoff into a narrowly targeted social networking site and virtual treasure hunt.

Expect to see more—much more—of the same, as a sagging touring industry looks to new, interactive marketing concepts to spice up ticket sales.

“We wanted to do something different and have a cool way to announce the tour,” manager Bob McMinn of Crush Music Media Management says.

Rather than just posting a list of venues and dates, Fall Out Boy gradually unveiled new cities and dates a handful at a time on a daily basis for a week, forcing fans to keep checking the Web site to see where the tour was coming to their town.

Each time a city was added, an icon appeared on a Google Maps interface. These icons link to a social networking application that allows fans in the same city to post their profile and communicate with each other about the show—like a mini-Myspace but only for people in the same city planning to attend the concert.

Fans registering with the system were given a chance to pre-order tickets before they went on sale to the general public. Registered users in a given city also can collectively earn points by sending an e-mail to their friends encouraging them to register to the site and buy tickets. Points are gained for each message sent, each friend who joins as a result and other activities like finding hidden Easter eggs in the map and uploading photos taken at the shows.

When the tour ends in May, the city with the most points will win a secret performance by Fall Out Boy.

“We want to keep doing new, interesting things for the fans because they are so active online,” McMinn says. “Make it like a game where the more they do, the more they get.”

According to Daniel Kruchkov, VP of digital media and commerce at Island Def Jam, the plan worked beautifully. Within three weeks of going live, 50,000 users were registered, 60,000 messages were sent and all the allotted presale tickets were purchased immediately.

“Because they were talking about it and because it was on their mind, I think they went and bought the tickets right away,” booking agent Andrew Simon of Agency for the Performing Arts says. “When kids see a bunch of other kids talking about something, they don’t want to miss out on it.”

This type of digital marketing is considered an inevitable necessity for the touring industry, as it looks to reverse a two-year slump in revenue and attendance. According to Billboard Boxscore, 2005 touring revenue was down 6.2%, attendance dropped 3.8%, per-show gross was down 15% and per-show attendance dipped 12.8%.

“Creative rollouts for the bigger arena tours are the thing right now,” Simon says. “Your standard press release just gets buried in the grand scheme of things.”

Fall Out Boy’s interactive tour map is an application created by mylocalbands.com called TourMaps. According to company founder Dan Berman, other bands utilizing the application include A Wilhelm Scream—currently touring with Less Than Jake—and Loser, another Island Def Jam act on tour with Staind.

And as more fans turn to online retailers for their music needs, expect to see further integration with online concert ticketing applications. Ticketmaster, for instance, last September teamed with Depeche Mode for a combination concert ticket and digital download pre-sale. Fans who pre-ordered a digital version of the band’s new album, “Playing the Angel,” via iTunes were given a password to purchase advance tickets online from Ticketmaster.

“The interactive medium is critical in that it offers a relatively inexpensive way of targeting different audiences, but also a direct way to make it transactional,” says David Goldberg, executive VP of strategy and business development for Ticketmaster.

The company also began introducing presale auctions on its Web site for registered users, and will be adding a ticket alert/reminder system for mobile phones in the near future.

Ultimately, the Internet and other digital channels provide the music industry with a marketing canvas of unlimited potential at a time when its primary audience—teens—are growing increasingly wary of the advertising messages sent their way.

“We’re at the point online where kids and fans know it’s an on-demand world,” Kruchkov says. “They don’t want to be programmed to. We want to give them as much control as possible and dictate what happens on the Web site. We’re going to be launching many more things like this through the year.”

LINKING UP WITH YAHOO

Extending music stored on the PC to the home stereo is expected to boost the adoption of digital music in general, and music subscription services in particular.

Assisting in that effort is WiFi hardware provider Linksys, with its new Wireless-G Music Bridge. The device connects to any home entertainment center, stereo receiver or powered speakers to link them to a home WiFi network. Any PC connected to the same WiFi network can then wirelessly stream music through them. That includes tracks purchased via iTunes or downloaded from various subscription services.

Yahoom Music Unlimited has partnered with Linksys to simplify the experience for subscribers. The two companies created a plug-in that works directly with the bridge, so users can simply select a button on the Yahoo Music interface that immediately streams music through the WiFi network. Yahoo is offering a $20 rebate for the Linksys Music Bridge for users who sign up for a yearly subscription to the music service.

The bridge is available for a suggested retail price of $99.

—Antony Bruno
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Labels Back Off DualDisc, But Sony BMG Presses On

The DualDisc marks its one-year anniversary of mass distribution this month, but the new hybrid CD/DVD once expected to become the physical successor to the CD may already be on life support.

A year after a consortium of major and indie labels announced they would back the product, its future appears to be riding on the one leading music company actually pushing it as a priority: Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

All the majors are sold on the notion of using bundled audiovisual experiences to add value to physical goods. And hit-starved retailers are clamoring for more combo products. But the majors are divided on DualDisc's role in that effort.

In one corner is Sony BMG, which is set to release more than 100 DualDisc titles in 2006. The shipment total is expected to surpass its 2005 output of more than 13 million units on 102 titles. Among the acts with DualDisc titles in the first half of this year are Pink, Dixie Chicks, Barry Manilow, Teddy Geiger, Miranda Lambert, Clay Aiken, Weird Al Yankovic, the Fray, the Jonas Brothers and London Pigg.

In the other corner are Universal Music Group, Warner Music Group and EMI. Combined, the three companies did not come close to Sony BMG’s DualDisc output last year. The prospects for 2006 do not look any better.

While all three majors are officially reviewing the product, few, if any, DualDisc titles are on the way this year. “It’s just about a dead issue,” a source at one major label says. “We’ll put out a few here and there, but it’s not anywhere near a major initiative.”

The rub in the debate over DualDisc remains cost. The price of manufacturing a DualDisc is double the average CD—about $1.20, versus 50 cents-60 cents for the traditional CD with jewel box and booklet, distribution sources say (Billboard, March 19, 2005).

UMG, WMG and EMI all are balking at the notion of dramatically increasing their manufacturing costs for a product that they say lacks clearly defined consumer demand. An NPD study of DualDisc usage published in August found that nearly half of all DualDisc buyers did not realize they were purchasing the configuration until after they left the store.

Other roadblocks to acceptance include mixed enthusiasm from artists about producing DualDisc content, the long lead time to properly produce the hybrid titles and a limited number of manufacturers that can actually make the discs.

UMG, WMG and EMI are more attracted to 2-in-1 CD/DVD combo packages, which are cheaper to produce than the all-in-one DualDiscs. They also are releasing combo packs in greater numbers. Still, Sony BMG is not dissuaded by the resistance of the other majors.

The company’s executives are heartened by another set of NPD stats, indicating that 72% of consumers that own a DualDisc title would buy another one in the next six months.

Sony BMG is also creating new dedicated senior staffing roles to oversee its initiative. On Feb. 3, the company will name William Sondheim, a one-time president of PolyGram Video USA, executive VP of DualDisc worldwide, reporting to CEO Andrew Lack, Sony BMG also recently named producer/director Andrew Wilk chief creative officer of content, DualDisc and DVD. Wilk also reports to Lack.

In an effort to keep costs down, Sondheim says the company is looking at increased automation on the production and manufacturing end. That would require disc manufacturers to automate ahead of demand—a risky proposition. But Sondheim argues that the industry needs to create opportunities to strike quickly with DualDisc.

The hope also is that increased automation from manufacturers can drive wider industry adoption of the hybrid discs.

“We believe over time we will achieve support from our competitors, and that will be an important ingredient to the long-term success of DualDisc,” Sondheim adds. “It’s not important in the short term, but we can only carry the ball on DualDisc by ourselves for so long.”

Already onboard with DualDisc are retailers, who are charging anywhere from the same price for both versions of an album to $3 more for DualDisc. They are pressing the labels for more DualDisc product.

The Grammys: Where’s the Relevance?

Ask today’s top independent labels to comment on the 48th annual Grammy Awards, and the response is nearly unanimous: silence.

The independent community seems to greet the event with a collective shrug.

But why should they bother to chat about the Grammys? The telecast serves as a promotional tool for the major labels. Despite claims for inclusiveness, indie labels are largely cut out of any TV time.

Performers this year include Bruce Springsteen, Sugarland, Kanye West and Coldplay, but nary an indie at press time. It would have been easy to toss a developing artist a verse during an overdue tribute to Sly Stone, but why highlight a rich underground R&B scene when Aerosmith’s Steven Tyler and LFO’s Devin Lima are available.

The independent label community is the fastest-growing sector of the business, and the Grammys still have no relevance to them. It is foolish to think Bright Eyes or the Perceptionists or the New Pornographers could nudge a U2 from an album of the year nod, but how about some love in the rock or rap album categories?

To be fair, there are categories where indies have a strong showing, such as best pop instrumental album or best traditional blues album, but there is no reason why the full breadth of the independent label community should not be represented in nominations.

The Arcade Fire was nominated for best alternative music album, a category created in 1991 that has become the token ghetto for somewhat adventurous music. But really, the Arcade Fire nod was a no-brainer. After all, the group has received seals of approval from David Bowie and David Byrne, making the band all the more palatable to Grammy voters.

The one category that is tailor-made for independents is perhaps the longest-standing joke of the awards, best new artist. Since 2000, not one artist on an independently distributed label has garnered a nod. Los Lonely Boys were recognized last year, but were affiliated with Epic long before Grammy time. Likewise, Susan Tedeschi in 2000 and Evanescence in 2003 were on indies with major-label distribution when nominated.

The one independent-bred act included in the best new artist nominations, Fall Out Boy, has had plenty of success on an indie. Yet it was not until the band signed to a major that the Grammys recognized it. Same with best alternative nominee Death Cab for Cutie—impressive success on Barsuk Records, but not a mention until Atlantic began promoting the band.

Could Fall Out Boy have been nominated prior to joining forces with Island? Fueled by Ramen owner John Janick says, “This is a difficult question. I think Island opened the band up to some audiences that may have been difficult for us to reach last year.”

If we must take the size of a fan base into consideration, few bands enjoyed the mix of commercial and critical success in 2005 as Bright Eyes, but Saddle Creek head Robb Nansel says he was not surprised that the act did not receive a nomination.

Neither were we.
Digital Album Sales Show Impact On Marketplace

While everyone is focusing on the digital tracks explosion, as such singles have beat unit album sales every week so far this year, some distribution executives are equally fascinated with digital album sales.

In the first three weeks of this year, digital album sales totaled 1.6 million, a 35.9% increase over the 679,000 scanned in the first three weeks of 2005, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

That 1.6 million amounts to 5.3% of all U.S. album sales, a volume that—as one distribution executive puts it—would make it the seventh largest U.S. account.

Digital sales are already showing that they can help niche genres move product. But expect digital album sales to also have an impact on record stores, particularly in their rock sections.

The top 100 digital album sales lean much heavier toward rock than does the top half of The Billboard 200.

The top three digital albums are the Strokes’ “First Impressions of Earth,” with 24,000 scans; James Blunt’s “Back to Bedlam,” with about 14,000; and Jack Johnson’s “In Between Dreams,” with nearly 9,000.

So if you are a brick-and-mortar store leaning rock with an online site selling digital downloads, you might want to follow sales trends of the digital album configuration.

GOOD CALL: Bob Benjamin, a good old friend of the music retail/sales and distribution business, can use a call from pals, if you have a spare moment.

Benjamin, who was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 1996, has been hospitalized since Jan. 17 after falling and becoming immobile in his home for four nights without food, water, or medicine. He is now recuperating at JFK Medical Center in Edison, N.J., and is undergoing physical therapy to regain his stamina and the use of his muscles.

The unfortunate incident occurred one month after the West Coast debut of his Light of Day concert series in Los Angeles. Since being diagnosed with the disease, Benjamin has become a leading activist in raising funds for the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation. So far, he has held six Light of Day concerts, named after a Bruce Springsteen song.

The artist has actively supported the efforts, appearing at five of the events.

Benjamin, along with Salvador Trepat—publisher of Spanish Springsteen fanzine Point Blank—issued a 64-CD “Light of Day: A Tribute to Bruce Springsteen” on Benjamin’s Schoolhouse Records (Billboard, Oct. 11, 2003). Between album sales and the annual concerts, Benjamin estimates nearly $1 million has been raised for charities devoted to fighting Parkinson’s disease.

Benjamin has his own retail marketing company, the Marketing Dept., and calls stores throughout the country, working product and taking inventories.

Here’s hoping he is back working the phones shortly.

In the mean time, Benjamin can be reached at 732-690-7004 or at njbob113@aol.com.

OOPS: Two weeks ago, I ran an item about Larry Feldstein losing his gig as Northeast marketing director for Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales and looking for opportunities. But I shortchanged his e-mail address by one digit. His correct e-mail: lmf1717@hotmail.com.
French Industry Picks Up

Physical Units Dipped, But Digital Sales Soared In 2005

PARIS—After four years of gloom, the French industry is seeing signs of light.

According to figures released last month by labels body SNEP at the MIDEM trade show in Cannes, the physical market has begun to stabilize and digital sales are picking up. Simultaneously, the government announced a series of measures to support labels and retail.

"The digital economy is beginning to be a tangible reality," says SNEP president Gilles Bressand, who is also chief executive of indie label XIII Bis Records.

SNEP says France’s recorded music market remained fairly stable in 2005 with shipments rising 0.8% in trade value to 961 million euros ($1.177 billion), up from 953 million euros ($1.155 billion) in 2004.

The value of physical shipments dropped 2.6% to 929 million euros ($1.138 billion), a loss offset by revenue from online and mobile sales rising to 32.4 million euros ($39.7 million), a 24 million euro ($29.4 million) gain over the previous year.

Some 18.6 million units were sold digitally, up from 2 million in 2004. Overall, digital sales accounted for 4% of revenue, slightly below the industry’s average of 6%.

Jean-Francois Cecillon, chairman/CEO of EMI Music Continental Europe and acting CEO of EMI Music France, says the current scenario “is a key moment for the industry” in the transition from physical to digital sales. But he adds, “This key moment will last half a generation.”

SNEP also published total retail value figures this year, based on sales monitored by chart compiler IFOP/Tite Live. The figures showed a market flat in volume, but dropping 7.8% in value to 1.47 billion euros ($1.8 billion). During the past two years, SNEP says, average retail prices have dropped 23% on singles and 15% on albums.

In 2005, “sales stabilized in volume, which is a good thing,” Warner Music France president/CEO Thierry Chassagne says. “But we should not forget that this is due to a drop in prices.”

In 2006, Chassagne is hopeful that price erosion will be “largely compensated by overall growth in digital sales.”


According to SNEP, Universal Music remained the industry leader in France with a 35.3% market share, followed by Sony BMG at 27.6%, EMI at 18.6% and Warner at 14.2%.

Local product accounted for 65% of the wholesale market, marginally down from 66% last year. Raphael (Capitol) was the top-selling album artist in 2005, followed by Johnny Hallyday (Mercury), Chimène Badi (A2Z), Calogero (Mercury) and Mylène Farmer (Polydor).

Many French label executives have complained that the shrinking market has made sustained investment in local acts difficult in recent years. Those anxieties have seemed to have resounded at the government level.

Acknowledging that it is "vital to boost investment and revise risk taking" in domestic repertoire, French minister of culture Renaud Donnedeu De Valeres announced a new support plan during MIDEM.

Donnedieu De Valeres plans to introduce a tax credit system that would allow labels to offset part of their recording costs. A 5 million ($6.45 million) fund will be distributed to labels and to a new agency that will assign credits, he says.

“We are very pleased with the speed at which this decision was made,” Bourgeois says.

The tax credit plan will apply to production costs and expenses linked to the digitization of catalog, although the proposal states that total annual credits per company should not exceed 500,000 euros ($613,000).

The French government has notified the European Commission of its plans, which should be integrated into a bill before the French parliament this spring.

Donnedieu De Valeres has also launched a 2 million euro ($2.4 million) fund to help new specialized independent retailers launch. Philippe Peron, director-general of music retailers body SDS, says the fund should help create five to six new stores each year.

“This is a significant support scheme,” Peron says. “[It] for the moment, procedures to access these funds are complex and I hope they will be simplified.”

According to Donnedieu De Valeres: "It was urgent to take measures that would sustain the economy of this sector, which is currently facing a deep structural crisis.”

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French artist RAPHAEL had the top-selling album in 2005.

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GLOBAL NEWSLINE

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TO TAKEOVER TALK BOOSTS HMV

U.K.-based retailer HMV Group saw its share price climb after revealing Jan. 30 in a statement to the London Stock Exchange that it had received a preliminary takeover offer. The identity of the potential buyer was not revealed. HMV Group shares closed Jan. 30 at £1.92 ($3.39), up from an opening £1.64 ($2.90).

In its half-year figures to Oct. 29, 2005 (published Jan. 12), HMV Group reported sales down 0.1% to £759.7 million ($1.34 billion), with operating profit down 85% to £2.8 million ($4.95 million).

On Jan. 12, HMV also confirmed its chief executive Alan Giles would retire in December to “develop a portfolio of nonexecutive roles.” Four days later, HMV U.K. & Ireland announced the exit of product director Steve Gallant, replaced by operations director Simon Peck.

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SONY BMG U.K. RESTRUCTURES

Sony BMG Entertainment U.K. has organized its frontline music divisions into two new label groups, effective Jan. 31.

The two units of the London-based company, Columbia Label Group and the RCA Label Group, will handle releases from Columbia, Epic, Jive and RCA, and domestic imprints Cheeky, Deltasonic, Modest, Phonogram and Syco Music. Columbia will work most rock/alternative acts, while RCA will deal with pop and urban projects—although “there will be exceptions,” a spokesman says.

Sony BMG Music U.K. chairman/CEO Rob Stringer says the move is intended to give the U.K. company and its roster “a greater external identity through two distinct label groups.”

Mike Smith, former senior VP/director of A&R at EMI Music Publishing U.K., is named managing director of Columbia Label Group. Craig Logan, previously VP of international marketing at EMI Records, is named RCA Label Group managing director. Logan most recently managed Sony BMG artist Pink. Smith and Logan report to Fred Doherty, Sony BMG Entertainment U.K. president of the music division.

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PIRACY SEIZURES UP IN ITALY

The Italian music industry’s anti-piracy group FPM says more than 1.6 million illegal prerecorded CD-Rs were seized in 2005, up 21% from 2004. FPM says increased anti-piracy action also saw the seizure of 800,000 illegal music DVDs, 6 million blank CD-Rs and 1,500 high-speed disc burners. Racks also led to a 35% year-on-year increase in the number of arrests, which totaled 510.

