THOROUGHLY MODERN MATISYAHU
STRIKES A SPIRITUAL CHORD

THE MONSTER OF INDEPENDENT ROCK
SHOOTS FOR MAINSTREAM SUCCESS

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

Plus: Radio Adds Download Data
To Its Programming Toolbox

INSIDE: Q&A With Pink Floyd's
DAVID GILMOUR
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CLARENCE

LOVE, LA REID
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**BILLBOARD MUSIC & MONEY SYMPOSIUM**
March 2
St. Regis Hotel • New York
billboardevents.com

**NO. 1 ON THE CHARTS**

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The Billboard Music & Money Symposium is the premier event for music industry decision-makers, entrepreneurs and companies interested in providing funding for entertainment ventures. Exchange ideas, generate leads, share information with the most influential members of the music financial, and legal communities.
EMB

Wow DOMINATED THE GRAMMYS WITH 5 AWARDS
Album of the Year
Song of the Year
Best Rock Performance by a Group or Duo
Best Rock Album
Best Rock Song

RECORD OF THE YEAR
"Boulevard Of Broken Dreams"
Green Day
Rob Cavallo
Chris Lord-Alge

ALBUM OF THE YEAR
How To Dismantle An Atomic Bomb
U2 (FRS)
Flood (PRS)
Daniel Lanois
Jacknife Lee (PRS)
Nellee Hooper (PRS)

SONG OF THE YEAR
"Sometimes You Can't Make It On Your Own"
U2 (PRS)

Best Female Pop Vocal Performance
Kelly Clarkson

Best Male Pop Vocal Performance
Stevie Wonder

Best Pop Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocal
Maroon 5

Best Pop Collaboration With Vocals
Gorillaz

Best Pop Instrumental Performance
Les Paul

Best Pop Instrumental Album
Burt Bacharach

Best Pop Vocal Album
Kelly Clarkson

Best Dance Recording
The Chemical Brothers
Q-Tip

Best Electronic/Dance Album
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Tony Bennett

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U2 (PRS)

Best Metal Performance
Slipknot

Best Rock Instrumental Performance
Les Paul & Friends

Best Rock Song
U2 (PRS)

Best Rock Album
U2 (PRS)

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Beyoncé
Stevie Wonder

Best Urban/Alternative Performance
Damian Marley

Best R&B Song
John Legend
Jermaine Dupri
Manuel Seal

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Devo Springsteen

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Kelly Clarkson

Best Male Pop Vocal Performance
Best R&B Performance
by a Duo or Group
Stevie Wonder

Best Gospel Song
James Harris III
Terry Lewis
James Q. Wright

Best Rock Gospel Album
Audio Adrenaline

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Best Gospel Choir Or Chorus Album
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Best Latin Pop Album
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Little Joe Y La Familia

Best Traditional Folk Album
Tim O'Brien

Best Hawaiian Music Album
Daniel Ho

Best Reggae Album
Damian Marley

Best Traditional World Music Album
Ali Farka Touré (MUNOA)
Toumani Diabaté (MUNOA)

Best Musical Album For Children
Dennis Scott

Best Comedy Album
Chris Rock

Best Score Soundtrack Album For Motion Picture, Television Or Other Visual Media
Craig Armstrong

Best Song Written For Motion For Motion Picture, Television Or Other Visual Media
Glen Ballard
Alan Silvestri

Best Instrumental Arrangement
Gordon Goodwin

Best Instrumental Arrangement Accompanying Vocalist(s)
Gil Goldstein
Héctor Pereira

Best Recording Package
Aimee Mann

Best Surround Sound Album
Mark Knopfler (PRI)

Best Classical Album
Leonard Slatkin

Best Choral Performance
Leonard Slatkin

Best Small Ensemble Performance (with or without Conductor)
Pierre Boulez (GERMAN)

Best Short Form Music Video
Missy Elliott
Ciara

Lifetime Achievement Award
The Weavers

Trustees Award
Chris Blackwell (PRI)

MusiCares Person of the Year
James Taylor

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Marilyn Bergman I President & Chairman of the Board
By Thomas F. Lee

The U.S. Congress is right to respond to the allegations of corruption that have arisen as a result of the expanding Jack Abramoff scandal. Many proposals have been introduced to rein in the excessive gifts and lavish travel that Abramoff was able to offer certain members of Congress.