However, 2005 also saw Italy’s parliament pass the controversial “Ex-Cirielli Law” (Billboard, Dec. 10, 2005), which reduces the statute of limitations in trials for a range of white-collar offenses, including piracy. Labels fear this will cripple many prosecutions in a country with a notoriously slow-paced legal system. Enzo Mazzu, president of FPM and its parent, labels body FIMI, says, “We are still waiting to see what effect this law will have on both current and future anti-piracy trials.”

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MCPS-PRS, SGAE PARTNER

U.K. authors’ rights body MCPS-PRS is partnering with Spanish collecting society SGAE to develop a new joint-licensing platform for Anglo-Latin repertoire across Europe.

The London-based alliance says extensive trials on the collaborative initiative, dubbed “electronic Licensing of Online Services” (eLOS), will take place during the first quarter.

SGAE executive president Teddy Bautista said in a statement that the move showed the trade bodies were “gambling on the convergence of business and technology to a plastic environment.”

MCPS-PRS Alliance CEO Adam Singer added: “SGAE is a hot society when it comes to technology, and together we want to make eLOS the leading infrastructure in harvesting a digital economy.”

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HOWELL LLEWELLYN
Nova Scotia’s Sampson Shows His Strength In Nashville

TORONTO—Few Canadian artists have made the same kind of impact in Nashville as singer/songwriter/producer Gordie Sampson, who hails from the Cape Breton region of Nova Scotia.

Working in Music City has long been the goal for many Canadian singers and songwriters, and several have toyed with the idea since the 1970s. But Sampson’s success has been striking, underlined when Carrie Underwood’s single “Jesus, Take the Wheel” (Arista/Arista Nashville)—Sampson’s co-write with Nashville-based Brett James and Hilary Lindsey—topped Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart Jan. 21.

Nashville “is the basket I’m putting most of my eggs in,” the 33-year-old Sampson says. “But I will spend summers in Cape Breton, doing some playing in Canada.”

“There’s a major buzz here about Gordie’s first Billboard No. 1,” says producer Glenn Meisner at state broadcaster CBC Radio in Halifax, Nova Scotia. “His success indicates that if you work hard enough and get the right breaks, you can get your songs out there.”

During the 1990s, the international success of Shania Twain plus U.S. breakthroughs by Terri Clark and Paul Brandt opened the door for Canadian talent in Nashville. Several leading domestic acts including Clark, Brandt, Aaron Lines and the Wilkinsons began working from there, alongside noted Canadian songwriters like Nanci Déré, John Douglas, Steve Fox and Cyril Rawson.

Sampson signed with Nashville-based publisher Combustion Music four years ago and moved to Nashville in September 2005.

His songs have been recorded by Faith Hill (“Paris”), Keith Urban (“The Hard Way” and “You (Or Somebody Like You)” and George Canyon (“My Name”). He recently penned two with LeAnn Rimes, and has plans to write with Urban.

“Gordie is a pleasure to be around as a writer,” says Universal South artist Canyon, who also hails from Nova Scotia. “He isn’t the type to write safe [lyrics] or work with melodies that fit with what everybody else is writing—he thinks outside the box.”

In September, “My Name” won top single and top song honors at the 2005 Canadian Country Music Awards.

Sampson is highly acclaimed as a producer/arranger and session player in Atlantic Canada. He has toured and recorded with most of the major acts there. His songs have also been covered by fellow Canadians Big Sea, Jimmy Rankin and Darnel Doyle.

He records for MapleMusic Recordings in Toronto. After the release of his second album, “Sunburn” (2004), he gained a Juno Award nomination for songwriting and took home five awards at the 2005 East Coast Music Awards. The annual, nationally broadcast awards—organized by trade body the East Coast Music Assn.—honor outstanding contributions to Atlantic Canadian Music.

Sampson has four nominations for this year’s ECMA, which will take place Feb. 27 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

The artist is also co-owner, with producer/guitarist Fred Lavery, of a state-of-the-art studio, Lakewind Sound in Port Alberni, Cape Breton.

Sampson’s recent production work includes “Forerunner” (“Rounder”), the Jan. 10 U.S. debut album by Cape Breton act the Coolards.

Cape Breton is the homeland of Scottish culture in Canada. Growing up there, Sampson started playing piano when he was 5. He cites 1970s rock as his earliest influence, notably Black Sabbath and Pink Floyd.

Before first visiting Nashville a decade ago, he recalls, “I listened to no country music, except what my mother used to sing” in a cover band.

Today, Sampson’s regular Nashville co-writers include Lindsay, James, Troy Verges and Blair Daly. He says his covers come equally from impromptu moments and formal pitching.

He recalls Hill hearing “Paris” during a session break when Nashville studio player Tom Bukovsky played it on piano. Sampson’s friend, session drummer Chris McHugh, tipped off Urban to “The Hard Way” and “You (Or Somebody Like You).”

Underwood’s recording of “Jesus, Take the Wheel” is “a case of my publisher pitching it on the phone,” he adds.

Japan Biz Sends Mixed Messages

Digital Sales Growing, But Are Yet To Make Up For Decline In Physical CDs

TOKYO—The Japanese music market remains in a state of flux as the industry here waits for digital growth to compensate for declining CD shipments.

“We have to accept the fact that this is a market in transition, with all the challenges that entails.” Warner Music Asia Pacific president Lachie Rutherford says. “My wish for 2006 would be for more comprehensive agreement between the Japanese music industry and Web portals and online music sites.”

Shipments figures in Japan—the world’s second-largest recorded-music market—send a mixed message about 2005, according to data from the Recording Industry Assn. of Japan.

Shipments of recorded music (including music videos and DVDs) in 2005 by the RIAJ’s 41 member companies rose 2% over the prior year to ¥37.2 trillion units with a wholesale value of ¥22.2 trillion ($37.7 billion), down 2%. That compares with declines of 4% in volume and 5% in value for 2004.

Stripping out music videos and DVDs, shipments of audio software fell 1% on a volume basis to 3.1 million units and 3% in value to ¥36.2 billion ($53.2 billion).

The RIAJ figures are based on trade shipments. SoundScan Japan published its own 2005 market report Jan. 30, based on point-of-sale data from some 2,700 music retailers nationwide.

According to SoundScan, 2005’s top-selling domestic album was the self-titled set from pop-rap duo DeF Tech (Il Chill), which sold 2.3 million copies. The year’s top-selling international album was “Disco-Zone—Koi No Maimai” (Avez) by Romanian trio O-Zone, with 462,635 units.

The RIAJ says shipments of domestic repertoire (excluding music videos and DVDs) in 2005 fell 3% to 228.2 million units. Wholesale value was unchanged at ¥27.1 billion yen ($2.4 billion). International product (excluding music videos and DVDs) rose 4% in volume terms to 18.1 million units, with value down 8% to ¥5.4 billion yen ($83.9 million).

The rise in shipments of international repertoire reflects efforts during the year by labels to shift sales of overseas product from imports to local pressing, HMV Asia Pacific president Paul Delezskysays. “Record companies have gradually reduced prices of international domestic catalog to be closer to the price of [previously cheaper] imports,”

O-ZONE

Delezskysays, “The good news,” he adds, “is the leveling out of the domestic market in value terms after several years of decline.”

Rutherford says labels are also cutting prices of international catalog to compete with high-profile new releases. The increase in shipment volume also reflects labels’ decision to burn Japan’s sizable music rental sector from offering international product until one year after release, he adds.

Shoji Doyama notes that the RIAJ includes Western classical recordings as international repertoire, and the fall in value reflects the emergence of “many low-priced products” on the classical market.

Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) remained the territory’s biggest label in 2005, with a market share of 18.5%, according to SoundScan Japan. Avex was No. 2 with a 13.6% share, followed by Universal Music Japan (10%), Toshiba-EMI (7.8%) and Victor Entertainment (7%).

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Juanes: All Spanish, All The Time

Artists Crack Tour Markets That Latin Acts Tend To Avoid

As Juanes begins the final leg of an ambitious international tour, the Colombian rocker continues to break traditional markets in North America and abroad. The artist is doing so while performing in his native language. "He sings in Spanish and only in Spanish, but he plays the guitar in English," Juanes' manager Fernan Martinez says. "When you are Hispanic and sing in English, you're Latin for the Anglos and Anglo for the Latinos, and that's not good!"

The second leg of Juanes' Mi Sangre tour began Jan. 28 at the Bank Atlantic Center in Sunrise, Fla. While South Florida is a given for any Latin act touring the States, Juanes is also playing such markets as Portland, Ore.; Milwaukee; Cleveland; Newark, N.J.; and Des Moines, Iowa, as well as cities across Europe.

Michel Vega, Juanes' Miami-based agent at the William Morris Agency, says covering the map has been the strategy since he began booking the artist in 2000. "We play as many secondary and tertiary markets as possible," Vega says. "When we started with him, typically a Spanish-language act would play the obvious 10 or 12 Hispanic markets like Miami, L.A., Houston, Chicago, New York."

Even early on in his career, Vega says, Juanes would play places that most Spanish artists would either never visit or would only do so much later in their career. Thus, Juanes has built a fan base in those markets "to the point where on this current album's tour, we're going to do 53 shows in the United States. Outside of the regional Mexican genre, I don't know any other Spanish-language artist that does that."

Juanes—whose full name is Juan Esteban Aristizábal—says he is all about spreading his music. "The reason we play a lot everywhere is because that's what I love to do," he says. "For me, it's about growing as a musician and an artist."

This strategy means Juanes goes from playing stadiums in South America to arenas in several U.S. markets to theaters and large clubs in other nontraditional U.S. regions. "It's tough to do, but that's what we want to do to spread out in the States," Martinez says.

On the first leg of the Mi Sangre tour, Juanes sold 2,600 tickets in Minneapolis; sold 1,700 seats in Jacksonville, Fla.; and sold out the Opera House in Detroit, according to Vega. "These are not known as strong Hispanic markets. However, the audience is there, and because we worked them early he already had a [fan base] in these markets."


Last year, Juanes reported $6.3 million in grosses and 127,328 in attendance to Billboard Boxscore from 22 shows, primarily in the States. He played nearly 100 dates total, and Vega estimates Juanes sold 900,000 tickets worldwide.

National promoters working with Juanes include Live Nation, House of Blues and AEG Live, along with independent Latin promoters, casinos and performing arts centers. "It is challenging, but that's what needs to be done in this environment," Vega says. "There's not one answer to 53 markets."

Juanes' tour of Europe begins March 8 in London, and the same strategy of breaking markets applies. This time around, for example, he is playing an 8,000-seat in Zurich, a 4,000-seat in Mannheim, Germany, and a 5,000-seat in Munich. "And this is for a Spanish-language artist who sings in Spanish," Vega says. "Put it this way—Spanish artists in Spain don't play venues" as big as those Juanes will play in Germany.

Juanes speaks English fluently, but is not interested in it for singing. "I'm still thinking in Español, I still dream in Español, and I write my music in Español," he says. "I don't see why I need to change."

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On The Road

Ray Waddell: rwaddell@billboard.com

Live Nation Builds U.K. Base With Wembley Deal

Live Nation's 15-year deal to manage and promote London's Wembley Arena gives the company an even stronger base of operations in the United Kingdom.

The deal, which coincides with the unveiling of a $600 million refurbishment of Wembley, was brokered by Live Nation subsidiary Hamsard with developer Wembley London Limited, a subsidiary of Quintain Estates and Development.

Wembley joins the Hallam FM Arena in Sheffield as Live Nation's other management deal in the United Kingdom, along with a number of regional theaters. Tased Durrani, president of marketing for Live Nation, says his company is looking for other opportunities internationally and in the United States.

"Expanding our venue network is a priority," Durrani says. Wembley Arena will reopen in April. The deal is important strategically for Live Nation, with rival AEG Live set to open the 23,000-capacity O2 arena in 2007 at London's Millennium Dome site.

Historically, Wembley has been one of London's top-grossing venues. Madonna's four sellouts at Wembley during her 2004 Re-Invitation tour grossed nearly $10 million. Wembley was the top-grossing arena in the 10,000-15,000-capacity range in the world in 2004, racking up $26.8 million from 35 concerts, according to Billboards Boxscore.

Paul Latham, CEO of international venues and U.K. music for Live Nation, is the company's point person at Wembley.

APPED OUT: MySpace.com continues to develop as a player in the music business. The 51-million member Internet community is sponsoring the tour by Fort Minor. The trek supports the band's debut album, "The Rising Tide," on Linkin Park's Machine Shop Recordings. Fort Minor is the hip-hop side project of Linkin Park member Mike Shinoda.

The tour is short but significant. It will play 500-800-seat clubs in nine cities in two weeks, ending Feb. 10 at Nation's in Washington, D.C. MySpace will select DJs from each market to open the shows. The DJs will appear onstage and have the opportunity to create an online mix tape including samples from Fort Minor and other featured tour artists to stream on their MySpace profiles.

Fort Minor's 11-piece lineup consists of Shinoda, Styles of Beyond, a live string section, backup singers and Beatdown on drums.

Following the U.S. run, which includes one off Feb. 21 at the Fillmore in San Francisco, Fort Minor will embark on a brief Asian tour that includes dates with 50 Cent in Taipei, Taiwan, and Bangkok, Thailand, then headlining dates in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Next, Fort Minor has booked early March dates in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in Australia and in Auckland, N.Z.

Fort Minor and Linkin Park are booked by Michael Arfin at Artists Group International.

LIVE UPDATE: Global Spectrum, operator of the Iowa Events Center complex in Des Moines, has named Matthew Homan as its new G.M. Homan comes to Des Moines from the Global Spectrum-managed Colonial Center in Columbia, S.C., where he was assistant G.M./director of event services.

Scott Kavanaugh, formerly with the Overland Park (Kan.) Convention Center, has been named assistant G.M. in Des Moines, joining Holly Kjeldgaard, who had been interim G.M. Kjeldgaard will continue her role as assistant G.M./director of marketing, focusing on events and attractions at the complex's new Wells Fargo Arena.
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Clarence, Happy Birthday and thanks for being there.

PETER VAN BRUNT
RAYMOND & PAT SHIELDS
R. VAUGHN GILL, ESQ.
Despite its name, the second incarnation of the Taste of Chaos tour is coming together rather smoothly. The inaugural tour, created by the organizers of the Vans Warped tour as a winter equivalent to the summer outing, brought punkers indoors for the cold-weather months in 2005, traveling through North America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and Japan. According to Billboard Boxscore, the tour sold 180,065 tickets for 30 reported shows, grossing more than $4.8 million.

The outing is now called the Rockstar Energy Drink Taste of Chaos tour, as part of a three-pearc title sponsorship deal with beverage company Rockstar. Among the 20-plus companies also supporting the tour are Hot Topic, Alternative Press, Fuse, Ferret Music and Best Buy.

Rockstar executive VP of marketing Jason May says Taste of Chaos is "the perfect property for Rockstar Energy Drink. The company waited to sponsor a tour until it found one with "a recognized household brand name." He adds that "the naming rights on a tour that will have a different incarnation every year is exciting for us." According to May, on-site sampling of Rockstar and getting the beverage into people's hands is more important than signage, which he calls low-key: "Our objective is not to try and outshine the bands."

Co-headlining this year are Deftones and Thrice. The hard-edged, multi-act lineup also includes As I Lay Dying, Funeral for a Friend, Atreyu, Pez, Leon, and Street Drum Corps.

The route has expanded from last year's 37 dates to 44. The regular ticket price is $25, although some seats are $15.50. Chaos founder and partner Kevin Lyman says "momentum has picked up" for 2006's ticket sales. "I think some of the markets started off pretty slow, but today I actually feel pretty confident." As of Jan. 27, more than 82,000 tickets have been sold.

The U.S./Canada tour, which starts Feb. 16 at the 12,000-plus-capacity San Diego Sports Arena, will visit venues that range from 8,800 seats to 13,000. The route is varied since "a lot of the smaller cities just don't have available spaces," Lyman says. "Last year we didn't have the hockey season. We had a lot of flexibility to get into venues."

Lyman notes that the tour's promoters—a mix of independents, as well as larger entities like Live Nation—feel sales are equivalent to last year, but he says the central Midwest is a tough sell right now, noting that other tours have also had a hard time in that region.

"I know we need to work there, so we're going to be focusing a lot of our marketing efforts there," he says. "But in places where we didn't go last year, [like] Texas markets, we'll start seeing sellouts." Lyman also says his people will rely on the street-marketing savvy they have developed through the years since much of the lineup is currently between recording or promoting new albums.

One such group is Deftones, who have appeared on the Vans Warped tour numerous times. As the band prep the follow-up to its 2003 self-titled Maverick release for an early spring bow, drummer Abe Cunningham calls Taste of Chaos "the perfect thing for us to sort of get back in. We've been gone for a while, relaxing for a while and making a record, and the timing was perfect."

The tour has quickly spawned related audio and video products, with last year's arrival of the "Taste of Chaos" CD and DVD (both through Image Entertainment), along with the Warcon Records set "Taste of Christmas." The "Chaos" CD has sold less than 3,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Just arrived Jan. 24 is the double compilation album "The Best of the Taste of Chaos" (Warcon), featuring previously released tracks and B-sides by bands on the 2005 and 2006 tours.
When you break through

You leave a path for others to follow

Clarence,

We have all been blessed by the achievements of your lifetime. Thanks for making a difference.

Happy birthday

Ernie Singleton
For more than 35 years, James Taylor has been making music that touches people to their core. With modern-day standards like “Fire and Rain,” “Carolina in My Mind” and “Shower the People,” Taylor has sold more than 35 million albums in the United States alone.

The singer/songwriter also gives generously of his time and wallet to support numerous causes, which include the Rainforest Foundation, the National Resources Defense Council, the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and Vote for Change.

On Feb. 6, Taylor—who was the Billboard Century Award honoree in 1998—will be recognized for his considerable musical and philanthropic contributions as the 2006 MusiCares Person of the Year. Among the artists saluting him at the Los Angeles event, produced by the Recording Academy, will be Bruce Springsteen, Jackson Browne, Dixie Chicks, Taj Mahal, Paul Simon, Bette Midler and fellow Century Award recipient Randy Newman.

Taylor admits that after years of seeing his contemporaries receive honors, he is a bit undone at the prospect of all the attention. “I’ll probably be in some kind of state (at MusiCares). I’m thinking of taking a bullhorn to the show and yelling at people onstage.”

One result of the honor? Taylor jokes that he will no longer be able to fuss that he has not gotten his due. “I can’t complain about anything,” he says. “It’s been such an important part of my life.”

Undoubtedly, he will work on what he does best: a new tour and a new album. A few years ago, Taylor left Sony Music after more than two decades. He talked to Billboard about his future plans while on vacation on the East Coast.