Less than a week passed from the time Abramoff reached a plea agreement to the time both political parties introduced competing versions of reform bills. Lobbying reform will be a prerequisite in the House and the Senate now that Congress is back in session.

I applaud leaders in Congress for acting so quickly to root out alleged corruption in their midst. But I am dismayed to think that if Abramoff was an independent promoter instead of a lobbyist, and his skybox suites, free meals and paid golf trips to exotic locales were bestowed upon radio programmers instead of members of Congress, his behavior would have raised hardly an eyebrow in Washington, D.C.

In fact, while it took Congress less than a week to respond to its own system of pay-for-play, we in the music business are still waiting for legislation to curb the new forms of institutionalized payola in radio.

Our legislators have passed up opportunities to enact broad anti-payola legislation presented by Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., in the last two sessions of Congress. Last November, Feingold introduced a retooled bill, S. 298, which is designed to curb payola by increasing public scrutiny of radio practices and industry accountability for those practices. The time has come to pass that legislation. Americans have been shocked by the excesses that can develop when lobbyists are allowed to pay for access to public servants. They rightly insist that lawmakers must not be beholden to well-funded lobbyists but must faithfully serve the interests of the local constituents who elect them. And Congress rightly recognizes that its credibility as a public institution will depend on its ability to ensure that the conduct of members and lobbyists is open to public scrutiny and bounded by accountability.

So why is Congress so slow to rehabilitate the public’s trust in radio? After all, the airwaves are a public asset, not private property. Since the 1930s, federal law has allowed the broadcast industry to use those airwaves for commercial purposes without charge. But, in return, federal law requires radio station owners to serve the public interest.

The American Federation of Musicians believes that those public-interest obligations include providing diversity and local content. And surely all listeners are entitled to be aware of music choices because of its merit rather than as a result of an undiscerned business transaction.

In my view, the sad fact is that since the ownership loophole in caps ownership, such elements as diversity, local control and local content have plummeted. Moreover, payola has been reinvented as an institutionalized system of indirect payments that drives up the costs of reaching an audience to levels that are prohibitive for new performers. At the same time, this new system diminishes the variety and quality of songs played on the air—and denies public consciousness.

Feingold’s bill addresses these issues not only by closing the loophole that allows harmful practice of pressuring performers to give free concerts in return for airplay. And last but hardly least, it would build industry accountability by significantly increasing penalties for payola, including authorizing the FCC to consider revoking a station’s license.

Congress is moving quickly to change the way the nation’s public officials do business. It should also act promptly to change the way business is done over the public airwaves.

In Congress and on the radio, the ability to pay for access amounts to a breach of the public’s trust. In both cases, it is time for Congress to repair the breach so that Americans can once again have full faith in their lawmakers and their airwaves.

Thomas F. Lee is president of the American Federation of Musicians.

I wanted to commend Leila Colô for her column “Grammys Latin Gap” (Billboard, Feb. 2).

I enjoyed and appreciated Leila Colô’s column on Latinos and the “mainstream” Grammys. I have had many conversations with people during the past few years about this subject, and you really captured it in your piece. Thanks for making such a compelling case, and hopefully it will inspire all of us who care about this issue to become further engaged in the process.

Elsa Vivero

VP of sales, developing markets and genres WEA Corp. New York

Leila Colô hit on some of the most important issues that Latino artists, musicians, producers and record labels face every day. I believe that these issues stem from lack of knowledge by some of our Latin independent label presidents and their staff. I myself am unaware of the process for submitting material for consideration of a Grammy nomination. In this business we all need one another to progress.

Elliott Maysonet

S.O.S./Sabrosura Records New York

I am happy to see your magazine recognize the need for the Latino community to continue to inspire change in the industry.

Maritza Baca

Promotional Management Group Chicago

Let your colleagues know what’s on your mind. Send letters to Ken Schlager, Executive Editor, Billboard, 710 Broadway, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003, or e-mail to letters@billboard.com. Include name, title, address and phone number for verification. Letters should be concise and may be edited. All submissions published shall become the sole property of Billboard, which shall own the copyright in whole or in part, for publication at its discretion and in any media.
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"The Perfect Christmas" continues to spread holiday cheer. Bath & Body Works' collection of holiday classics by today's most acclaimed musicians has reached a two-year sales total of 1.3 million albums. Bath & Body Works and Madacy Entertainment would like to thank all the artists, labels and managers who helped make "The Perfect Christmas" a huge success:

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Guster
Diana Krall
Dean Martin
Ashanti
Ella Fitzgerald
Marvin Gaye
Billie Holiday
James Brown
Mindi Abair
Stevie Wonder
Alicia Keys
Destiny's Child
Sarah McLachlan
Jessica Simpson
Aretha Franklin
Cyndi Lauper
Tony Bennett
Liz Phair
Rachael Yamagata
Wham!
Pete Droge
Martina McBride
Paige Armstrong

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2006!
LEGAL BY SUSAN BUTLER

Mario Sues To Void 'Oppressive' Production Deal

Multiplatinum recording artist Mario is claiming that the man who sheltered him as a teenager when his mother was a drug addict has diverted "virtually every meaningful benefit generated from his recording career."

Mario Barrett sued Troy Patterson and his Third Street Music Group Feb. 16 in the U.S. District Court in New York. The Grammy Award-nominated artist, 19, says in the complaint that under a contract he signed with Third Street as a minor, he has only received about $50,000 from the sale of more than 3 million records, which have generated about $20 million for J Records.

Meanwhile, the suit says Patterson—or his company—pocketed hundreds of thousands of dollars from its deal with J Records. The deal promises to provide J with Mario's recording services for seven albums.

"Mario wants his contract with Third Street voided and all money Patterson and Third Street received under the 'oppressive' deal turned over to him, plus damages for fraud and breach of fiduciary duties. J Records is not named in the suit."

"Mario values his relationship with J Records head Clive Davis and J Records," says Kenny Meiselas, a partner with Grubman, Indursky and Shire in New York. Mario retained the high-profile lawyer—who also represents Sean "Diddy" Combs, Mary J. Blige and other superstars—about six months ago to handle his legal business affairs.

"Mario's issues are solely with Troy Patterson and Patterson's production company."

According to the complaint, Patterson first saw the 11-year-old Mario perform in 1997 at a Baltimore talent contest. He approached Mario and his mother after the show and befriended them. With Mario's father absent and his mother frequently gone for weeks or months at a time, Mario often lived with his maternal grandmother. Patterson allegedly "insinuated" himself into their lives for commercial gain.

Around 1998, his grandmother became ill, passing away the following year. Patterson began acting as Mario's personal manager. In 2000, Mario's mother suggested he visit Patterson in New Jersey, where he ultimately stayed for months, the suit says.

At Patterson's suggestion, Mario, then 13, and his mother—"visibly under the influence of drugs"—signed a recording and publish- continued on >>p12

BUSINESS BY BRIAN GARRITY

IDJ Reins In Digital Singles

Label Limiting Online Tracks To Protect Album Sales

Labels regularly sell hit singles through digital retailers before the albums that generated them reach stores. But industry concerns are growing that the practice, which was designed to combat peer-to-peer cannibalization, is eating into CD sales.

Now one major label, Universal Music Group's Island Def Jam, is shying away from early online releases of radio tracks to protect its album business.

IDJ is yet to make "So Sick," the lead single from R&B artist Ne-Yo's forthcoming album, "In My Own Words," available to iTunes and other digital outlets. Reportedly the company will not release the track in digital form until after the album arrives Feb. 28.

The song, which has been at radio for more than 13 weeks, is No. 3 on this issue's Hot 100 Airplay chart with 151.9 million listener impressions. IDJ also has not released a digital single of Rihanna's "SOS (Rescue Me)," which has been at radio for three weeks. Her new album, "A Girl Like Me," will drop April 11.

The label successfully pursued a similar strategy late last year with the digital single for Mariah Carey's "Don't Forget About Us." The song, a bonus track included on the rerelease of "The Emancipation of Mimi," was not released digitally until Dec. 13, almost a month after the album's Nov. 15 street date.

The song was No. 1 on the Hot 100 Airplay chart with 143.2 million impressions when the digital track was released.

The move comes as music companies are exploring a variety of options to maximize continued on >>p12
MARIO (cont.)

From >>pit

eting agreement with Third Street in May 2000. Their lawyer, with “virtually no experience in the music industry,” was selected and paid by Patterson, the complaint alleges. Seven months later Third Street finalized its deal with J Records.