Q: You just finished another great year of touring. How do you keep it fresh after so many years?
A: You learn how to pace yourself while not to take on too much work. You sort of strike a delicate balance between being in good shape and fit and up for the show with your chops up, and going too far and getting tired of it and tired of the material and stuff. And it’s really amazing how every night the presence of an enthusiastic audience and being onstage with great players just wakes you up and brings that out of you.

That’s the best thing about it. It’s almost like there’s another force operating that continues to be a real factor.

Q: You are working on a special concept for the next tour. What can you tell us about it?
A: I’m going to go out and essentially do solo work. Larry Goldings is going to play keyboards with me, at least to start with. We’re going to play smallish theaters, houses of around 3,000. I think, performing arts centers and stuff. We’ll do that in the first half of March, the first of April, the first half of May, and beyond that, we’ll see.

It’s been a number of years since I worked solo. That’s all I used to do, and that’s how I started out. So it’s nice to get back to that every once in a while.

Q: Are you going to play new material?
A: I’ve got four or five things started and near completion. Maybe I’ll have something ready by March, but I wouldn’t want to promise it.

Q: In 2004, you successfully put out a Christmas album through Hallmark. What did you learn from that experience?
A: I finished up my commitment to Sony [in 2002 with “October Road”], and it’s a very changing, shifting kind of landscape in the record business these days, and I figured we’d keep our options open. [Taylor’s manager] Gary [Borman] got this offer in from Hallmark, and I figured, “Sure, let’s give it a try.” It was an interesting experiment to work outside of the record company model, and it’s definitely a way to go.

I think it was a positive experience. I had a certain amount of trepidation going into it, not knowing what it was going to be like, but the Hallmark people were clearly on their game and knew what they wanted with just a surprising level of organization. They kept us on track for a whole year ahead of time with deadlines for this and deadlines for that.

It was very interesting to see how tight their business model was. It was great.

Q: What are your thoughts on a new label home?
A: I don’t know. I’m assuming it’s probably a good idea to find somebody to partner up with, but my feeling is that it’s best to do it on a project-by-project basis at this point.

I was with Sony for, oh, close to 20 years. I guess, maybe longer. The thing about it is you can find yourself in a situation where you sign with one company and then five years later, you’ve delivered two of your five albums and you don’t know anybody there. People [say], “I want a key man clause,” but no one’s going to accept that, it never works out that way.

So I think with the other way, when you make an album and get a certain of the way through the album on your own with your own money and your own production, you can then let a company take a look at it and go, “We like this, we know what we can do with this” or “We want to pass on this.”

When it’s your fourth album [on a contract] and you signed with a whole different crew, you just sort of deliver it out of thin air, they may take a look at it and say, “We don’t know what to do with this thing” or “This isn’t what we expected,” so this is a much easier and straightforward and honest way to go at it.

Also, we’re in state now where you can really get started at home and get into the project without needing a big company to bankroll you, so it’s probably a good idea to do that, and that’s how I anticipate we’ll work on it, on a project-by-project basis.

Q: One cause of the upheaval in the industry is the digital and mobile landscape. Do you pay attention to that and ponder how many ringtones of “Shower the People” you can sell?
A: I have kind of a narrow focus on it. I’m not much of a businessman, I really depend on other people I work with to think about those things. I think it distracts me from what my job is, which is to write, perform and record songs.

Q: What did you think when you heard you were to be honored by MusiCares?
A: I think it was a pretty poetical moment. It’s not something one’s going to experience that way.

Q: MusiCares has expanded its mission in the last few years with initiatives like the Emergency Financial Assistance Plan and by providing relief to musicians in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Have you had the opportunity to become familiar with the organization?
A: I’ve had a chance to talk to a few people about it. I think it’s a great opportunity for musicians and people in the music business to directly help and do something positive for fellow musicians.

Q: How involved have you been in picking the artists for your tribute?
A: My management [Borman and Barbara Rose] has been much more active. I asked that my band be the house band because they know the material, so that seemed the easiest way to go about it, but aside from that, I’ve kept myself out of the loop. So there’s an element of surprise to it.
Happy Birthday Clarence,

"Thanks for everything, if it weren't for you I would be still trying to get out of bad contracts.

The music industry would not be the same without you and when I grow up I’m gonna be just like you."

Love,
Dallas Austin
Happy Birthday Clarence,
Thank you for dreaming first!

Kanye West
Artist and CEO of Getting Out Our Dreams Music

www.americanradiohistory.com
His influence reverberates throughout the music industry. Yet Clarence Avant—pioneering label executive, shrewd deal-maker and mentor extraordinary—remains the spotlight-shunning person who first entered the game more than 40 years ago.

Longtime friend Quincy Jones distills the essence of the Avant mystique: “He’s the perennial godfather of our business. Everyone in this business has been by Clarence’s desk, if they’re smart.”

“Everyone” includes such industry personalities as Jimmy Iovine, Barbra Streisand, Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, David Geffen, Doug Morris, Henry Gamble, Sylvia Rhone, Holland/Dozier/Holland, Walter Yetts, Antonio "A." Reid and Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds. But the list is not music industry-exclusive.

Avant’s colleagues also include presidents (Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter), ambassadors (Andrew Young), politicians (Maxine Waters), entrepreneurs (BET founder Robert Johnson, Black Enterprise publisher Earl Graves), social activists (the Rev. Jesse Jackson) and TV personalities (Oprah Winfrey).

As impressive as his Rolodex is his résumé: artist manager, record-label founder, broadcaster, former chairman of Motown Records, entrepreneur and a tireless advocate of opportunities for African-Americans within the music business and beyond.

The ever-sensible Avant, who turns 68 this month, insists he is just a country boy. But look deeper, and you will find a no-nonsense yet funny man determined to simultaneously live life and give back.

If you search online for his name, you will find his birthplace listed.

MUSIC BUSINESS PIONEER MARKS FOUR DECADES AS A CONSUMMATE DEAL-MAKER

CLARENCE

AVANT

BY GAIL MITCHELL
MUSIC BUSINESS PIONEER (cont.)

from >>p41

as Greensboro, N.C. And he will tell you the same thing himself. But he was actually born in Climax, a small town outside of Greensboro. Adopting his mother’s maiden name of Avant, he never really knew his father and did not finish high school.

Moving up north at the age of 16, he eventually worked at Macy’s in New York and for a law directory in Newark, N.J.

In his 20s, Avant was initiated into the music business when he worked at a club called Teddy P’s Lounge. Blues artist Little Willie John played the club and was so impressed by Avant that he hired the young man as his manager. Soon other clients followed, notably jazz organist Jimmy Smith, composer Lalo Schifrin, jazz producer Creed Taylor and recording pioneer Tom Wilson.

Before exercising his own considerable mentoring skills, Avant was tutored by a key figure in the music industry of the ’50s and ’60s: Joe Glazer of Associated Booking. At the time, Glazer managed Louis Armstrong. He also booked gigs for a who’s who in jazz and pop that included Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Sarah Vaughan, Lionel Hampton, Billie Holiday and an ingenue by the name of Barbra Streisand.

Quoted in “The Autobiography of Quincy Jones,” Avant says Glazer taught him two important lessons that have served him well through the years: One, keep your mouth quiet about what you know. Two, when you make a deal, ask for as much money as you can without stuttering.

That second lesson sparked Avant’s decades-long friendship with Jones.

It was the early ’60s, and Jones was a VP at Mercury Records—the first such position held by a black man at a U.S. record label. Avant got wind that Jones had signed jazz artists Gillespie and Gerry Mulligan for $100,000. So he decided to talk to Jones about his signing.

“He went and got the deal,” Jones says. “I respected him for that.”

Avant’s deal-making prowess was called into play in the late ’60s when he negotiated the first joint venture between an African-American executive and a major record label. The executive was Motown & R&B man Mickey Stephenson, the label Venture Records. Although Venture did not pan out, Avant decided to try his hand at running a label.

Black music executives at major labels were rare at the time. And there were not any formal R&B music departments. Black music was placed under the “special markets” banner.

As veteran label executive and Urban Network publisher Miller London told Billboard last year, “People like Berry Gordy and Clarence Avant said, ‘Look, I can’t make it in that world. I’ll make my own world so I can make money.’”

Avant got his chance in 1971 when he founded Sussex Records.

The name is evidence of Avant’s sly humor. Jones recalls that Avant, who co-founded Sussex with the late Ronald Moseley, once told a group of MBA students that the name was inspired by two words: success and sex.

‘Clarence . . . Our high priest of culture. Our deal-making Renaissance man. Our pope. Our rebel. Our consigliere. He’s been a great mentor to many over the years, creating a world of opportunity for others to follow.’

—SYLVIA RHONE, UNIVERSAL RECORDS EXECUTIVE VP/MOTOWN RECORDS PRESIDENT

Dear Clarence,

Thanks for the memories

And your friendship

Congratulations

With Love,

Ani & Jerry

continued on >>p46

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www.americanradiohistory.com
To Clarence Avant,

The Original, Triple “OG”
And Godfather Of Our Business

If There Is A Better Brother/Friendship
On This Planet, God Must Have Kept It
For Him Or Herself

Thank You For Almost Half A Century Together

Happy Birthday
With Love From Deep Down,

♥ Q

P.S.: The Only Problematic Issues We’ve Ever Had
Concerned You Denying Your Roots In Climax, NC.
And Your Insistence On Putting Ice In
My 1961 Château Petrus. 😊
Clarence,

From one chairman of Motown to another -
Love you, man! You're an inspiration to us all.

Happy Birthday!
Berry Gordy
To My Husband
You were a giant when I met you always with a hand extended to lift someone climbing or trying to find his or her way.
You haven't changed in all these years.
I love you!
Jacquie

To Our Father Clarence Avant
It is said that there are only two lasting things one can give his children. One is roots, the other wings. Thank you for grounding us and allowing us to fly.
We love you!
Nicole and Alex
MUSIC BUSINESS PIONEER (cont.)

from >>p42

"Clarence is an amazing music man," Reid says. "To have that kind of an artist on your roster and still hear his records every day, not to mention others recutting his songs . . . that's impressive."

Avant's barrier-breaking continued in the '70s with the purchase of Los Angeles radio station KAGB. The move made him one of the first African-Americans to own an FM station.

After Sussex folded, Avant launched a second record label, Tabu. The label scored its first No. 1 R&B hit in 1980 with the S.O.S. Band's "Take Your Time (Do It Right)." Labelmates included Cherrelle and Alexander O'Neal.

A subsequent single by S.O.S., "High Hopes," did not fare as well on the R&B chart, peaking at No. 25. But it precipitated a fortuitous meeting in 1982 between Avant and the song's writers, Jimmy "Jam" Harris and Terry Lewis, moonlighting members of Morris Day's band, the Time.

Avant called Jam & Lewis a year later and asked them to pen a couple of songs for the S.O.S. Band's next album. The pair crafted the back-to-back top five singles "Just Be Good to Me" and "Tell Me If You Still Care." And the fledgling songwriting/production duo was off and running. But not before learning a valuable lesson from Avant.

After the duo's representative negotiated a price for the songs, Jam & Lewis received a phone call from Avant's office requesting a meeting. The two newcomers—whom the sweat suit-wearing Avant would teasingly call thugs because they wore suits and hats—thought they had blown the situation by asking for too much money. It turns out they had not asked for enough.

"He said, 'Here's what you're worth and what the budget should be,' " Jam says. "That spoke to Clarence's fairness. There's not one person who has been more instrumental to the success of myself and Terry than Clarence Avant."

Jam in turn introduced Avant to another up-and-coming production team, L.A. Reid & Babyface. With Avant's guidance, the prolific pair would go on to establish the pivotal Atlanta-based label LaFace Records.

"I had never heard of Clarence until Jimmy Jam told me how he could help us organize our business," Reid recalls. continued on >>p50
Happy Birthday, Clarence!

From your family at UMG and Universal Music Publishing Group

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INTERSCOPE GEFFEN A&M RECORDS | GEFFEN RECORDS | ISLAND DEF JAM MUSIC GROUP
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UNIVERSAL MUSIC LATINO | UNIVERSAL MUSIC PUBLISHING GROUP | VERVE MUSIC GROUP

www.americanradiohistory.com
Clarence,

Happy Birthday my friend.

David
An extraordinary leader and caring friend who has always put others before himself.

Happy Birthday, Clarence!

With love and respect from Clive Davis and everyone at the RCA Music Group
MUSIC BUSINESS PIONEER (cont.)

from >>p46

"His contribution to my career has and continues to be invaluable. We still talk at least a couple of times a month. His career guidance is maybe less celebrated because it's behind the scenes. But the advice he's contributed—to Quincy 30 years ago, me 20 years ago, Puffy 10 years ago and those coming up now—is clearly significant."

Avant was recruited by the major leagues in 1993, taking on the chairman role at Motown Records. That was the year PolyGram purchased Berry Gordy's legendary label. During his five years as chairman, Avant counseled the Motown management team on restructuring its operations. He was also appointed to the international management board of parent PolyGram Holding, making him the first African-American board member.

Among the executives Avant became acquainted with during this time was PolyGram senior VP of worldwide pop marketing David Munns. Now EMI Music vice chairman, Munns credits Avant's sage advice, hard-to-match integrity and humor ("he's hilarious when he's on form") as the reasons behind his strong connections inside and outside the music industry.

"You may not like what he has to say, but he says it straight up," Munns says. "There are no hidden agendas with him. If everybody in the world had the same values as Clarence Avant, the world would be a much better place."

Making the world a better place is a prevailing theme in Avant's various endeavors outside the music business. An active member of the Democratic Party, he campaigned for President Clinton, was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention during the Carter administration and served as a member of the Trade Mission to the African Nations for former United Nations ambassador Andrew Young.

A major supporter of Operation PUSH and the NAACP, Avant secured funds to ensure the completion of the 1973 film "Save the Children." The moving documentary featured a host of artists and its release grossed $20 million.

"Clarence has the most amazing mind," Jones marvels. "I'd swear he's been reading The Wall Street Journal since he was 2. He's aware of every business deal—and its details—on the planet."

A deal of his own making occurred in 2004 when he selected Universal Music Publishing Group to administer his Los Angeles-based publishing companies, Avant Garde and Interior Music. The worldwide deal covers such classic songs as Bill Withers' "Lean on Me" and "Am I Losing You?" Dennis Cole's "Scorpio" and the Jam & Lewis-penned "Saturday Love," popularized by former Tabu artists Cherelle and Alexander O'Neal.

"He's aware that you can still be in the business and have some influence—"we're still going anywhere," Jones adds. "He reinforced our ethics and morals—"he showed you can still be in the music business, retain those values and still be successful." Or as Jones eloquently states, "He is Mr. True."

As one of contemporary music's greatest architects, Clarence has done it all, from executive and label owner, to manager and publisher. But one of his greatest achievements has been combining a tireless work ethic with an intuitive knack for discovering and nurturing talent that created a movement and helped define popular culture.'

—BRUCE RESNIKOFF, UNIVERSAL MUSIC ENTERPRISES PRESIDENT

Happy Birthday, Clarence!

Thank you for all that you do for so many.

We love you,
Congresswoman Maxine Waters,
Ambassador Sidney Williams,
and family.
Because time itself is like a spiral, something special happens on your birthday each year: The same energy that God invested in you at birth is present once again.

-Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Happy Birthday to the Great Clarence Avant
Clarence,

Happy Birthday!
Thank you for being a part of our lives.

With much love,
Ron, Michi, Jacques & Justin Sweeney

P.S. Write the book.
Avant, Clarence. (Āˈvōnt klārˈens) 1. Mentor. 2. Role model. 3. Friend.

Thanks for being my coach.

Always,

Big Jon
Talking with music industry veteran Clarence Avant, you can count on one thing. The conversation will be anything but boring. Peppering his stories with salty language and humor, Avant reels off colorful anecdotes that illuminate and teach still-valuable lessons he has learned on the path from his native North Carolina to the executive suites of the music business.

You realize he is a precious commodity—one of the record industry's few remaining griots. During a freewheeling exchange over breakfast at one of his favorite Los Angeles hangouts, the Four Seasons Hotel, Avant lets loose on the past, present and future.

What got you out of Climax, N.C.? I'm what you'd call "country." I've done everything from picking cotton to sucking tobacco and sugar cane. I stopped school after about eight grades. I was born out of wedlock; Avant is my mother's name. When my mother married my stepfather, I left home when I was around 12 and stayed with my cousins Frances and Roy. I had another close cousin, Richard "Dickie" Avant, whom I'm extremely close to. He and his mother lived in New Jersey. So at 16 I came to New Jersey and got a job. Then I went to work for Macy's in New York.

How did you break into the music? I later worked for a law directory in Newark [N.J.] where I met another black guy from North Carolina who was also a promoter. His name was Teddy Powell, and he booked acts like Jackie Wilson, Sam Cooke, the Platters and Little Willie John in his nightclub, Teddy P's Lounge. This was the late '50s. Teddy made me a manager of the club. That's where I met Little Willie John, who asked me to be his road manager. I took the job. But it's a wonder I didn't jump off a building or commit suicide. Willie was plain genius when it came to performing but a pain in the ass. I was so green. His band was looking for me to pay them. I had waited until after the gig was over to pick up the pay. I found out Willie had come in a couple of days before and gotten the money. The band wanted to kick my ass. [laughs] Willie John was slick, but he remained a friend of mine. He also taught me one thing: Don't believe everything you see, and you better watch your shit.

You have credited Joe Glazier's influence. He was an early mentor? He was with Associated Booking. He managed Louis Armstrong and booked jazz acts. In Vegas he was the king. He was one of those friendly boys from Chicago. Very Al...continued on >>p58

Congratulations, Clarence, for this very well-deserved tribute, and a very big thank you for everything you have done for me.

Straight ahead!

Lalo Schifrin
IN THIS BUSINESS THINGS ALWAYS CHANGE.
LUCKILY, YOU HAVEN'T.

Happy Birthday to a living legend, from all your friends at Warner Music Group.

warner | music | group
Happy Birthday Clarence!

Thanks for your inspiration and wisdom for so many years

~ Jamie Foxx ~
Clarence,
You have inspired us for so many years, here's to many more. Happy Birthday!
‘MAKING CRAZY DEALS’ (cont.)

from >>p34

Capone-ish. [laughs] But he taught me to believe in yourself first.

What led you to start your first label, Sussex? Venture Records, the joint venture I put together for Motown's Mickey Stevenson, didn't get off the ground, unfortunately. That's what made me determined to form a record label. I would have to say Sussex was one of the first black record companies to have white artists with hits records, like Dennis Coffey ("Scorpio"), the Gallery ("It's So Nice to Be With You") and Wadsworth Mansion ("Sweet Mary").