Third Street then modified its deal with Mario, who was represented by the same counsel as previously selected by Pat-

ton—as actual person, business manager, record company and publisher with rights to ultimately “retain more than 90% of the sub-

stantial amounts they receive from J Records.”

Under a law that several states have for minors’ enter-

tainment contracts, Third Street then petitioned a Baltimore court to approve the terms of its contract with Mario so that he could not void it by claiming he was a minor. In 2002, the court approved the contract and appointed Mario’s mother as legal guardian.

Shortly after Mario’s first al-

bum release in July 2002, his mother was arrested and sent to a detention center for about two months. At that time Patterson and Mario’s aunt successfully petitioned the court to make them Mario’s guardians, the com-

plaint alleges.

In 2004, Mario began ques-

tioning Patterson’s motives, the suit says. In November 2004 after an award show, Patt-

erson allegedly grabbed Mario by the throat and threatened him. Since then, Mario has seen little of Patterson.

Mario is both committed to, and passionate about, bring-

ing this matter to its just reso-

lution,” says John Rosenberg, head of the entertainment litiga-

tion group at Sullivan & Worcester in New York.

Patterson declined comment. Davis was unavailable for comment.

Mario’s current manager J

E wing of the Coalition says, “I’ve seen a lot of situations

when artists have been greedy, disingenuous or not loyal to their

production companies.” But, he says, that is not the case here. “Mario just wants to be treated fairly.”

Ewing adds that Mario has been meeting with producers and is anxious to begin record-

ing another album.

“His transitioning from young man to grown-ass man, so he’s anxious to let people know where he’s at in his life,”

Patterson said.

Mario is working on a Para-

mount Pictures film, “Freedom Writers,” starring Hilary

Swank. He has a co-star role in the Disney film tentatively titled

“Music High.”

IDJ (cont.)

from >>p1

the digital and physical revenue they generate from new

releases.

Some labels are stressing ringtone offerings prior to street date in combination with downloadable tracks. So DeJ/Virgin Records’ Dem

Ch franz Boyz sold more than 1 million master ringtone rights of four different tracks from their album “On Top of Our

Game” before it was released Feb. 7, according to Virgin Records. DeJ/Virgin Records meanwhile announced T-Pain sold 1.5

million master ringtone rights of four different tracks from his album “Im Sprung” and “Im in Luv (Wit a Stripper),” pointing to surging sales for master ringtone rights.

continued on >>p14

BRIT Awards Fete Home-Grown Newcomers

Kaiser Chiefs, KT Tunstall, Arctic Monkeys Among Winners

LONDON—They predicted a

riot, and that is what they got. With three trophies, alternative rock outfit Kaiser Chiefs were declared kings of the 2006 BRIT Awards during a ceremony that executives consider a triumph for new British talent.

Of the 17 awards given at the Feb. 15 gala at Earls Court in London, six prominent cate-

gories went to debut artists. Newcomers accounted for 10

awards at last year’s BRIT show.

Kaiser Chiefs’ hit track cups a

remarable year for the outfit, which hails from Leeds, Eng-

land. The Chiefs’ debut album, “Employment,” was the fourth

best-selling British album in the United Kingdom last year and has sold 1.65 million ship-

ments at home.

“The BRITs press coverage has been incredible,” says Martin Tocher, co-owner of B-

Unique, the London-based label home of Kaiser Chiefs. “The wins should definitely bed that album in the top 10 for the next few weeks.”

Tocher has tentative plans to release a follow-up in first-quarter 2007.

Newcomers KT Tunstall, James Blunt and Arctic Monkeys were also among the award win-

ners. “I think it’s a little early to say it signals the rejuvenation of British music, but there’s defini-

ently cause for some optimi-

sm,” says Jeff Smith, Napster’s London-based international programming director.

n

percentage points from the previ-

ous year, the best result since 1998. Repertoire from the United States accounted for 37.7% of the market last year. Britain’s market-leading music retailer HMV is anticipa-

ting a bumper post-BRIT sales effo.

“We predict that this year’s BRITs will see the biggest percentage increases in sales ever,” HMV spokesman Gen-

naro Castaldo says.

Singer-songwriter Blunt won a brace of trophies. He took honors for pop act and British male solo artist—his only nomi-

nation— to Blunt.