Was such an eclectic roster your intent? I thought music was color blind. I didn't want anybody telling me what I couldn't sign. If Goddard Lieberson could sign Johnny Mathis, I could sign who I wanted. I was just glad to be in the game.

Undoubtedly, Sussex's most successful artist was Bill Withers. It took me damn near four years to find someone to produce his records. Everyone who heard him would say, "It ain't going to work." But I was determined. One song I really like was "Grandma's Hands." I figured everyone has a grandma and could relate. Then he had "Lean on Me." And I'll never forget his version of "Harlem."

I had a lot of material by various Sussex acts but didn't have enough money. What I did wrong was buy that radio station, KAGB, Avant Garde Broadcasting. All of a sudden, I had 100 employees and didn't have the checks to pay them. That's why [Sussex] went under.

What did you do then? I was so bitter, so angry about Sussex. If I had it to do all over again, I would have probably had at least 15 artists signed. What I learned is you can have two good records, but the rest can wipe your ass out. That's why Bill Withers and I fell out. It was a small label, and he was really the first one to have any hits in succession, although the Gallery had a couple of small ones. It took me almost three years to get my mind straightened out again.

Because when you lose something like that, you lose everything. And we were dead broke. My house was in foreclosure.

But you went on to establish another label, Tabu Records. I want to give a lot of credit to Walter Yenikoff. He was at CBS Records. continued on >>p62

'He is the silent hero behind a lot of people, especially in the African-American community. L.A. [Reid] and I went to Clarence because we wanted to be like Jimmy [Jam] and Terry [Lewis]. He helped us get our first record deal, and ultimately helped us with many other things beyond. He has touched far more lives than so many other people.'

—KENNY 'BABYFACE' EDMONDS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
CLARENCE AVANT

LEADER | COUNSELOR | MENTOR
FEARLESS ADVOCATE
LOYAL FRIEND & FAMILY MAN

THANKS FOR ENRICHING OUR LIVES.
BEST WISHES FOR A MEMORABLE CELEBRATION!

BRENDA ANDREWS
&
TOM DRAPER
After all that we've been through, 
Time won't change the way we feel about you 
Clarence, you are truly the finest... 

And you just get better with age.

Happy Birthday Godfather! 
We Love You 
Your 2 Thugs 
Jimmy and Terry 

"The Earth Has Music For Those Who Listen"
Clarence,

You have been a mentor and a friend. As a wordsmith, even I cannot accurately describe the impact you have had on my career. As a friend, it is easy: Thanks!

- Lionel Brockman Richie
THE RECORDING ACADEMY proudly honors CLARENCE AVANT industry leader, visionary, entrepreneur, mentor, friend, recipient of our esteemed Governors Award ...and true industry legend.
When did you know you possessed an aptitude for deal-making?
I never knew. I just had a con, some talk. I have no idea, so be honest with you. I just became this cat that people knew was making crazy deals.

For example?
One of the most fascinating was with Creed Taylor. He’d just left ABC Impulse; he’d started that label there. Then he was at MGM, where he was running Verve. That’s when he signed acts like Jimmy Smith and Stan Getz.

I was approached by Jerry Moss and Herb Alpert in 1967. They were looking for a jazz guy. Off the cuff, I said, “I can deliver Creed.” But Moss and Alpert pointed out he was signed to MGM. “So what?” I said. “I’ll deliver him.”

Creed was making $15,000 a year on a three-year contract. I told Jerry I wanted $150,000 a year. He told me I was out of my goddamned mind. But Alpert taught me it’s easier to walk down but harder to walk up. It took me a year, but I delivered. I got Creed Taylor $150,000 a year, times three years. I never budged. Moss had said he wasn’t going to budge. I said to myself, ’Why are they going from $75,000 to $90,000 and $100,000?’ I said, ’We may as well stay with the $150.’ Herb called me and said they really wanted Creed, but they might have to pass. I said, ’Pass. ’ I was scared they might, but I also had enough nerve to say I wouldn’t take $100,000 either.

What is your perspective on today’s music business?
continued on >>p64

T’ve known Clarence for three decades, and what I admire most about him is his ability to put issues into their proper perspective. He separates ego from accomplishment, and that is the definition of wisdom.’

—LES BIDER, FORMER WARNER/CHAPPELL MUSIC CHAIRMAN/CEO

Happy Birthday
and Congratulations

STAR TRAK
Thank you for being an unconditional friend and a life long mentor. Only my dad Joseph Busby has had the impact you have made in my life’s journey.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

May God continue to bless you and your family

I love you

Jheryl Busby

Clarence,

We congratulate you for all that you are and all that you have done. We know you would never take a bow, but we’re gonna applaud you anyway.

The Hidden Beach Recordings Family
Dear Mr. Avant:

mentor (n): a wise and trusted guide and advisor.

Thank you for taking the time, time after time.

Jeanie Weems

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MUSIC BUSINESS PIONEER (cont.)

from >>p62

I have these records from Time Life, the best of soul, the best of pop... Listen, and you'll be amazed at the pure songwriting. But I don't know what you can do 20 years from now with some of the stuff I heard today. I do think rap is very important. It's opened up the door for a lot of kids to make a living. But when it comes down to real talent, Kanye West is one thing, as are Jay-Z and Ludacris. I just don't like some of the lyrics.

We tend to degrade ourselves by degrading ourselves. When we hear a white person say, "nigger, bitch, whore," [then] the NAACP, Urban League, Brotherhood Crusade and congressmen would be all over a person's ass if he were white and saying those words. One month of black history doesn't do us any good. We need 52 weeks, and maybe we'll catch on then as to why we have to make some stronger choices. We're so far behind, especially economically. Yet we have the talent to do everything.

Did you accomplish what you wanted to during your Motown tenure?

No. What Berry Gordy did is something no other label could ever do again. He had a machine, an assembly line that nobody has ever been able to duplicate.

When I went to Motown, he sold the company to Boston Ventures. Cheryl Bousby was running it, and he was into branding the Motown name through cafes, animation and clothes. We had Boyz II Men then; when I left we still had Boyz II Men. Stevie Wonder was running it, and he was into branding the Motown name through cafes, animation and clothes. We had Boyz II Men then; when I left we still had Boyz II Men. Stevie Wonder was running it, and he was into branding the Motown name through cafes, animation and clothes. We had Boyz II Men then; when I left we still had Boyz II Men. Stevie Wonder was running it, and he was into branding the Motown name through cafes, animation and clothes. We had Boyz II Men then; when I left we still had Boyz II Men. Stevie Wonder was running it, and he was into branding the Motown name through cafes, animation and clothes. We had Boyz II Men then; when I left we still had Boyz II Men.

As big as Motown was, all of a sudden you've got just Boyz II Men and maybe a couple of other little things. It takes two years to develop two or three artists, and we didn't have time for that. So it fell apart.

Then Edgar Bronfman bought the company and brought in Doug Morris. Doug decided to replace Motown president George Jackson. Doug and I had a heavy disagreement about that, but we're still friends. It was just business. I like people I can argue with and still be friends. I don't like no son of a bitch I can't cuss out and be friends with tomorrow. So Doug

continued on >>p68

‘Clarence was one of the first African-Americans to really get to sit at the table. He opened the doors and blazed the trail that people, like myself, continue to walk on. He’s a great man. It goes beyond the business. He teaches civil and political responsibilities, and he reminds us not to forget how blessed we are.’

—‘BIG JON’ PLATT, EMI MUSIC PUBLISHING EXECUTIVE VP
Boost Mobile Recognizes the Audacious Career of Clarence Avant

There was once a kid named Clarence raised in the deep south. Little did his mother know that nearly anything was liable to come out of this child's mouth.

He designed a life that was rooted in giving. His words, heart, and intellect haven't changed since the beginning.

The number of lives that his has positively touched is beyond comprehension. Yet he has asked none of them to contribute a penny toward his pension.

From upstart rookie to persons of fame. He treats everyone he meets precisely the same.

Some may wonder why it took so long for this honor to come up. Because he's been waiting for the rest of us to catch up.

For those who read this issue and ask, why bother. The answer is simple, there is only one true GODFATHER!
Dr. Clarence Avant
When Clarence speaks people listen.
The E.F. Hutton of the music business.
Happy Birthday
to the real Godfather.

From your family at the Coalition

Troy Carter, Tony Davis, Jay Erving, Eve, Nelly, Fat Joe, Kelis, Mario, Floetry, Patti Labelle and Famlay.
CLARENCE HAPPY BIRTHDAY

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT TXTSTATION & MATT COLEMAN

CLARENCE, 
You can still 
"Lean On Me" 
if times get tough... 
Only in America! 

Happy Birthday 
from your old friend. 

Don King 
"It's a long way from Little Willie John!"

A Los Angeles Recording Academy membership awards luncheon in 2003 brought together, from left, LIONEL RICHIE, Academy president NEIL PORTNOW, and CLARENCE AVANT.

‘MAKING CRAZY DEALS’ (cont.)

from >>>64

brought in Kedar [Massenburg], and with the sale, there was no room for me.

Alain Levy [then-president/CEO of PolyGram] probably gave me the best five years of my life, because economically he took care of me and also gave me the chance [beginning in 1993] to be a Motown chairman. There have only been two: Berry Gordy and myself. Berry has the money, I had the title. [laughs] But Motown still has that ring with people when you tell them you were once its chairman.

I still think the company can be turned around. I wouldn’t have minded a shot at it again. I talked to one personality who shall remain nameless, and this person said, "Hey man, how old are you? I heard you’re seventy-something." I’d rather stop here with this part of the conversation, because I refuse to cry.

You have been nicknamed “the Godfather.” Do you think the moniker applies? I certainly didn’t get paid may be the way I should have, because I didn’t ask anyone for 10%, 12% or whatever. Maybe I should have. Then I wouldn’t be sitting here talking to you. I’d be a rich guy sitting in Bel Air. I did it because there was no one else out here doing it. Black folks [in this industry] had never had anybody they could talk to. The white boys would only give up so much information. My doors were open. And I got involved.

What does the future hold for the music industry? The 21st century is becoming more technology-driven. You’ve got Steve Jobs, whose Apple has made a huge dent. You look at downloads, ringtones. The industry has a long way to go from where it was in 1999. In 1999 it was a $40 billion industry. Today, we’re somewhere around $24 or $25 billion.

Is it going to get any better? It’s all about good songs. I put it this way: I admire guys like [Interscope Geffen A&M chairman] Jimmy Iovine, who is a brilliant executive. I look at [Island Def Jam chairman Antonio] “L.A.” Reid, another brilliant executive. He’s a song guy. I would not have bet that no one could bring Mariah Carey back. But listen to her music on this album. It’s about the songs. I look at Clive Davis, who can take someone like Rod Stewart and have him sell 4 or 5 million records in his 60s.

As I’ve said before: I have a lot of respect for many rap. But I look at [Billboard] every week to see what tours are doing. Established acts like the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen, Eagles, Paul McCartney and Madonna, they have songs. I don’t give a damn if you’re 50, 60 or 70, you go see people who can sing songs.

This is where I think Motown has a chance to

‘It is ultimately Clarence’s unique ability to analyze and judge situations, combined with his willingness to advise, mentor and help others in our industry, that makes him such a respected and beloved leader and visionary.’

—NEIL PORTNOW, RECORDING ACADEMY PRESIDENT

return. I feel sorry for artists like James Ingram or Patti LaBelle for whom there’s no marketplace, only because the record companies are so big now. They have to make numbers. They haven’t got time to work those kinds of artists.

With all your stories, have you thought about writing a book? Cathy Hughes [chairperson of broadcasting company Radio One], one of my closest friends, has been kicking my ass about that for the last five years. Quincy Jones is on me every other week. I have never wanted to think about the responsibility of writing a book. Plus some of the things I’ve been involved in will be hard for people to believe. Luckily, I have a lot of documents to prove them.

Looking back on your life, what would you change, if anything? I’d look at the errors I made and be a much better businessman, much more focused. I was never focused on anything. I just tried to survive.

But I’ve always said if I had my life to live over again, I’d want to be an investment banker. I like numbers. Either an investment banker— or Bill Gates.

Comments from music industry executives about Clarence Avant were compiled by Debbie Galante Block.

www.americanradiohistory.com
Happy Birthday Clarence!

Your positive influence on the entertainment industry is only surpassed by your enormous impact on the many people whose lives you have touched. I am one of those fortunate people who have been mentored by you for many years and am honored to say that you are truly my friend. You are one of a kind!

Your friend always,

Alan Haymon
MUCH OF NEW ORLEANS REMAINS UNINHABITABLE, BUT EFFORTS CONTINUE TO RESTORE THE CITY’S MUSICAL HERITAGE. HERE’S HOW ORGANIZATIONS LIKE MUSICARES ARE TRYING TO HELP • BY TODD MARTENS

Like nearly every house in New Orleans, Bethany Bultman’s home has holes in its roof. Buckets to catch rainwater surround her desk, and she is hesitant to go out at night. Much of her neighborhood is still completely without power.

She is one of the lucky ones. Leaky roof aside, her house suffered little damage, and she has a second one in Massachusetts, a world away from the devastation Hurricane Katrina inflicted last August. Bultman admits to missing her Cape Cod getaway, but she cannot bring herself to abandon New Orleans. There would be the guilt of leaving behind the city and those who are suffering, but more important, there are checks to write.

Bultman subscribes upwards of 70 per week, each for $100, each given to a New Orleans musician. To date, her efforts have been funded largely by donations from Pearl Jam and nonprofit organization Jazz Aspen Snowmass; she recently promised $250,000 from MusiCares, the Recording Academy’s charitable arm.

The checks Bultman writes are allocated only to those who work, which these days in New Orleans can mean performing at a club in front of a handful of Federal Emergency Management Agency workers.

On many nights, money from the door is minimal or nonexistent. Bultman hopes her $100 subsidy is enough to dissuade someone from taking a gig in another city. If instruments and artifacts from the city’s musical heritage were washed away, then New Orleans’ soul—the musicians who define it—must stay.

“As the time wore on,” Bultman says, “more and more musicians who were dumped all over the country wanted to come back. We soon realized that this is really about giving people instruments and giving people hope, and that’s when we started paying the gig fees.”

Two months ago, Bultman, a writer/historian and the co-founder of the New Orleans Musicians’ Clinic, was urging displaced musicians to return to the city. She started the clinic with her husband in 1998 with the assistance of Dr. Jack B. McConnell, the developer of Tylenol tablets whose son, Page, played keyboards for the band Phish. With a mix of pride and a dedication to preserving a music culture that she says “percolates out of the ground,” Bultman hoped all New Orleans’ evacuees would soon be returning.

‘NEW ORLEANS IS NOT A HEALTHY PLACE’

Really, however, soon sunk in, and now she is not so sure. “The goal was to get everyone we could get back to New Orleans,” she says. “Now that we’re back, we’ve moved away from that. We’ve moved away from the fantasy that everything would go back to the way it was. New Orleans is just not a healthy place for everyone to come to.”

Eight of the city’s ZIP codes are still without full power, according to the Jan. 24 status report from the mayor’s office. The area affected most by Katrina—the Ninth Ward—remains under curfew, and 911 emergency availability is scattered. Few hospitals are open, and the NOMC, which had free use of the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans, has lost such privileges, as much of the facility needs extensive repairs.

And for many, life was not all that great before Katrina. One in four of the city’s residents lived below the poverty line, and a great number of its working musicians relied on a steady influx of tourists.

Bultman stays in touch with the national organizations providing relief to New Orleans musicians, including MusiCares, which announced its pledge in support of her efforts Jan. 25.

She is heartened by the outpouring of generosity from her top donors and has nothing but praise for MusiCares. But five months after Katrina, Bultman feels that little has been accomplished. Nearly all of the 200 musicians she helps lack a place to live. She worries the situation will only get worse with a dearth of health care and tries to communicate to the national associations that the effort to restore the music community in New Orleans is one that will take years—and one that will happen one saxophone at a time.

“As MusiCares are all really good people,” she says. “I said if they had the opportunity, they should encourage any musician with any kind of health issue whatsoever from coming back. Everyone wants to come home, but home is just not a good place to be.”

MusiCares made when it offered an initial donation of $1 million for Katrina relief efforts just days after the hurricane.

With the muscle of the Recording Academy behind it, and another $5 million from New York’s Children’s Hospital, the organization has received more than $10 million, and is expected to gather $25 million by June. “However, it only covers 20% of what we need,” muses McConnell.

With Bultman and more than 100 other musicians, Carroll, who has been in the city for nearly six months, is feeling the need and a sense of urgency. “It’s like there’s a sense of no time,” she says. “You need to get a sense of who actually needs the money right now.”

The initial response was wide, says Debbie Carroll, MusiCares senior director of health and human services. “We had no idea at that time that the scope would be as large as it has been,” Carroll says. “All of the information we were receiving in that first week was from the media. Shortly after we announced that effort, we began receiving more well over 100 phone calls per day. Within the first eight weeks we had dispensed that first million to over 1,700 clients who had relocated in 36 states.”

To date, Carroll estimates that MusiCares has aided more than 2,300 people from its general assistance fund, which is designated to cover basic living expenses. MusiCares was able to use the Recording Academy’s 12 nationwide chapters to provide assistance in the form of $500 debit cards to those who had fled New Orleans.

But the charity was also dedicated to reaching those who remained. Reid Wick, the president of small independent jazz label STR Records and a member of the Recording Academy’s board of governors representing New Orleans at the Memphs chapter, became the charity’s liaison with the city.

Aside from having deep connections within the New Orleans music scene, Wick had firsthand knowledge of Katrina’s might. “My wife worked at a local hospital in New Orleans,” Wick says. “Instead of evacuating, I went to the hospital to be with her. I had two days of clothes with me, and I thought that would be enough. We spent the next week rescuing patients and lifting them into helicopters.”

Wick divides his months between New Orleans and Memphis, and spent the early part of January meeting with local charities. He has talked with Bultman and the Musicians’ Clinic, who are also working with Wendy Oxenhorn of the Jazz Foundation of America, to ensure MusiCares’ efforts in New Orleans assist those with the most need.

“MusiCares has really stepped up to the plate these past few weeks,” Bultman says. “We’re in the trenches, and if there has been something we couldn’t take care of, like paying someone’s rent, they can come in and do it.”

RETURN TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Pianist Joe Krown was playing 12 gigs per week prior to Katrina. His wife, who worked at Tulane University Hospital, was laid off after the hurricane. He filled out the paperwork for nearly every charity dedicated to helping musicians.

“I have a mortgage and a rent and no income, and before I said anything more to a couple of them, there was a check in the mail,” Krown says. “That happened with MusiCares and the Musicians’ Clinic and the Jazz Foundation.”

He also benefited from the New Orleans Musicians’ Relief Fund, which was started by one-time DJ’s member Jeff Beninato and his wife, Karen. Along with Chicago rock group Wilco, the couple brought Krown and such musicians as Leroy Jones, George French, Craig Klein and Cranston Clements to Chicago for a benefit show that raised more than $100,000.

Beninato says he started the charity two days after Katrina hit New Orleans, and a few days after that he heard from MusiCares. He began working with the national organization, providing names of musicians he knew were still in New Orleans.

Beninato is re-outfitting the New Wave Brass Band, hoping to get the big band in matching form for Mardi Gras. Providing instruments for working New Orleans musicians has become a group effort, and MusiCares is at the forefront. Wick says the charity has helped more than 600 musicians get new instruments, and he says MusiCares receives between 30 and 80 applications per day.

MusiCares has partnered with Gibson and the Guitar Center chain and launched its Music Rising replacement initiative in New Orleans with U2’s the Edge. While an unknown number of musicians still need a place to live, they need the instruments to make a living.

Krown, for one, says he was able to replace some equipment thanks to MusiCares, and the program has made it easier for him to be self-sufficient. “It was starting to feel like I was beginning, and I have too much pride for that,” Krown says.

Wick says MusiCares will team with an organization like the NOMC if someone needs an instrument that costs more than the charity’s grants allot. As for a lack of housing, he is unsure where to begin, but he knows he is on the right track.

“Tulane always works for us, and we can do,” he says. “This is such a big problem. I got a call today from a guy who just got his new bass guitar, and he was happy to be able to go out and hustle and just have the therapeutic outlet of music again. It’s a start.”
PUTTING ON THE SHOW AS PRODUCERS SWEAT THE DETAILS, AN ARRAY OF TALENT, BUT THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY THROUGH LIVE PERFORMANCES WILL ENGENDER a SENSE OF EXPECTATION.

LOS ANGELES—From the staging details to the talent, but the sense of community through live performances will engender a sense of expectation.

Recording Academy president Neil Portnow says music is “the critical and most important element of any year’s presentation. We want those Grammy moments, where you have an element of the performance that is unique and that might be unexpected, instructive and educational, that connects the dots between generations and genres and sees musicians really stretch and take chances on our stage.”

Though the producers would not reveal any visual details about the set, Cossette says that 275,000 pounds of scenery will hang from the ceiling of the Staples Center, and more than 900 computerized lights and 50 high-definition projectors will be used for the show. There is no obvious theme to the telecast nor a designated host, because, Ehrlich says, “the fewer rules and constraints will give a freshness to the show.”

One of the production twists will see some artists introducing their own performances through previously taped segments. Confirmed presenters include artists Big & Rich, Michael Bublé, Common and Ludacris; actors Tom Hanks, Matt Dillon and Terrence Howard; and last year’s Grammy host Queen Latifah.

While final production elements are still coming together, many of this year’s official Grammy sponsors unveiled their music-oriented campaigns weeks or months ago. Partners include Dr Pepper, Heineken, Cadillac, Verizon, People magazine, Yahoo Music, Westwood One Radio, XM Satellite Radio, Hilton Hotels and Continental Airlines.

Verizon kicked off its second annual Grammy partnership by sponsoring the Grammy Charity Holiday Auction on eBay from Nov. 28 through Dec. 8.

The telecommunications company has launched a special Web site exclusively for Verizon broadband subscribers that features such Grammy-oriented content as photos, trivia and a contest to win a trip to this year’s show.

“Music is definitely an important area for us in terms of marketing and sponsorships because our customer base is so diverse and

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“Music is definitely an important area for us in terms of marketing and sponsorships because our customer base is so diverse and
music is so diverse,” says Dana Moscato, senior manager of entertainment marketing for Verizon. “We will be involved with the Grammys up to at least 2008.”

Yahoo Music and XM Satellite Radio are debuting exclusive content as first-time Grammy partners.

Yahoo is hosting the official Web site of the Grammys (grammy.yahoo.com).

In addition to news and updates the night of the show, the site has continually updated such features as “On the Rise,” which focuses on this year’s best new artist nominees through special interviews; “Dress Quest,” about Kimberly Stewart’s search for Grammy attire; and highlight clips from the last 30 years of Grammy telecasts.

The site will be promoted on Yahoo’s home page, and there will be ad bumpers about it on the Grammy telecast.

“This partnership really fits in with what we are trying to do, which is … expose our users to great new music,” says Dave Goldberg, head of music for Yahoo.

Similarly, XM will further its promotional goals as the official satellite radio network of the Grammys starting this year.

XM is creating the Grammy Radio channel (XM 200) for three days—Feb. 6-8. It will broadcast a variety of Grammy-related events including the Recording Academy’s Salute to Classical Music lunch, the MusiCares Person of the Year Tribute honoring James Taylor and the pre-Grammy Clive Davis party—which is not associated with the Recording Academy. (For an exclusive interview with Taylor, see page 38.)

Scott Waltermann, executive producer of Grammy Radio for XM, says, “There are so many things that we can do in the coming years, including going back into their archives for programming.”

Portnow says that though marketing and linking with corporate sponsors was one of his major goals when he became president of the Recording Academy three years ago, he looks beyond the financial and promotional elements that these partnerships bring to the organization.

“They create value for both entities,” Portnow explains. “There’s a thin line between commercial exploitation and things that are done in good taste. That becomes an interesting challenge, but an exciting one, because it means that we are doing with corporate America for the most part is quite a bit different than the typical brand-to-brand associations.”

This year’s roster of sponsorship partners also includes Cadillac, which will serve as the official car of the Grammys for the second year running.

A limited number of 2007 Cadillac Escalades will be used to transport talent to Grammy events, and one will be auctioned at the MusiCares Taylor tribute.

More than 100 other Escalades—2006 ESVs—featuring distinctive Grammy badging will also be used for Grammy transportation. The cars will be available for sale at Cadillac dealerships in Southern California after the show.

Mike Jackson, general manager of GM’s Western region, says the special Escalades the Grammys used last year were all sold three weeks after the telecast.

“Associated with the Grammys allows us to showcase our products tied to an organization that has great prestige,” Jackson says.

Heineken is partnering with the Grammys for the third time this year.

Using the theme “Think Green & Gold: Heineken Helps Keep the Music of New Orleans Alive,” the brewing company will promote awareness of the hurricane-stricken city with a green carpet for arrivals Feb. 8 at the Staples Center and its Fais Do Do (a Cajun dance party) event Feb. 7 at the Henry Fonda Music Box Theater, which will feature a Mardi Gras theme and New Orleans musicians including the New Orleans Social Club.

Mike McCann, Heineken’s director of integrated marketing, promotions and sponsorships, says the company is developing music as its main promotional platform.

He adds, “We share with the Grammys the sensibility of not being overly garish in how we brand.”
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NAVARE MOVES INTO MUSIC CITY

NASHVILLE—A little more than a year ago, Navarre Distribution set its sights on Music Row's flourishing independent label scene. The effort is paying off, with Navarre emerging as an important player here.

Although New Hope, Minn.-based Navarre first dipped its toe into Nashville's distribution waters in 2003 by partnering with Clint Black's Equity Music Group, the real action has come during the past 12 months, as Navarre partnered with four more Nashville labels. Dualtone Music Group, home to Chely Wright and the Greencards, signed a three-year deal with Navarre last September, switching from RED Distribution. Startups 903 Music, Midas Records and Aspiration Records have also come aboard.

The drive was spearheaded by Navarre VP/GM Bob Freese, who joined the company's distribution division, Navarre Entertainment Media, in December 2004. "The independent distribution opportunity is bigger than ever in Nashville," he says, "and I believe that is where some of the greatest opportunities lie.

"The timing was perfect," Freese says of his company's Nashville push, which started not long after the impact of the Sony/BMG merger began to be felt here. "The consolidation of major labels creates opportunities." Navarre and its affiliated labels have already achieved some strong success stories.

Equity act Little Big Town has sold 263,000 copies of its album "The Road to Here" since its release last October. The CD has been steadily selling more than 13,000 units per week since early November, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It is currently in the top 20 and rising on Billboard's Top Country Albums chart.

Meanwhile, Neal McCoy, the owner and flagship artist at 903 Music, has sold 144,000 copies of his "That's Life" and more likely to succeed...
Sometimes, Best New Artist Is Truly A Winner

Every year, one of the most heavily debated Grammy Award categories is that of best new artist. While all of this year’s candidates—Ciara, Fall Out Boy, Reina, John Legend and Sugarland—are worthy, everyone really should be no doubt that Legend is going to take home the award.

We looked at the best new artist recipients during the past 30 years and the list shows only two jaw-dropping choices: Starland Vocal Band (1976) and Debby Boone (1977). However, that is in part because Milli Vanilli, which won in 1990 and had its Grammy revoked, has been wiped right off the Grammy Web site. There is simply no new best artist category listed for 1989 (the year that was honored at the 1990 ceremony).

In what is clearly the Grammy equivalent of a marriage annulment, it is as if the award just did not even exist that year: “Oops! We forgot to give that one out!”

There are some amazing artists who have surfaced during the last 30 years, who, in hindsight, surely should have won, including Madonna, U2, R.E.M., Garth Brooks, Eminem, the Fugees and John Mayer.

Additionally, Grammy voters have routinely ignored certain genres. Despite several country boom and the development of truly talented superstars in the format in the last 30 years, the only country artist who has won is LeAnn Rimes (1996). On a very fringe tip, some may include Shelby Lynne (2000). The only rap artist, if we want to consider her more rap than R&B, who has won is Lauryn Hill (1998).

Lynne and Hill’s win bring up another sore point. Although the definition of the award is broad enough to include an artist’s breakthrough effort, it really should not. For example, as talented as she is, it is just not right to have someone like Lynne win best new artist after releasing albums for more than a decade.

Additionally, artists who lead other acts, like Hill and the Fugees, should not be eligible when they put out a solo effort. If taken to its extreme, Tom Petty could have been nominated for his solo debut, “Full Moon Fever,” in 1989, or Don Henley in 1982 for “I Can’t Stand Still.” As much as we love Gwen Stefani, the voters were right not to nominate her for best new artist.

Looking over the list, several artists peaked commercially with the effort that led to their Grammy win, including Paula Cole (1997), Marc Cohn (1991), Arrested Development (1992), Christopher Cross (1980) and Hootie & the Blowfish (1995).

Which brings up an interesting point: How do you determine who is the best new artist? Is it the act that created the best release that year among the contenders or the one that shows the most promise for a long-term career?

All we know for sure is that one only has to look at this year’s top overall nominee, Mariah Carey, to know the voters certainly got it right in 1990, when she was named best new artist.

Carey, along with Legend and Kanye West—whom it should be noted last best new artist last year to Maroon5—each snared eight nominations this year.

Two other career artists who stand out among the past best new artist winners are Sheryl Crow (1994) and Alicia Keys (2001). While we have already pegged Legend to take home the best new artist trophy on Feb. 8, we also expect Carey to take home the statue for record of the year for “We Belong Together.”

Carey also deserves album of the year for “The Emancipation of Mimi,” but that may go to Grammy fave U2 for “How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb.”

For song of the year, we also expect U2 to get the nod for “Sometimes You Can’t Make It On Your Own.”
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- **Nicholas Firth**, Chairman & CEO, BMG Music Publishing
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**Jerry Gold**, Senior Managing Director, FTI Consulting
**Mark Levinton**, Epstein Levinsohn Eodine Hurwitz & Weinstein, LLP
**Greg Clayman**, VP Wireless Strategy & Operations, MTV Networks
**Jerry Gold**, Senior Managing Director, FTI Consulting
**Rich Greenfield**, Managing Director, Media Analyst, Palm Research
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Tozer Gets A ‘Lift’

While the eight Grammy Award nominations John Legend received for his debut album “Get Lifted” have certainly raised his status, the profile of some of his colleagues has risen as well. Songwriter/producer Dave Tozer, who worked on eight tracks on “Get Lifted,” has inked a production deal with Sony Music Label Group that will see him producing and writing for acts across the record group.

Concurrently, he has renewed his worldwide co-publishing agreement with Famous Music Publishing. His TozerTunes Publishing was originally affiliated with Famous Music in March 2005.

Tozer’s Sony Music pact is nonexclusive and covers all the Sony labels, including Sony Urban, Columbia and Epic. His most recent credits include songs for R&B singer Heather Headley, pop artist Natasha Bedingfield and British rapper/singer Estelle. Tozer is also working with another British newcomer on Sony, R&B singer/producer, William. Williams and Epic’s Bedingfield are the first Sony artists that Tozer is working with under his new production agreement.

“Dave’s strength is in his writing and producing for a wide variety of artists,” Famous Music president/COO Irving Jaffe says. “The fact that he’s doing well in the urban arena and can work with an artist like Natasha bodes very well for him.”

Sony Urban Music president Lisa Ellis calls Tozer an “exceptional musician and songwriter who has broken through with new and fresh music in a tough environment.”

Tozer is also preparing to return to the studio in late February/early March to start recording Legend’s sophomore set. Among the “Get Lifted” tracks Tozer contributed to are “I Can Change” featuring Snoop Dogg, the Kanye West-produced “Let’s Get Lifted” and “Solid.” With You,” which received a Grammy nomination for best traditional R&B performance. That song was also heard last year on two TV shows, UPN’s “Kevin Hill” and NBC’s “ER.”

Tozer says he and Legend have a few songs from their “Get Lifted” collaborations that may be considered for Legend’s new album. Beyond that, nothing definite has been decided regarding the album’s musical direction.

Tozer notes, however, that the pair approaches the creative process in an organic way. He’s more of a keyboardist; I’m a guitarist. But we’re both songwriters. At the core, it has to be a moving song. Plus we like changes and moods in our music. We don’t want to get bogged down in one bag.”

Legend and Tozer have been writing together since they first met in 1998. South Jersey native Tozer was a studio musician in Philadelphia (where he remains based), and Legend was a student at the University of Pennsylvania. After meeting through a mutual friend, the pair began collaborating on demos. Tozer later became the guitarist/music director of Legend’s band before the latter signed with West’s Columbia/Sony Music imprint G.O.O.D. (Getting Out Our Dreams).

As a musician, Tozer appeared on West’s “Diamonds From Sierra Leone,” which is up for a Grammy for best rap song. Tozer was also a producer on another album that earned several Grammy nominations: the Luther Vandross tribute “So Amazing: An All-Star Tribute.”

He produced Legend’s cover of “Love Won’t Let Me Wait.”

Tozer is managed by David Sonenberg of DAS Communications, whose clients include Legend and the Black Eyed Peas.

Legend says that he and Sony began talking about a possible production association last March. “Working with John helped me put me on their radar,” he adds. “This is a very appealing opportunity at this stage in my career, giving me the chance to branch out and utilize my diversity.”

Other recent Famous Music signings include singer/songwriter P.J. Morton, production team the Co-Stars and SPK & Kyze, who wrote the reggaeton hit “Oye Mi Canto.” Additional members of the company’s urban division are Ivy Gotti, Fred Jerkins, Busta Rhymes and Akon.

Highway To A Grammy

5-Year-Old Boutique Lost Highway Notches Its 44th Nomination

As Lost Highway Records marks its fifth anniversary this year, it is also celebrating a remarkable Grammy achievements. Since its inception, the label has released 50 albums, and netted an astonishing 44 nominations. It has also scored 11 Grammy wins, including album of the year for 2001 for the “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” soundtrack.

The label’s diversity is reflected in its Grammy victories. It has seen winners in categories ranging from best male country vocal performance (Ralph Stanley) and best female rock vocal performance (Lucinda Williams) to best traditional folk album (“Down From the Mountain”) and best historical album (“Night Train to Nashville: Music City Rhythm & Blues, 1945-1970”).

“Lil’ John Lewis, co-founder of Universal Music Group Nashville and president of Lost Highway, says the label is still endeavoring to “shatter that alt-country image that we started with.” He has even considered signing some hip-hop artists that company execs consider “genius songwriters.”

This year, the label goes into the Grammys with a nomination in the best country collaboration with vocals category for “Dreams Come True,” by Willie Nelson featuring Norah Jones.

Lewis thinks Lost Highway’s Grammy track record is due to its roster. “We’ve just been blessed with these amazing artists,” he says. “They all have a body of work that’s been recognized by peers.”

Lost Highway is the current label home to Elvis Costello, Van Morrison, Nelson and Lyle Lovett (the last of whom in partnership with Curb Records) and the catalog of Hank Williams. There are also three artists who have been with the label from the beginning: Williams, Ryan Adams and Tift Merritt. More recent signings include Mary Gauthier, Golden Smog, Tim O’Reagan of the Jayhawks and Donavon Frankenreiter.


Given its relatively small size, Lewis is surprised Lost Highway has kept up a pace of about 10 releases per year, although he notes with a laugh that the release schedule has been bolstered by the prolific Adams, who has been known to release three albums a year, and the almost equally prolific Nelson.

Lost Highway has been able to build its Grammy quest by critical acclaim and hard touring on the part of its artists, many of whom Lewis describes as “iconic.”

“Dealing with these kinds of artists makes you take your game to another level,” he says. “All of us that work at the label have that feeling, and it has a way of creating a bit of a culture inside the label.”

Lewis says Lost Highway has enjoyed the best of both worlds—the boutique feel that can attract an artist like Morrison—and the “muscle and money” that comes from being associated with a major.

Lost Highway has had the support of its Universal parent company since the beginning. “Thankfully, we’ve never lost any money,” Lewis says. “When people say, ‘How do you function in that huge environment?’ I say, ‘It’s not that tough if you don’t lose money. And if you make some, everybody’s happy and leaves you alone.’”

That is not to say it has not been challenging. Running Lost Highway, he says, sometimes feels like “breaking every rule in the music business.”

His dream is to one day end his run having released at least one “classic” album from each of the artists. “Someday I’m going to be in a rocking chair—maybe sooner than later,” Lewis says. “And I’ll be able to say I got to work with Lyle Lovett and Willie Nelson and Lucinda Williams. I feel like the luckiest guy in the world.”
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Who’s Gonna Win?

Picking Favorites For The 48th Annual Grammy Awards

It is that time of year again: the countdown to the Grammy Awards. As always, handicapping fever is in full bloom as industry pundits crowd TV screens, online sites and print publications with their predictions on this year’s crop of likely winners. And, as always, there are still some musings as to who was not nominated and why. Among the R&B/hip-hop talents name-checked most frequently in that area are Scott Storch and Jermaine Dupri for producer of the year and Mariah Carey, the third eight-time nominee.

In years past, I have steered clear of sharing my predictions. However, on this 48th Grammy go-round, I thought I would break that precedent.