In a first, visitors to the aw-

nings’ official Web site, bris.co.uk, can download songs and clips of nominated artists and previous winners. Powered by digital music services firm 7 Digital, the site also offers a compo-

ilation bundle featuring tracks from the official BRIT Awards CD released Feb. 13 by Sony BMG. All proceeds from the show and the Web site will be do-

nated to the BRIT Trust charity.

“People are saying we are in another Britpop era,” Napster’s Smith says. “I don’t think it again, because Britpop—with the exception of Blur and Oasis—was relatively niche. All these new bands today seem to be coming out and into the mainstream.”

--Mike Strobel
**UpFront**

**GRAMMY, VALENTINE’S DAYS LOVE IS SELECTIVE**

The one-two punch of the Grammy Awards relevant and Valentine’s Day have built expectations that the discs had built-in. Those expectations shrank a bit this year—by 7.4%, to be precise.

Album sales were down nearly 1 million units for the week ending Feb. 12, according to Nielsen SoundScan. For that week, sales reached almost 12.1 million units, versus 13 million units for the corresponding week last year.

Merchants were nevertheless grateful for bumps to certain titles. Albums from Michael Bublé and Chris Botti seemed to fare well as tokens of affection, with sales jumps of more than 40% and hefty Billboard 200 chart leaps.

On the Grammy front, beneficiaries included John Legend, whose album “Get Lifted” jumped to nearly 52,000 units from about 6,000 units the prior week, moving 187-186 on the Billboard 200. Jerri Kamlier, music divisional merchandise manager for Trans World Entertainment in Albany, N.Y., says he knew the album would enjoy a sales lift because once customers hear it, they can tell it is “quality” music.

“We definitely paid attention to the winners,” says Thuy Ngo, VP of purchasing and marketing at Super D. A one-stop in Irvine, Calif. “We were well stocked ahead of time in anticipation of the show, but we particularly tracked the breakouts like U2 and John Legend. Both of those acts doubled sales for Grammy week versus the prior week, Ngo reports.

U2’s “How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb” re-entered The Billboard 200 at No. 49 following its first album win. Other strong movers on the chart included Mariah Carey’s “The Emancipation of Mimi” (which jumped 14-7), Kelly Clarkson’s “Breakaway” (24-8) and Kanye West’s “Late Registration” (50-30).

In Newton, Mass., Newbury Comics buyer C. Mello reported that Mary J. Blige came out of the box the strongest of all the artists who performed. According to Nielsen SoundScan, her “The Breakthrough” album jumped to 152,000 sales from the prior week total of about 123,000.

Frances Kirk, product manager at Tower Records in Portland, Ore., says, “The Sly & the Family Stone... and the U2 album were really the only ones that had an impact for us. U2 picked up largely because we have the new one on sale for $9.99.” Kirk says that people gravitated toward Sony’s new “Different Strokes by Different Folks” covers album rather than Sly Stone’s catalog. The set features acts that performed during the Family Stone tribute at the Grammys, including Will.I.am and Maroon 5.

**GRIEKS TRASH BIG Haul OF COUNTERFEIT CDs**

Greek authorities and the local IPFI affiliate last week destroyed four tons of pirated CDs in Athens. The discs had been seized in more than 2,600 raids carried out during the past year in the Greek capital. According to the Greek IPFI affiliate, the sale of illicit music CDs is costing the Greek government 150 million euros ($178 million) in annual losses.

**GORIZLZ GAMES COMING**

Animated act Gorillaz are working with RealNetworks to develop their own series of mobile videogames, called the Gorillaz Entertainment System. RealNetworks is working on developing four games based on each of the band’s members. The games are expected to be available for downloading in April.

Compiled by Chris M. Walsh. Reporting by Lars Brandle, Antony Bruno, Charles Ferro, Brian Garrity, Maria Paravantes, Tom Sanders and Chris M. Walsh.

**Latin Awards Think Young**

Daddy Yankee, RBD Lead Finalists For Billboard Honors

MIAMI BEACH — Reggaeton star Daddy Yankee and Mexican pop phenomenon RBD—both part of the youth movement that dominated Billboard’s Latin charts last year—are the leading finalists for the 2006 Billboard Latin Music Awards.

The awards extravaganza will air live April 27 on the Tele- network at 9:30 p.m. at the close of the annual Latin Music Conference, which will kick off April 24 here.