But before I share my humble opinion, I would like to reveal the outcome of a straw poll I recently conducted. This totally unscientific but revealing survey of my kids, their schoolmates and other relatives—about 20 people—represented a snapshot of the consumer demos coveted by the music industry: preteens to young adults (12-25).

It probably came as no real surprise that if this group were handing out Grammys, most of the statuettes would be bestowed on Kanye West, who is nominated for eight Grammys.

In the marquee categories (record and album of the year) and two of the rap categories (best rap solo performance, best rap album), West emerges hands down as the winner via his No. 1 single “Gold Digger” and sophomore album “Late Registration.” West’s “Diamonds From Sierra Leone” lost out to Missy Elliott’s “Lose Control” in the best rap song category. While her collaboration with Common and John Legend (“They Say”) under best rap/sung collaboration was trumped by Gwen Stefani’s “Rich Girl” featuring Eve.

Fellow eight-time nominee and comeback diva Mariah Carey was shut out of the key categories in which she is nominated: record, album and song of the year. The straw poll recognized her in the best female R&B vocal performance category and best R&B song (both for “We Belong Together”) as well as best contemporary R&B album (“The Emancipation of Mimi”). The Grammys’ third eight-time nominee and West protege Legend is another favorite among this group. He picked up nods for song of the year (“Ordinary People”), best new artist and best male R&B vocal performance (“Ordinary People”). Alicia Keys’ “Unplugged” earned her the singer/songwriter props for best traditional R&B vocal performance (“If I Was Your Woman”) and best R&B album.

Destiny’s Child weighed in with best R&B performance by a duo or group with vocals (“Cater 2 U”), while Damien Marley (“Welcome to Jamrock”) is the hands-down winner in the best urban/alternative performance category. The Black Eyed Peas walk away with best rap performance by a duo or group (“Don’t Phunk With My Heart”).

Here are my own predictions for the marquee and R&B/rap categories:

Carey (record of the year, song of the year, best female R&B vocal, best contemporary R&B album), Legend (best new artist, best male R&B vocal, best R&B song, best R&B album), Destiny’s Child (best R&B performance by a duo or group), Keys (best traditional R&B vocal), Marley (best urban/alternative performance), West (best rap solo, best rap album), Elliott (best rap song, best rap/sung collaboration with Ciara on “1, 2 Step”) and the Game featuring 50 Cent (best rap performance by duo or group for “Hate It or Love It”).

And because I believe that West and Carey will split votes on album of the year, U2’s “How to Disarm an Atomic Bomb” will rise to the top. We will see come Feb. 8.

Harmer Shows Her Range

Benefit Concerts Lead To A New Album For Singer/Songwriter

TORONTO—When Canadian singer/songwriter Sarah Harmer went into Reaction Studio in July 2005 to record “I’m a Mountain,” her first album in two years, she knew exactly what she wanted.

The project was recorded, mixed and mastered within a week. The brevity was in part due to the fact that Harmer and her band were coming off a tour where they had already worked up much of the material.

“There’s nothing like confidence when you are (in the studio),” Harmer says. “We were feeling really good.”

That confidence clearly shows. The album is garnering Harmer some of the best reviews of her career in the United States in such publications as Time and The New York Times. “Rounder is hoping that advance word on the album, which comes out Feb. 7 in the United States, will translate to sales for the artist, who has been a critical darling in Canada for years,” Rounder GM Paul Foley is pleased “with the exceptional early media we’ve had.” He adds, “We expect a very strong first week. We’ve also had a tremendous response from Borders, Barnes & Noble and all of the independents.”

Foley cautions, however, that “there’s not a radio single here.” He says, “We have shipped the full-length album to radio. We think it will get a great response at Americana formats. We will let non-commercial stations gravitate to a track. We will also ship to folk and bluegrass formats.”

The genesis of the album took shape last summer when the 35-year-old artist hiked and performed in southern Ontario with concert proceeds benefiting an advocacy group trying to preserve the Niagara Escarpment that winds through the region.

“She had the confidence to put the songs onto the CD without much production,” BBR2 announcer Bob Harris says. “The natural setting highlights the strength of the songs, and her great voice. She sounds as if she really has her heart in this album.”

Harmer’s manager, Patrick Sanford of Eggplant Entertainment in Toronto, adds, “The album didn’t come from a commercial place. It came from touring and getting great players together.”

“I’m a Mountain” is the follow-up to Harmer’s 2004 album, “All of Our Names.” In Canada, the new album was issued Nov. 8. On Harmer’s own Gold Snap Records, which is distributed by Universal Music Canada. As of Jan. 22, it has sold 25,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The album comes out on Rounder March 6 in Europe.

“This with album, we expect to establish Sarah in the roots scene here,” says Bert Pipper, managing director of Rounder Europe.

Harmer’s 2002 debut, “You Were Here,” was first issued in Canada by Gold Snap, and was initially only available via mail order or at Harmer’s shows. She financed the album herself without seeking major-label backing. Rounder and Universal Music Canada separately licensed her to their respective territories in 2000.

“You Were Here” has sold 115,000 units in Canada and 74,000 units in the United States, making it her top-selling effort.

“I’m a Mountain” is centered on Harmer’s observations on nature, relationships and human...

Latin Notas

Leila Cobo lcobo@billboard.com

GRAMMYS’ LATIN GAP

These are the facts: Latinos are now the largest minority in the United States.

Last year, music sales overall were down, but sales of Latin music were up from the previous year by 12.6%. Most major labels have Latin artists—from Frankie J to Shakira and Daddy Yankee—signed to their rosters, and reggaeton may have been the single most-talked-about musical trend of the year. So big was Latin music that, even the MTV Video Music Awards acknowledged its popularity, booking not one, but two Spanish-language performances for its 2005 awards show.

And yet, as of press time, not a single Latin artist is booked to perform at the upcoming Grammy Awards! (Christina Aguilera does not count.)

Perhaps I am missing something, but it seems to me that it takes phenomenal effort to ignore such a humongous elephant in the living room. Yes, we know Latin artists and Latin categories are not a priority for the Grammy ceremony. Save for occasional appearances—including Ricky Martin’s now-fabled performance of “The Cup of Life” in 1999—Latinos have been largely out of the picture, limited to—in a good year—a single slot.

While that may have been acceptable 10 years ago, today it is anachronistic. And while certainly the Recording Academy needs to wake up and smell the proverbial coffee (most of it comes from Latin America, we should note), Latinos are also partly to blame.

Academy members, myself included, were flummoxed when we received a list of entries where many recordings were glaringly absent. In the tropical categories, in particular, it seemed like half the stars were AWOL. Entire catalogs, including that of Miami Records, which releases much of Colombia’s fine salsa product, were not entered.

Then, there is the supremely annoying best Latin rock/alternative album category, which houses everything under the sun, from rock to alternative to rap to reggaeton. As a result, in a year that has seen urban Latin music flourish, the genre has
The Indies Have It

DIY Efforts Share The Spotlight For Grammys’ Jazz Noms

Micro-indie and artist-run labels once again show their mettle in the Grammy Awards competition, in light of 2005’s win by Maria Schneider. Her CD “Concert in the Garden” snared the statuette for best large jazz ensemble, making it the first Grammy-winning album that was not available on retail shelves. She sold it exclusively on her ArtistShare-powered Web site.

This year trumpeter Dave Douglas, who started his own Greenleaf Music label, is a best contemporary jazz album contender for his funky, electrified “Keystone.” His stiffest competition comes from two Nonesuch recordings: “The Way Up” by the Pat Metheny Group and “Momentum” by Joshua Redman’s Elastic Band. Expect Metheny to get the nod, even though Douglas’ hip, imaginative music to accompany legendary actor Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle’s silent films merits the trophy.

Bassist Dave Holland likewise ditched long-time label ECM in favor of his own Dare2 imprint, on which he recorded his buoyant big-band album, “Overtone,” distributed by indie Sunnyside Records. He deserves the Grammy for best large jazz ensemble album, even though his strong Sunnyside project—the Mingus Big Band, Orchestra & Dynasty’s “I Am Three,” released by the DIY Sue Mingus Music imprint—is up for the same award.

Sunnyside also boasts Luciana Souza’s “Duos III” for best jazz vocal album, though the favorite is Dianne Reeves’ “Good Night, and Good Luck” (Concord Jazz) from the George Clooney film of the same name. My vote goes to Dee Dee Bridgewater’s French album “Jal Deux Amours,” recorded for boutique indie Sovereign Artists.

While Wynton Marsalis’ “Live at the House of Tribes” (Blue Note) was particularly strong and will probably win, the Wayne Shorter Quartet’s intense live outing “Beyond the Sound Barrier” (Verve) is most worthy of best jazz instrumental album. And yet another live outing (is there a trend here?), Sonny Rollins’ “Without a Song—The 9/11 Concert” (Milestone/Concord), features a best jazz instrumental solo nomination. The saxophonist’s exhilarating improvisation on the song “Why Was I Born?” will score the Grammy.

JAZZ MASTER: Nominated in the best Latin jazz album category for his “Time Was—Time Is” (O-Plus Music), conguero Ray Barretto shrugs at what he figures is his 11th or 12th Grammy Award nod.

“It’s a momentary little joke you get when somebody takes notice,” he says, noting that he figures he’s once won half a Grammy for a Latin jazz album he recorded with vocalist Celia Cruz.

Barretto feels truly honored in talking about another recognition: being named a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master at this year’s International Assn. for Jazz Educators conference Jan. 13 in New York.

“I never expected it, because some people don’t consider me a jazz artist,” he says. “But I’ve always thought of myself that way, so this indicates the NEA sees my involvement in jazz seriously. To me jazz is the last bastion of honest music.”

Barretto deems the Jazz Master accolade a once-in-a-lifetime triumph. “I might get nominated for another Grammy next year,” he says, “but I’ll never get nominated for a Jazz Master again.”

Other 2006 Jazz Masters honored at IAJE included singer Tony Bennett, arranger/composer Bob Brookmeyer, keyboardist Chick Corea, clarinetist Buddy DeFranco, trumpeter Freddie Hubbard and artist manager John Levy. NEA chairman Dana Gioia presented the awards.
Nothing highlights the divisions within the dance music community more thoroughly than the annual announcement of the Grammy Award nominees. And no group has been quite so divided as the class of 2005.

In one corner, we have the purists: the chart-fountaining, music-first, dance/electronic music-lovers, for whom pop crossover success is neither a requirement nor a goal.

Grammy has not been historically kind to this crew. In 2000, for example, poster boy Moby shared the best dance recording category with bubble-pop outfits like Eiffel 65, Jennifer Lopez and Enrique Iglesias. All lost to Baha Men’s “Who Let the Dogs Out.”

On the far side of the ring are the pragmatists: the hit-hungry, radio-loving business people who see dance as stunted by its unwillingness to embrace pop. But it does not do them any good to have pop stars like Cher, Britney Spears and Janet Jackson claim best dance recording prizes either, eclipsing artists groomed for dance-specific success: it seems a bit like letting pro athletes compete in the Olympics.

The twain shall never meet for these two groups, and last year, it did not have to. The best electronic/dance album category debuted, after years of lobbying by electro-stars like BT and the Crystal Method’s Ken Jordan. Basement Jaxx won for the noisy, unapologetic “Kish Kosh,” and the purists seemed content, finally gaining a Grammy foothold.

Meanwhile, the By-year-old best remixed recording, non-classical category chugged along as scheduled. It added soon-to-be Madonna producer Jacques Lu Cont to the pantheon of honored remixers, for No Doubt’s “It’s My Life.” He joined Frankie Knuckles, David Morales, Club 69 (Peter Rauhofer), Hex Hector, Deep Dish, Roger Sanchez and Maurice Joshua, all of whom snagged golden gramophones for their work on major pop hits, pleasing the chart-watchers.

But this year, things are askew. It is flat-out impossible for a pop artist to win best dance recording. In fact, odds are that a regular dance hero could pull it off. Old-guard members the Chemical Brothers, Fatboy Slim and Deep Dish; new pionnier LCD Soundsystem; and classic band New Order are all nominated. Yes, Kylie Minogue snuck in there too . . . but for a Scissor Sisters-produced track. Advantage: the electron-ists.

For best remixed recording, times have suddenly become tough for the pop apologists. Lu Cont is nominated again, this time for the Killers’ “Mr. Brightside,” but his fellow nominees are head-scratchers: practically unknown “nu skool” breaks pioneer Adam Freeland, for a quirky Sarah Vaughan remix; Guetta & Gau-raud, for their underplayed rerub of Deep Dish’s “Flashdance”; the overdue Louie Vega, for a compilation-only release (Curts Mayfield’s “Superfly”); and industrial mainstays Meat Beat Manifesto, for a Tower of Power remix, of all things. Advantage: Nobody.

And that really is unfortunate, all metaphorical bouts aside. It is great that best dance recording is finally honoring dance artists, not vacationing pop stars. And the new album category is long overdue and on the right track.

But the remix category was always where we could honor the producers who translated mainstream music into the utilitarian language of the dancefloor; studio wizards who used bombast and beats to illicit emotion rather than thought, which might be the essence of dance music.

It was also no where we quietly paid tribute to overlooked heroes. Did Joshua win in 2003 for his classy Beyoncé remix alone, or also for 1988 underground classic “This Is Acid”? If Ralph Rosario was nominated this year, as he should have been, would it have been only for his delightfully catty Pussycat Dolls remix, or for the 1987 super-classic “You Used to Hold Me”?

By changing the nature of the category, the Recording Academy is eliminating dance’s ability to honor its own and de-valuing the power and complexity (or blissful, elusive simplicity) of a successful pop remix. Let’s hope the stakes will return to normal with next year’s nominees.

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**Global Pulse**

**EDITED BY TOM FERGUSON**

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**Rammstein’s Grammy Nom Fires Up Universal**

**Company’s German Subsidiary Stoked By Recognition For Incendiary Industrial/Metal Group**

Rammstein’s status as Germany’s leading rock export of recent years is underscored by its Grammy Award nomination for best metal performance with “Mein Herz.”

Since forming in 1994, the Universal Music Germany industrial/metal act has built an international cult following thanks largely to its—literally—incendiary live shows featuring flame throwers and exploding stage gear.

“Mein Teil” is taken from the Berlin 5th's 2006 album, “Reise, Reise,” released in the United States on Universal/Republic. According to Universal Music Germany, the album has shipped 1.5 million copies globally.

Universal Music Germany president/CEO Frank Briegmann says the label is “very proud” of the band’s Grammy nomination. Through the years, he adds, Rammstein “has been wowing fans around the globe by always setting new standards with their musical creativity.”

Rammstein’s new album, “Rosenrot,” was released across Europe in October, and Universal reports total shipments in excess of 1 million. A U.S. release will follow in first-quarter 2006. Rammstein is signed to BMG Music Publishing in Berlin.

—WOLFGANG SPAHR

**BOLLYWOOD HEIGHTS**

Indian singer Asha Bhosle and U.S.-based Kronos Quartet will present their Grammy Award-nominated Nonesuch set, “You’ve Stolen My Heart: Songs From R.D. Burman’s Bollywood,” at U.S. concert halls in the East Coast this spring. The record is up for best contemporary world music album.

Following shows last September in Los Angeles and San Francisco, veteran Bollywood film singer Bhosle is reuniting the foursome April 8 at Carnegie Hall in New York and April 9 at Berklee Performance Center in Boston. The dates were booked through Kronos Quartet’s San Francisco offices.

“During Kronos’ long association with us, we’ve been nominated for Grammys in a variety of categories, but never world music, so we’re especially happy for them to receive this recognition,” Nonesuch senior VP David Bither says. “It’s a record of great wit and invention [and] also features one of the world’s great voices.”

The tribute to the music of Bhosle’s late husband, R.D. Burman, was released globally in August 2005 and spent the last 20 weeks on Billboard’s Classical Crossover chart.

—NIGEL WILLIAMSON

**NEW BOUNDARIES**

Another cross-cultural collaboration besides the Kronos Quartet/Asha Bhosle set is vying for the Grammy Award for best contemporary world music album.

South Africa’s Ladysmith Black Mambazo won the best traditional folk album Grammy in 1987 with “Shaka Zulu” (Warner Bros.) and took the traditional world music album prize in 2004 with “Raise Your Spirit Higher” (Heads UP). This year the group is nominated with the Strings of the English Chamber Orchestra for “No Boundaries” (Gallo Record Company/Heads UP).

The project is the brainchild of Robert Brook, founder and director of South Africa’s annual Music Is a Great Investment Festival. This year brings together classical, indigenous and jazz artists from home and abroad. In 2001 and 2002 Ladysmith performed with the orchestra at the festival’s shows in the South African capital of Pretoria. “The [idea of] the recording came directly out of those performances,” Brook says.

“‘No Boundaries’ features hand leader Joseph Shabalala’s songs (published by Gallo Music Publishing) alongside compositions by Bach, Schubert and Mozart. Ladysmith is touring America through April, followed by U.K. shows in May and June. All dates are booked through International Music Network.

Gallo released the act’s new album, “Long Walk to Freedom,” Jan. 23 in South Africa; Heads UP is handling the set internationally. It features new recordings of Ladysmith songs with such guest vocalists as Melissa Etheridge, Emmylou Harris, Taj Mahal, Sarah McLachlan and Hugh Masekela.

—DIANE COETZER

**FOR THE RECORD:**

Corinne Bailey Rae (Global Pulse, Feb. 4) is signed as a songwriter to Global Talent Publishing U.K.
**ALBUMS**

**BETH ORTON**
*Comfort of Strangers*
Producer: Jim O’Rourke
Astralwerks
Release Date: Feb. 7

With “Comfort of Strangers,” her first record in nearly four years, Beth Orton finally puts any shades of a dust from her early collaborations with William Orbit and the Chemical Brothers. The U.K. singer/songwriter instead inhabits eclectic indie icon Jim O’Rourke’s psyche and the result is a lovely set of pop-flavored neo-folk. Even at its most languid, Orton’s voice has always suggested hidden reserves of strength, and the new songs’ more traditional structures showcase that backbone. So do her lyrics: “I think I’m gonna cry/But I’m gonna laugh about it all in time,” she sings in the one of those days lament “Shopping Trolley.” As Orton wrestles with uncertainty, hypocrisy and heartbreak, the mood ranges from wistful (“Absinthe: “A Place Aside”) to anemic (“Heart of Soul”). But in the end, you know she is going to be OK.—JM

**BELLE & SEBASTIAN**
*The Life Pursuit*
Producer: Tony Hoffer
Matador
Release Date: Feb. 7

Belle & Sebastian received a shot in the arm with 2003’s “Dear Catastrophe Waitress.” Long having revved in a mix of precious moments and slily lyrics, the expectations ensured the album’s cynicism arrived like a sucker-punch. That set also re-established Stuart Murdoch as the voice of the group and added some vigor to the band’s chamber pop. “The Life Pursuit” continues B&S’ growth into more of a timeless pop act, its wry eye toward U.K. life recouped into tighter, swifter arrangements. There is upbeat confidence from the start, as the band explores funnier, slammier material. Opener “Act of the Apostle” is a glistening blend of keyboards and harmonies. Other standout includes the sharp “White Collar Boy” and swinging “Dress Up in You.”—TM

**MYLO**
*Destroy Rock & Roll*
Producers: various
Brestaf recording/RCABest
Release Date: Feb. 7

Whether or not Mylo destroys rock’n’roll is beside the point. With his debut album, originally released in the United Kingdom on his own label in 2004, Scottish DJ/producer Myles MacInnes has re-energized dance/electronic music. Though far from groundbreaking, “Destroy Rock & Roll” spotlights an artist who has a knack for cleverly referencing music that has come before, from Jim Carnes and Prince to Daft Punk and Yoko & Karl. Mylo’s world, orchestral movements cavort with electro hijinks. Melodic opener “Valley of the Dolls” could very well be the soundtrack to the sun rising, while “Muscle Cars” recalls 80s Italo-disco. The cream of this ass-kicking collection is “In My Arms,” a melancholic slab of synth swirls, warm beats and “Bette Davis Eyes.” Also included is British hit “Doctor Pressure,” which effortlessly meshed up Miami Sound Machine’s “Dr. Beat” and Mylo’s own “Drop the Pressure.”—MP

**RIHANNA SOS (4:01)**
Producer: Jonathan Rotem
Writers: J. Rotem, E. Bogart, E. Cobb
Publisher: not listed
Def Jam (CD promo)

Rihanna’s new spokesmodel Rihanna needs little “SOS” to get her name back atop the charts. This song is featured in her ad campaign, and it is so immediately adhesive and beguiling for party-time play that that rare can’t-miss quality abounds. It does not hurt that “SOS” cleverly samples Soft Cell’s 1982 classic “Tainted Love” (how did it take more than 20 years for that to happen?), adding a throwback urgency and a fun, throbbing beat that works beautifully with Rihanna’s quick turns of phrase. Previous single “If It’s Lovin’ That You Want” failed to garner the heat of last year’s Caribbean-flavored debut, “Pon De Replay,” which practically made the 17-year-old from Barbados a revolution. “SOS” weaves its spell without the reggae, displaying the young singer’s versatility. A major talent is brewing.—CT

**WEN STEFANI**
*Crash (4:06)*
Producer: Tony Kanal
Writers: G. Stefani, T. Kanal
Publishers: Harajuku Lover/Pirate Ship (ASCAP)

Interscope/CD transept

The record-setting sixth single from Gwen Stefani’s triple-platinum “Love. Angel. Music. Baby.” returns the pop princess to her sing-song nursery school days. After a couple of truly musical moments with “Cool” and “Luxurious.” But as juvenile as “Crash” is, it is also clever and catchy enough to become an instant anthem for top 40 disciples. For those looking beneath the surface. Stefani offers a shrewd shout- out here to everything from Midnight Star’s “Operator” to 2 Live Crew’s “Me So Horny,” along with other cunning ’80s references. Warning: impossible to dislodge from the brain once inserted.—CT

**KT TUNSTALL**
*Eye to the Telescope*
Producer: Steve Osborne
Relentless/Virgin
Release Date: Feb. 7

Though her single “Black Horse & the Cherry Tree” has stomped its way to No. 1 on Billboard Radio Monitor’s Triple-A chart, U.K. pop sensation KT Tunstall has yet to ride into the mainstream. That should change with the release of her debut full-length, “Eye to the Telescope,” which offers a delicious blend of acoustic guitar, raw grooves and sublime melodies. Tunstall has a stunning, sultry voice full of life and longing. From perfect pop hooks (“Suddenly I See”) to Björkish lullabies (“Silent Sea”), she adds her own earthy edge to the realm of female guitar pop. “Black Horse” cooks a raw blues into a dance groove with a roaring stringing chorus; the layered harmonies on “Heal Over” are riveting. There are also idealful ballads perfectly suited to coffee shops and fettle lovers. America, what are you waiting for?—SP

**THE MINUS 5**
*The Gun Album*
Producers: Scott McCaughey, Kurt Bloch
Yep Roc
Release Date: Feb. 7

The Minus 5’s fifth album belies the modest beginnings of the band, still run in ever-enterprising fashion by Scott McCaughey (the Decemberists) and theDisposable—K.

Whether it is beneficial or not is still up for debate. But on “On Top of Our Game” (co-executive-produced by .remaine Dupri), the Atlanta-bred foursome continues to do what works for them, generating more energetic tracks akin to “White Tee” and “I Think They Like Me,” featuring Dupri, Da Brat and Bow Wow, a former Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs No. 1. Logically, production here favors uptempo whistles and boom-boom claps with not much variation, but Houston rapper Bun B (“My Music”) and crooner Trey Songz (“Freaky As Bow Wow, Wanna Be”) add much-needed diversity. While the songs become monotonous after a while—the band is either “posted on the block” or detracting “haters”—they do get the job done.—CH

**JACK JOHNSON AND FRIENDS**
*Sing-a-Longs and Lullabies for the Film Curious George*
Producers: Robert Carranza, Jack Johnson
Brushfire
Release Date: Feb. 7

At a recent screening of “Curious George,” packed with kids and their parents, the lack of excited laughter and howls was unbelievable. The crowd was not buying the fur-free, curious storyline. But the soundtrack, well, that was another story. Walking out of the theater, it was an endearing to hear some singing—continued on >p84

**ROCK**

**RICHARD THOMPSON**
*RT: The Life and Music of Richard Thompson*
Producers: various
Free Reed
Release Date: Feb. 7

Richard Thompson generally deals in degrees of greatness, so it is easy to take the songwriter for granted. Yet Thompson’s prolificacy makes the five thematically organized CDs here (six, if you include the mail-in bonus disc of other archival recordings) difficult to tackle. Die-hards will wonder where to begin, the disc comprising epic guitar solos? The fan-selected “essential” collection? Or the compilations of sessions, cover, “Eye to the Telescope,” “Black Horse” and the Decemberists’ Colin Meloy, gets the point across: Everything is alright; let’s party. One of the most beautiful rock’n’roll—TC

**IN FLAMES**
*Come Clarity*
Producers: various
Ferret Music
Release Date: Feb. 7

In Swedish godfathers of melodic death metal In Flames deliver a blitzkrieg of guitars on “Come Clarity.” The dual-axe attack of Jesper Strömblad and Björn Gelotte leads cuts like thrashy opener “Take This Life” and shout-out anthem “Scream.” Bassist Peter Iwers and drummer Daniel Svensson hold down the bottom with a coordinated stampede of beats (see “Pacing Death’s Trail”). The galloping charge does halt for the acoustic-driven title track and “Dead End.” Genre boundaries are ignored on the latter, which features Swedish pop singer/Songwriter Lisa Missolovsky. The album closes with the contemplative “Your Bedtime Story Is Scaring Everyone,” on which the static from a TV set chatters against a barely melody.—CLT

**HIP-HOP**

**DEM FRANCHIZE BOYZ**
*On Top of Our Game*
Producers: various
So So Def/Virgin
Release Date: Feb. 7

By focusing less on lyrical content and more on getting bodies on the dancefloor, Dem Franchise Boyz have helped spur the recent rise of club-oriented rap. Whether it is beneficial or not is still up for debate. But on “On Top of Our Game” (co-executive-produced by .remaine Dupri), the Atlanta-bred foursome continues to do what works for them, generating more energetic tracks akin to “White Tee” and “I Think They Like Me,” featuring Dupri, Da Brat and Bow Wow, a former Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs No. 1. Logically, production here favors uptempo whistles and boom-boom claps with not much variation, but Houston rapper Bun B (“My Music”) and crooner Trey Songz (“Freaky As Bow Wow, Wanna Be”) add much-needed diversity. While the songs become monotonous after a while—the band is either “posted on the block” or detracting “haters”—they do get the job done.—CH
LYNN MILES
Love Sweet Love
Producer: Ian LeFeuvre
Red House
Release Date: Feb. 7
Lynn Miles sings lusciously on her fifth country-tinged, folk-pop album. Smart lyrics abound as she exudes love lost and gained, sketched with dark hues and rising tenuously. The haunting loneliness that pervades here finds its expression on two road tunes, “Night Drive” and the upbeat “8 Hour Drive,” supported by producer Ian LeFeuvre’s down-home banjo picking. Other highlights include the guitar-strummed rhythmic opener “Frames of Love,” and the title cut. The first, inspired by soul poetry, posits a deep love of saints, heroes and martyrs who take risks in the flames of desire in the face of cynics and doubters, the second, partially informed by the Sept. 11, 2001, crowd, honed to loved ones from hijacked planes, affirms the pain and pleasure of “sweet love”—DO

PREVIOUS CDS
Love Sweet Love

ELECTRONIC
SUGAR
Electronic The Human Connection
Producer: Scott Herren
Warp
Release Date: Feb. 7
The title of the buoyant track “Uptight Down” over and over again, indeed, “Uptight Down” is one of those one- listen songs, with Jack Johnson offering a relaxed-in-the-sun delivery. On this soundtrack, he is joined by a handful of musician friends, including Ben Harper and G. Love. Highlights include a cover of the White Stripes’ “We’re Going to Be Friends” and “The Three Rs,” which is Johnson’s reworking of the “Schoolhouse Rock” staple “Three Is a Magic Number.” In Johnson’s hands, it becomes a protect-the-environment anthem. Nice job—MP

SARAH HARMER
I’m a Mountain
Producer: Sarah Harmer Cold Snap Records/Zebo/ FVtfs
Release Date: Feb. 7
Somewhere on the way to recording her fourth solo album. Sarah Harmer and husband, Emmylou Harris. The Canadian singer-songwriter’s “I’m a Mountain” is an acoustic home-brew of influences: a handful of family farm roots, a cup of bluegrass inspiration and a few dashes of pop experience. Harmer’s winsome vocals recall Harris at times, recorded with friends and family (including dad Clem) adds homespun authenticity. First single “I Am Aglow,” “Luther’s Got The Blues” and the title track bubble like a fresh mountain spring. “Oleanders,” a song she has been toying with since 2000, is tender and feels right in this spare setting, while a closing cover of Dolly Parton’s “How Deep in the Valley” is cozy and welcome. Harmer’s ongoing personal discovery has been a joy through these past few years, and this latest turn is no different.—BIAJ

TOP PICKS

THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS
FEATURING WILLIAM BEEP (3:49)
Producers: Will.I.am, Ron Fair
Writers: W. Adams, K. DioGuardi, J. Lynne
Publishers: various

The “Beep” in the Pussycat Dolls’ third single refers to the frequency with which the naughtily lyrical bits are censored. How scandalous! Even if we were not such cheap gimpucks to draw attention to the song’s faux naughtiness, “Don’t Cha” and “Stickwitu” were surprise hits because of their instantaneously melodic charms. “Beep” tries to check off every novelty du jour, all in less than three minutes—but it ends up sounding like everything else today clichéd and overworked as production. We had higher hopes.—CT

MORNINGWOOD
Nth Degree
Writer: Peter Yanowitz
Producer: Gil Norton
Publishers: various

The moment is also there in the cumbia-like “Bogurran” and “Cuando Hieres A Una Musa” featuring a singing ivory Queen. The romantic “No Es Lo Mismo” a duet with Tito Nieves, floats thanks to the beautiful harmonies. But the album often drags with romantic tracks sounding like they have been forced to adhere to midtempo salsa beats. Despite its name, this is not all that different from other romantic salsa product.—LC

MCCALLUM'S DIERS BENTLEY
Settle for a Slowdown (3:36)
Producers: Brett Beavers
Writers: B. Beavers, T. McEuen, D. Bentley
Publishers: Sony/ATV Tree

There have been a million songs about a woman leaving her man brokenhearted, but Diers Bentley’s latest serves up that scenario with a creative lyric that finds a fresh way of saying what we have all heard before. Penned by Brett Beavers, Tony Martin and Bentley, this paints a picture of a man standing in the rain, watching as his loved one pulls away. He knows he cannot hold her back, but just hopes he will see brake lights indicating that she at least paused for a moment before leaving him behind. Just knowing she hesitated would be a much-needed comfort, but it is not to be. Bentley turns in a beautifully measured, thoughtful performance by a singer with, by his own admission, with resistant reputation. It is another strong single in a career that is sizzling.—DEP

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DEPECHE SUFFER WOLL (3:49)
Produced: Ben Hiller
Writers: Gahan, Eigner, Philips
Publishers: JJSR/Universal Mute/Reprise (CD track)

The Depeche Mode’s 2005 album “Playing the Angel” is a welcome return to “Violator” glory days with such standout tracks as that David Gahan co-penned “Suffer Well.” The opening “Boys-inspired electro-pop sounds are quickly overruled by dark, brooding guitar—a familiar template that fans love, triggering all the feelings of trauma and despair that were not as present in previous recent albums. Multilayers of synth electronics create a pulsating beat, adding to the fervor and drama and leading to a definitive return to form. Throw in such foreboding lyrics as “An Angel led me when I was blinded and take me back i’ve changed my mind,” and a moody Mode classic is born—KT
We Are Divo-ed; Grammys’ Shift; R&B Panel Bulks Up

We interrupt your winter doldrums to bring you fireworks in the top 10 of The Billboard 200. Not enough bang to keep album sales ahead of the same 2005 week, mind you, but with three acts scoring career-high bows, enough to enliven cocktail party chatter during Grammy Awards week.

The king of this ball is Il Divo, which this week becomes the first act from the Top Classical Crossover list to debut at No. 1 on The Billboard 200. Guess that almost makes it superficial to say that the group also bows atop Top Internet Albums and earns its third No. 1 on Classical Crossover in less than a year, its debut album crowning that list for 29 weeks since it bowed there in the May 7, 2005, issue.

 Combined, Il Divo’s three albums have led that chart for 40 of the last 41 weeks. In earning its first No. 1 on Top Country Albums with 102,000 sold, Josh Turner also enters The Billboard 200 at No. 2 (see Between the Bullets, page 94). His first album peaked at No. 3 on the country list and No. 29 on the big chart in 2004. Second time also becomes the charm for Yellowcard (90,000 copies), entering The Billboard 200 at No. 5 and our fledgling Top Rock Albums chart on billboard.biz at No. 1. The band’s freshman album peaked at No. 23 in 2004.

This marks career-best Nielsen SoundScan weeks for all three. The chart-topper’s 156,500 copies beat the 147,000-unit start when “I Divo” hit the big chart at No. 4. Yet even with five debuts in the top 10, album sales cannot compete with the 2005 week when Kenny Chesney’s “Be As You Are: Songs From an Old Blue Chair” bowed at No. 1 on The Billboard 200 with 311,000 sold.

Things could be worse. Although sales have been down from the comparable week in this three of your year’s first four weeks, album volume is only 0.1% shy from the year-to-date pace of 2005.

MOVING TARGETS: What do Laura Ryn Hill, Diana Krall, Jill Scott, Norah Jones and India? Arie have in common? Like the soundtrack to “O Brother, Where Art Thou?” in 2002, each of those artists rode to higher chart terrain after they garnered attention from nominations in key Grammy Award categories. In 2000, for example, the first Macy Gray album began a steady climb after nods were announced that led her from No. 135 in early January to No. 6 between the Grammy telecast. That same year, Krall ended a four-month absence from The Billboard 200, starting a run to her then-best peak of No. 56 when jazz set “When I Look in Your Eyes” got nominated for album of the year. Similarly quick trajectories pursued Scott’s first album from No. 102 to No. 18 in 2001 and Jones’ debut set from outside the top 10 to No. 1 in 2003.

Developing artists have not garnered as much chart visibility from Grammy nominations in the last few years. Blame it on the Oscars. When the film awards moved from March to late February in 2004, the Grammys shifted to an earlier airdate. That means the Grammy nominations are announced in December, the busiest shopping month in the year. When the Grammys aired in late February, contenders were revealed in January, when soft sales weeks made it easier for newer names to realize chart advances.

The payoff for the earlier telecast is that the Grammys air before Valentine’s Day, which amps up an already potent sales frame. With this year’s awards running on Feb. 8, five days before Valentine’s Day, the Grammys can wield more influence than last year, when it ran just one day ahead of the gift-giving occasion.

MORE STORES: With this issue, Nielsen SoundScan and Billboard complete an update of the core stores panel that governs the magazine’s R&B/hip-hop sales charts.

Stores on the panel carry a broader-than-average inventory of titles from those genres and are located in markets that include at least one current-based station from relevant radio formats.

Revised by Raphael George, Billboard chart manager, and Chris Muratore, director of retail relations and research services for Nielsen Entertainment, the panel grows to 1,263 independent, chain and mass merchant stores from 966 in the re-amp of November 2004.

A Weekly National Music Sales Report

YEAR-TO-DATE 2003 2004 CHANGE

OVERALL UNIT SALES
Albums 40,265,000 40,240,000 -0.1%
Digital Tracks 20,641,000 46,143,000 123.6%
Store Singles 315,000 252,000 -20.0%
Total 61,221,000 86,535,000 41.5%

Albums w/TEA* 42,329,100 44,854,300 6.0%

*Includes track equivalent album sales (TEA) with 10 track downloads equivalent to one album sale.

 Il Divo

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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Week 100</th>
<th>Artist/Song</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Week 50</th>
<th>Artist/Song</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Week 30</th>
<th>Artist/Song</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check On It</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>OD SB</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O D S M</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Od S M</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Me Go</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm Gonna Be A Star</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>A Star</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Don't Want To Be A Star</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>A Star</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Time Is Now</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Now</td>
<td>Jive</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Ebony</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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<td>Ebony</td>
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### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breaking Freeway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock On It</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lights And Sounds</td>
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### ADULT TOP 40

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Label</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because Of You</td>
<td>You</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Are Beautiful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better Days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wake Me Up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>She Says</td>
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### ADULT CONTEMPORARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>You And Me</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>One More Thing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Think It, I Know It</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remember You</td>
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### MODERN ROCK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist/Song</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect Situation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasteland</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypnotize</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>System Of A Down</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roller Coaster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Day Is Exactly The Same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad Country</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Save Me</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>King Without A Crown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Twisted Transistor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lights And Sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Data for week of February 11, 2006. For chart reprints call 646-654-4633. Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data.
### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td><em>Unpredictable</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>Lil Wayne</td>
<td><em>Tha Carter III</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tyrese</td>
<td><em>Maxwell</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td><em>In My区</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Keyshia Cole</td>
<td><em>Peaceful</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Lil Wayne</td>
<td><em>Tha Carter II</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Eminem</td>
<td><em>The Eminem Show</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Anthony Hamilton</td>
<td><em>Keep on Moving</em></td>
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</table>

### Top Blues Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong></td>
<td>George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</td>
<td><em>All Hands on Deck</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong></td>
<td>Susan Tedeschi</td>
<td><em>Hope &amp; Desire</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Etta James</td>
<td><em>The Definitive Collection</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Buddy Guy</td>
<td><em>Last Train</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Delbert McClinton</td>
<td><em>Cost of Living</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.</strong></td>
<td>Dion</td>
<td><em>Old Soldiers Never Die</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Betty LaVette</td>
<td><em>I Got My Own Hell to Raise</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Aerosmith</td>
<td><em>Blues</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</td>
<td><em>The Best Of George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>12.</strong></td>
<td>Various Artists</td>
<td><em>Various Artists</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Between the Bullets**

Fresh off his high-profile TV week, Jamie Foxx takes his grip on No. 1 with *Greatest Gainer: Unpredictable*,news of the day and visits to "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" and "The Ellen DeGeneres Show". As well, artists continue to show their love to fans on the Soulful side of the hip-hop spectrum. This week's feature focuses on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums.