Daddy Yankee is a finalist in 10 categories, including hot Latin songs artist; topLatin albums artist and songwriter of the year.

Yankee’s album “Barrio Fino En Directo” (El Cartel/Inter- scope) is up for reggaeton album of the year. This week, it remains at No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart, his 2004 release “Barrio Fino” is in the top 20 of the same chart.

Pop group RBD, which burst into mainstream consciousness last year along with the soap opera “Rebelde,” is in a contender in nine categories, including top Latin albums artist.

Most impressively, all three RBD albums released in 2005 on EMI/Televisa are finalists in the duo or group category of the Latin Music Awards.

Pop artist Shakira is in the running in eight categories with her single “La Tortura” and album “Fijación Oral, Vol. 1” (Epic/Sony BMG Norte), and Machtet act Wisin & Yandel is a finalist in seven categories.

Colombian rocker James and Puerto Rican merengue/pop star Olga Tañon are finalists in five categories. Pop acts La Sa Estación and Reylí, along with contemporary bachata group Aventura, are each up for awards in four categories.

The list of finalists for the 2006 awards confirms audience interest in Latin pop at a time when many have bemoaned the decline of Latin pop stations.

“The Billboard Latin Music Awards honor the most popular albums, songs and performers in Latin music, as determined by the actual sales and radio airplay data that informs Billboard’s weekly charts during a one-year period ending with the Feb. 4 issue,” Albertini says. “Artists are honored in 51 categories representing pop, tropical, regional Mexican, reggaeton and hip-hop. The top labels, tours and publishing companies also are honored.”

This year’s list of finalists incorporates new awards recognizing the reggaeton song and the Latin ringtone of the year.

For a full list of finalists, go to billboard.com. For information on the Billboard Latin Music Conference & Awards, go to billboardevents.com.

**WMI Shifts Exec Power To NYC**

Albertini Out; TV Veteran Vien In

Warnor Music Group is shaking up its international division. Paul-Henri Albertini is out as chairman/CEO of Warner Music International. And after 20 years in London, the business unit is moving its base to New York, where it will be run by new top partner Patrick Vien.

Vien joins from NBC Universal’s Global Networks Division, where he was responsible forall TV channels around the world. He takes the title of WMI chairman/CEO and reports directly to WMG chair/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr.

Warner Music did not officially explain the reason for the change in leadership. However, a company insider said the move represents a strategic shift in WMG’s definition of the international CEO role.

Albertini, who became chair/CEO of WMI in September 2002 after serving as president of Warner Music Europe since December 2000, made his name as an A&R executive. With Vien, the WMG source says, the executive focus shifts to strategy and operations.

“You don’t need someone on top of [regional A&R executives] that has the same skill set,” the source says.

Vien will be expected to take a broader view of music as a “national” partnership with audio and video platforms, and to work in conjunction with the WMG digital team to find distribution and marketing

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Urban Stars Return To A Changed New Orleans

Juvenile and his crew were the first artists to shoot a video (for new single "Get Ya Hustle On") and a DVD documentary in the hard-hit lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans.

The week before Christmas, it was the first time Juvenile had returned to his hometown since leaving before Hurricane Katrina touched down Aug. 29.

The rapper is not alone in returning—or wanting to, at least. Other stars, including members of the Cash Money Crew and local favorite B.G., have plans to come back. But the city is very different from the one they left behind.

Mayor Ray Nagin's infamous Martin Luther King Jr. Day "Chocolate City" comment—meant to encourage African-Americans to return to New Orleans—was perceived by some as divisive. But it was grounded in some dire concerns.

Before Katrina hit, the city's population was about 68% black. A recent study by a Brown University sociologist determined that up to 80% of the black population might not return if they cannot move back to their old neighborhoods. Katrina-damaged areas had been 75% black, compared to 46% in undamaged areas of New Orleans. Juvenile says the harsh reality of what he saw was worth the return.

"We gave the residents a chance to show their side of the story," says the rapper, who lost his home to Katrina. "The Ninth Ward still isn't functional. It looks like someone dropped a bomb, and it's the end of the world."

Clear Channel/New Orleans director of urban programming A.L. Appleberry applauds Juvenile for not sugarcoating the Big Easy reality. "More of what was shown in his video needs to be seen by the rest of the world because it's a slow trickle back. This is not a situation where we'll be at our pre-Katrina population or the number of shows that used to come to town anytime soon."