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_data for week of FEBRUARY 11, 2006 | for chart reprints call 646.654.4633_
### Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Not My Hair&quot;</td>
<td>Keyshia Cole</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Shake That&quot;</td>
<td>Missy Elliott</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;When Love Takes Over&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Like Me&quot;</td>
<td>Alicia Keys</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Run It!&quot;</td>
<td>Kanye West</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We Go&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It Go!&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Want It&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;RUN IT! (THE WHISTLE SONG)&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;D.O.A. (Dirty Outlawz Assassins)&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Finger Lickin' Good&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Oh (Keyshia Cole &amp; T-Pain)&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Knockout&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Don't Stop&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Knockout&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx ft. T-Pain</td>
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### R&B Singles Sales

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Not My Hair&quot;</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;It Go!&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Sick Like Me&quot;</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>&quot;Knockout&quot;</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
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<td>11/06</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I'm Gonna Miss You Tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>11/06</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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<td>&quot;Get Ready&quot;</td>
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### Chart Data

- **Artist/Title**: Lists the artists and titles of the songs.
- **Chart Rank**: Indicates the ranking of the songs.
- **Data** provided by Billboard.
- **Year**: Indicates the year the chart was compiled.
**COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE**

Don't miss another important

**COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE**

**BILLBOARD COUNTRY SONGS:** 123 country stations are electronically monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Anywhere attended to songs appearing in the top 20 on both the BDS Airplay and Audience charts are electronically monitored and cross-referenced with Research and Audience charts. © 2006 Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems, Inc. All rights reserved.

**ALL SHIFTS:** See Chart Legend for rules and explanations.

**Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 95**

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**BILLBOARD COUNTRY SONGS**

**S/T**/

**COUNTRY:**

1. **TODD GLASS**
   - *What A Man Gotta Do* (W.KIRBY, W.ROBINSON)

2. **JASON ALDEAN**
   - *If I Could Turn Back Clock* (B.HILL, M.DEKLE)

3. **JAMIE O'NEAL**
   - *Love Me Like You Used To* (S.BOGARD, J.STOVER)

4. **DANIEL PECK**
   - *Tell Me When To Go* (J.RICH, S.SAX, V.MCGEHE)

**ARTIST/TITLE (STATION):**

**Randy Rogers Band**
- *You Can't Make Me* (59.7)

**ARTIST/TITLE (STATION):**

**Clint Black**
- *Mama's House* (59.7)

**ARTIST/TITLE (STATION):**

**Susan Jamieson**
- *I Ain't Giving Up On You* (59.7)

**ARTIST/TITLE (STATION):**

**JASON ALDEAN**
- *Kiss A Girl* (59.7)

---

**8**

**7**

**6**

**5**

**4**

**3**

**2**

**1**

**BEST OF THE REST**

**BILLBOARD COUNTRY SONGS**

**S/T**/

**COUNTRY:**

1. **JASON ALDEAN**
   - *If I Could Turn Back Clock* (B.HILL, M.DEKLE)

2. **DANIEL PECK**
   - *Tell Me When To Go* (J.RICH, S.SAX, V.MCGEHE)

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   - *Tell Me When To Go* (J.RICH, S.SAX, V.MCGEHE)

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   - *Kiss A Girl* (59.7)

6. **Clint Black**
   - *Mama's House* (59.7)

7. **Susan Jamieson**
   - *I Ain't Giving Up On You* (59.7)

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11. **JASON ALDEAN**
    - *Kiss A Girl* (59.7)

12. **Clint Black**
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    - *Kiss A Girl* (59.7)

12. **Clint Black**
    - *Mama's House* (59.7)
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**Top Latin Albums**

1. DON OMAR
2. REGGAETON NINOS
3. MI SANGRE
4. MI STUDIO
5. LOS TEMERARIOS
6. GRACIELA BELTRAN
7. WISIN & Yandel
8. DADDY YANKEE
9. VARIOUS ARTISTS
10. CHIQUI CHIWIT
11. MI ABANDONADA
12. MI AMOR
13. RICARDO ARJONA
14. SHAKIRA
15. JOSE ALFREDO JIMENEZ
16. RAY LUNA
17. RAY ALAY
18. VARIOUS ARTISTS
19. AMY & IVY
20. VARIOUS ARTISTS
21. RAY ALAY
22. RAY LUNA
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35. RAY ALAY
36. VARIOUS ARTISTS
37. RAY LUNA
38. VARIOUS ARTISTS
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47. VARIOUS ARTISTS
48. RAY ALAY
49. RAY LUNA
50. VARIOUS ARTISTS
<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Albums</th>
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Data for week of FEBRUARY 11, 2006 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 100

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data

www.americanradiohistory.com
CHARTS

SALES DATA COMPILED BY
NIELSSEN SOUNDSCAN

FEB 11, 2006

ALBUM CHARTS

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/hip-hop chart albums is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national subset of core stores that specialize in those genres.

1. Albums with the greatest sales gains this week.

WHERE INCLUDED: This award indicates the title with the chart’s largest unit increase.

WHERE EXCLUDED: This award indicates the title with the chart’s greatest percentage increase.

INDICATES: Album entered top 100 of The Billboard 200 chart.

INDICATES: Individual disc entered top 50 of Billboard 200 chart.

INDICATES: Album entered top 50 of Billboard 200 chart.

INDICATES: Individual disc entered top 100 of Billboard 200 chart.

PRICE/CONFIGURATION

CD: Cassette prices are suggested list or equivalent prices, which are projected from wholesale prices. ** after price indicates album only available on DVD/DVD.) ** after price indicates CD/DVD combo only available. **/CD combo available. * indicates vinyl LP is available. Pricing and vinyl LP availability are not included on all charts.

SINGLES CHARTS

RADIO AIRPLAY CHARTS

Compiled from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Charts are ranked by number of gross audience impressions, computed by cross-referencing exact times of airing with Arbitron listener data. The exclusions are the Rhythm Top 40, Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are ranked by total detections.

* Songs showing an increase in audience (or detections) over the previous week, regardless of chart movement.

RECURRENT RULES

Songs are curated from the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously, if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart for more than 20 weeks.

SALES CHARTS

The top selling singles compiled from a national sample of retail store, mass merchant, and Internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan. For R&B/Hip-Hop titles, sales is compiled from a national subset panel of core R&B/Hip-Hop stores by Nielsen SoundScan. * Singles with the greatest sales gains.

CONFIGURATIONS


PREDICTOR

** Indicates title entered HIP predictor status in that particular format based on research data provided by Promusicsales. Songs are blindly tested online by Promusicsales using multiple latitude and a national subset sample of carefully profiled music consumers. Songs are rated on a 1-5 scale; final results are based on weighted positives. Songs with a score of 40 or more (75 or more for country) are utilized to have Hit Potential, although the Hit Potential number can fluctuate per format based on the strength of available music. For a complete and updated list of current songs with Hit Potential, commentary, polls, and more, please visit www.hippredictor.com.

DANCE CLUB PLAY

Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

* Titles with the greatest club-play increase over the previous week.

AWARDS/WEEKLY

ALBUM CHARTS

** Recording Industry Asia. Of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold). ** RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million albums (Diamond). Numerical within Platinum or Diamond symbol indicates album’s multi-platinum level. ** For best-sellers, and double albums with a run time of over 100 minutes or more, the RIAA multiples shipments by the number of discs and/or tapes. ** Certification for net shipments of 100,000 units (Platinum). ** Certification of 400,000 units (Multi-Platinum).

SINGLES CHARTS

** RIAA certification for 200,000 paid downloads (Gold). ** RIAA certification for 200,000 paid downloads (Platinum). Numerical within platinum symbol indicates song’s multi-platinum level. ** RIAA certification for net shipment of 500,000 singles (Gold).

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

DVD SALES/VIDEO SALES/RENTALS

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

TOP INDEPENDENT ALBUMS: Independent Albums are current titles that are listed on the Independent Album Chart and are distributed by any of the ten major independent distributors: TOBMASHERS. Top selling albums from a core panel of trend-setting music retailers. The chart is an overall performance for titles and releases from Billboard.biz. A weekly snapshot of all the charts that are included is available on Billboard.biz. @ 2006, W.B. Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved.

TASTEMAKERS

ARTIST

TITLE NUMBER & DISTRIBUTING LABEL

1. CAT POWER / VARIOUS ARTISTS

SONGS

TOP INDEPENDENT CHARTS: Independent Charts are current titles that are included in the National Album Sales Chart and can be purchased at retail outlets via distribution by the distributors that are listed below. The charts are updated weekly and are available on Billboard.biz. A weekly snapshot of all the charts that are included is available on Billboard.biz. © 2006, W.B. Business Media, Inc. and Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved.

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ELEGANT VILLA $5,395,000
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12317 ROCHEDALE LANE $2,349,000
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Carey Garcia 310.481.6286

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OPEN 1-4 02/05/06

OPEN 1-4 02/04-05/06

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3023 JUNO LANE $950,000
Betty & Jack 310.235.5444

6626 CAMUENGA TERRACE $1,650,000
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FABULOUS Westwood. CHIC SOPHISTICATED $780,000

2249 MOUNTAIN OAKS DRIVE $2,999,000
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R&B Duo’s McFadden Dies

Gene McFadden, one-half of legendary R&B duo McFadden & Whitehead, died Jan. 27 at his Philadelphia home. The 56-year-old suffered from liver and lung cancer.

McFadden & Whitehead are best-known for their 1979 No. 1 R&B/No. 13 pop anthem “ Ain’t No Stoppin’ Us Now.” Songwriter/producer partner John Whitehead predeceased McFadden in May 2004 after being fatally shot outside his Philadelphia home. Whitehead’s murder remains unsolved.

McFadden & Whitehead were teens when they first broke into the industry as founding members of soul band the Epsilon. The group toured with Otis Redding, who was also the act’s manager, until his death in 1967.

The pair then joined Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff’s Philadelphia International label, bent on pursuing a recording career. However, McFadden & Whitehead’s songwriting prowess took center stage when they penned “Back Stabbers” for the O’Jays. The R&B chart-topper became a No. 3 pop crossover hit and opened the door to a host of McFadden & Whitehead-written classics, including Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes’ “Wake Up Everybody (Part 1)” and the Intruders’ “I’ll Always Love My Mama.”

“McFadden & Whitehead were instrumental in creating the sound of Philadelphia,” Gamble & Huff said in a statement following McFadden’s death. “Their talent was indispensable, and their music capabilities were uniquely flexible.”

McFadden is survived by his wife, Barbara, two daughters, and two sons.

—Gail Mitchell

BIRTHS

GIRL: Anna Kay to Amy and Jeff DuVall, Dec. 22, 2005, in Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. Mother and father are members of gospel act the Duvall Family on the Cross & Crown label.

BOY: Robert Matthew to Deborah and Andrew Adler, Jan. 4 in Long Island, N.Y. Father is manager of royalty compliance at Wdingerer, Erk & Chaznis.

GIRL: Mia Charley to Sandra and Charlie Benante, Jan. 19 in Chicago. Father is the drummer for Anthrax.

GIRL: Zara Landau to Suzanne and Rob Auritt, Jan. 25 in New York. Father is senior counsel at the Harry Fox Agency.

BOY: Stephen John to Dawn and Stephen Rhodes, Jan. 27 in Staten Island, N.Y. Father is senior director of development at the Harry Fox Agency.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

FEB. 6 MusicCares Person of the Year Tribute honoring James Taylor, Los Angeles. 310-392-3777.


MARCH 1-4 24th annual Canadian Music Week, Fairmont Royal York, Toronto. cmw.net.


MARCH 4 20th annual Soul Train Music Awards, Pasadena (Calif.) Civic Auditorium. 310-858-8232. soultain.com.


APRIL 7 Juno Awards, Halifax (Nova Scotia) Metro Centre. junoawards.ca.


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Chaka Khan recently signed with Sony BMG's new Burgundy Records at Glenwood Place Studios in Burbank, Calif. (Photo by Sony BMG Strategic Marketing Group's Pete Garbarg, Khan's manager Tammy McCarly and Sony BMG Strategic Marketing Group's Matt Steinman.)

Bill Maher, author Stephen King and artist Rob Thomas, during the preview of "Amazon Fishbowl With Bill Maher," Jan. 22 at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Highlights of this Sundance preview show are available on Amazon.com. Shown, from left, are Maher, King and Thomas, discussing King's new book, "Cell." (Photo: Stephen Shugerman)

Enya was presented with plaques for the platinum U.S. sales of her new album "Amantine" and seven-times platinum U.S. sales of "A Day Without Rain." Jan. 28 at New York's Peninsula Hotel after returning from her performance on "Live With Regis and Kelly." Warner Records chairman/CEO Tom Whalley presents Enya with one of her plaques. (Photo: Jinni Celes)

The grand lobby of BMI Nashville was bustling at the seams during a heavy turnout of celebraters for Joe Nichols' No. 1 single "Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off," co-written by BMI writers Gary Hamann and John Wiggins. Pictured, from left, are BMI's Paul Cortis, Nichols, Hamann, BMI's Perry Howard and Wiggins.

Singer-songwriter Geoff Byrd performed at the Motorola Radio booth at MIDEM Jan. 25 in Cannes. Billboard associate editor/associate publisher Tamara Carroll is pictured behind the wheel of the radio vehicle next to Byrd. Multifaceted branding guru Grande Badeaux president Shane Austin (center) with Motorola senior marketing director Dave Ulmer (right). (Photo: JMV Studios)
Live 8 co-founder and MIDEM 2006 personality of the year honoree Bob Geldof, center, is congratulated by Billboard global news editor Lars Brandt, left, and Brisbane, Australia-based ARIA of Independent Record Labels CEO Stuart Watters at the dinner gala.

**MIDEM 2006**

Jan. 22-26
Palais Des Festivals
Cannes

For five days, the 40th edition of MIDEM gathered more than 9,300 music professionals from 92 countries that sought to discover new sounds and services, explore business opportunities, make deals and enjoy the event's numerous live performances and festivities. Adjoined with MIDEM, the MidemNet Forum was held for two days beginning Jan. 21 and discussed means for exploiting various opportunities for the music industry in the digital sector.


BMI Group chairman Eric Nicoll delivered this year's MidemNet keynote speech and discussed the expanding role of digital distribution in the music industry.

**Come hear, Finland.**

Finnish minister of culture Tanja Karpela paid a visit to MIDEM as her country hosted the opening gala. Karpela is pictured with members of two Finnish groups: Apocalyptica’s Eicca Toppinen, left, and 69 Eyes’ Jyrki 69.

Billboard legal/publishing editor Susan Butler enjoyed a sunset view as she chatted with digital music execs at RealNetworks’ midem.net yacht party at the Jan. 23 cocktail party at the ARIA pavilion. From left are RealNetworks Europe’s Piers Heaton-Armstrong; Butler; Michael, Cindy Owens, RealNetworks; Svea Lawless, Gabriel Levy, Neil West and Matt Eccles; and RealNetworks Europe’s Marco Menato.

Reed Midem officials celebrated the 40th anniversary of the MIDEM trade show with a specially designed cake. Cutting a slice from left are Reed MIDEM founder CEO Xavier Ropert, Reed MIDEM chairman/CEO Paul Zilker and MIDEM director Dominique Leguern.

Attendees of the American Assn. of Independent Music membership meeting mingled at the Jan. 21 Capital Rights Agency/ARIA cocktail party at the ARIA pavilion. From left are RealNetworks marketing director Jay Zimmerman, ARIA managing director Tuhin Roy and Lookout Records founder and the Donnas manager Holly Neuman. (Photo: Lip Reiners)

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**FEBRUARY 11, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 109**
JUST CAN’T GET ENOUGH
Depeche Mode looks like this year’s biggest live attraction in Europe. The British band is completing a 52-date winter tour in arenas around Europe, playing to an estimated audience of 750,000. Now a new run of 36 shows for the summer has been added. This will translate to nearly 2 million concertgoers witnessing the band live as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. Andrew Zweck, Depeche Mode’s booking agent at London-based Sensible Events, says this is the act’s biggest European tour ever and that dates have to be added in nearly every city the group plays. He adds that Tina Turner still wears the crown for the biggest European tour ever. Her 1996 trek totaled 134 shows in Europe.

A BILINGUAL PITBULL
Following his successful debut, “Miami,” rapper Pitbull is planning to release a recording that represents his Latin and American sides. The Miami native’s label, TVT, is looking at a June release for a bilingual set. It will be available as either two separately sold CDs—one in Spanish, the other in English—or one disc that mixes both languages. If Pitbull takes the dual-album route, he would be the first artist to simultaneously release albums in English and Spanish in the same package.

AEROWAVE EXPANDS
Track hears that multi-Grammy Award winner Glen Ballard’s Los Angeles-based Aerowave Production has added a new division that concentrates on creating and producing music videos, electronic press kits for artists and Internet advertising. Ballard, along with Aerowave’s Stephanie Kubik, has already worked on videos for international artists, including Elisa (Italy) and Sarah Bettens (the United Kingdom). On the animated music video front, Kubik—with Aaron Haye—helmed P.J. Olsson’s “3 Light Years and a Day.”

SEETHER GOES SOUTH
Wind-up Records act Seether recently spent time in Oaxaca, Mexico, to shoot a video for “The Gift,” the next single from the group’s top 10 album, “Karma and Effect.” The shoot was directed by music video superstar Meiert Avis (U2, Bruce Springsteen, Jennifer Lopez, Audioslave). Seether is currently co-headlining the Winterfresh SnoCore trek with Shinedown.
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