Appleberry notes that most of the clubs frequented by the city's African-American community—primarily located in New Orleans East—remain shuttered. Likewise, the city's most well-known urban-oriented music store, Odyssey Records, remains closed.

The broader music business—touring and retail—seems to be rebounding. But it may be that much of that reorganization is due to the swarms of workers brought in to rebuild the city and its curious visitors.

The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival help gauge the city's ability to sustain its reputation as a top festival spot.

Jazz Fest, April 28-May 7, is one of the city's premiere events, embraced by locals and tourists. Sponsors include American Express, whose program to promote New Orleans' native musicians—American Express Spotslights New Orleans—will present Irma Thomas, the Rebirth Brass Band and others on the festival's two main stages.

As the city tunes up for its 150th annual Mardi Gras (Feb. 16-28), music can be heard in French Quarter clubs, and larger venues are buying talent. Big Easy mainstay Tipitina's, which reopened Hurricane weekend, has been booking acts steadily since jam band Galactic played the 1,000-capacity room on New Year's Eve.

"We're doing great," says Stacy Fortenberry, marketing director for Tipitina's. "We've had Galactic a few times and a lot of local stuff that's all done perfectly well." Audiences for these shows include local residents, college students and people in town assisting in recovery efforts. Fortenberry says this new flow of consumers seems to be boosting retail, too. Many stores remain shuttered including several Wal-Marts and a Virgin Megastore. But French Quarter store Louisiana Music Factory—specializing in New Orleans-based music—reopened Halloween, and sales are almost back to pre-Katrina levels. "Although not many locals are back in New Orleans, there are a lot of workers here fixing things up, so we are doing well," employee Freeman York says.

Where urban music is sold, it appears to be doing well. "I can't keep rap and R&B in stock," Denise Russell says. She operates Jim Russell's Rare Records—which carries new music in all genres as well as a million vinyl albums—with her husband and storeowner Jim, closed for two months, the outlet reopened Nov. 1.

Because the Russells are trying to return store inventory to pre-Katrina levels, they cannot pay themselves or afford to put together a bigger order, but still manage to frequently replenish product.

Incredibly, despite a depleted population, Nielsen SoundScan reports that sales are now higher in New Orleans than they were before Katrina hit. Year to date, through the week ending Feb. 12, 489,000 albums have sold in the city, compared with 347,000 during the same time period last year. R&B and rap are both selling about 30% more than they had at this time last year, and gospel sales have nearly doubled. (Nielsen SoundScan executives declined to comment.)

A DEDICATED SCENE

Juvenile is keeping New Orleans close to his heart as he promotes his March 7 UTP/Atlantic album "Reality Check." He has performed shows at Tulane University and New Orleans nightclub the Venue. Two days after his album's release, he will play in town at the House of Blues, donating a portion of the proceeds—as he says he does for all shows—to Katrina victims.

Cash Money co-founders Ronald "Slim" Williams and Bryan "Baby" Williams have temporarily moved to Miami, after losing their homes and studio. But the brothers vow to return even as they move forward on upcoming projects by Keke Wyatt, Tenea Marie and new act Currency. Cash Money labelmate and fellow New Orleans native Lil Wayne, who also lost his home, still resides in the top 10 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart with "Tha Carter II."

Ronald and his brother plan to shoot videos in New Orleans and book their artists at local venues. "It will take a while before we can get everything together to come back," Ronald says. "But we aren't going anywhere."

To boost the revitalization spirit, Appleberry's stations—adult R&B WYLD-FM and R&B/hip-hop WQUE—launched the Bring 'Em Back concert series.

Kicking off Jan. 15 at local venue Howling Wolf, the first concert featured Donell Jones, Tyra and local artist Marvelous Miles. With less than a week to advertise and a nominal $20 ticket price, more than 1,000 patrons jammed the venue. The series' net proceeds will benefit Habitat for Humanity.

Plans are under way for a second concert on the eve of Mardi Gras. Appleberry says while some label reps have been helpful, others have not. "We've supported a lot of artists," he says. "We're not asking them to do something for us but for the community. I'm more than sure there are artists willing to come if we could talk directly to them."

Appleberry remains upbeat about the city's chances for revitalization. "The true spirit of New Orleans is to get up and keep kicking," he says. New Orleans rapper Young A echoes the sentiment. "I was at B.G.'s January show, and the mood was, 'We're glad to be back home.'"

In January, B.G. was finally able to fulfill his House of Blues date originally scheduled on the day Katrina hit.

"It's heartbreaking," says the former Hot Boyz member, who now lives his time between New Orleans and Detroit. "But as long as I've got breath in my body, I will do all I can to encourage people to come back. I love this motherfucker. New Orleans is what made me."

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR ITALIAN SUPERSTAR
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LIVE NATION
Wireless Cos. Spend Big To Push Music Services

The Super Bowl and the Grammy Awards telecasts saw Sprint and Verizon Wireless hit their marketing stride with high-profile TV spots promoting their new mobile music download services. These efforts mark a dramatic escalation of the wireless industry's battle to establish itself as a digital music provider. And the music industry has gained a powerful new ally with deep advertising pockets, and the willingness to spend on artists promotions.

While the majority of this spending has focused on their traditional business—selling voice plans—operators are making multimedia services a greater priority. Rarely has an operator spent so heavily on a specific service. The 30-second Super Bowl ad for Sprint's music service alone cost $2.1 billion on advertising through the third quarter of last year alone, placing seventh among the top 10 media buyers.

Carriers are even getting into the A&R business. On Feb. 15, Verizon Wireless and myspace.com launched a contest to give one unsigned band the chance to release its music on Verizon's VCast Music service.

The contest, titled "Calling All Bands," is open to any unsigned act with a MySpace profile. The winner will have its song released on the VCast service and a music video released on its video service—as well as a ringtone and ringback tone of the winning song.

While primarily an effort to promote VCast Music to MySpace's 54 million registered members, the contest also raises interesting questions about wireless operators' future role in the music industry.

"We're seeing artists that are really building their presence through the mobile market," Mirabella says. "That becomes a really interesting proposition for artists and labels because we have different avenues to go down than we did in the past. We see it as a critical part of developing artists, moving forward."
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COMING SOON IN CANADA AND JAPAN!
Mobile Tix: Promise Now, Reality Later

The idea of using a mobile phone as a concert ticket is very much a current topic of conversation. During the past few weeks, two of the most prominent players in the concert industry—Ticketmaster and Live Nation—have embraced the concept.

Ticketmaster will begin testing a wireless ticketing system in the United Kingdom and Australia this summer, and Live Nation partnered with Nokia to develop a similar system in the next two years (Billboard, Feb. 11).

Mobile ticketing certainly remains several years from a mainstream reality. Just ask Verizon Wireless. When the operator tested a mobile ticketing system during a free concert by the reunited Fugees that it hosted Feb. 6 in Hollywood, it learned firsthand the gap between promise and practice.

Subscribers who purchased the ringtone of the Fugees’ new single, “Take It Easy,” were sent a wireless message offering admission for two to the event. Those with advanced phones received a bar code on their screens. (Others received an e-mail they could print out.) The intent was to present the phones at the gate and have them scanned like any other tickets.

Problem was, it didn’t work. The scanners used by the event staff could not read the bar code on the phones’ screens.

The situation illustrates the complexity behind a potentially groundbreaking concept: Alert fans about upcoming events, give them the ability to immediately buy tickets and then deliver them, all via wireless phone.

“A lot of people in the industry are looking at the wireless device as a good proxy for a unique identifier to allow access to an event,” says David Goldberg, executive VP of strategy and business development for Ticketmaster. “But there are a lot of logistics behind it that raise some issues.”

Mobile phone screens do not have a standardized size or resolution, making it difficult to create a bar code that will appear the same on all of them. And as Verizon discovered, most existing bar code readers do not have the sensitivity needed to scan them, regardless.

There are non-technical issues as well, such as how to enable a person to buy tickets for four friends. Would each person need to get their own mobile ticket? Or would one ticket provide entry to four friends? And in either event, how do you inform the system?

Mobile ticketing will require new or upgraded bar code readers, training for event staff and a massive educational campaign to gain consumer trust and understanding—all of which comes at a cost.

The industry has only recently adjusted to scanning bar codes from paper tickets instead of just ripping them in half. Upsetting the cart again would require a clear benefit for wireless ticketing to generate support. Yet despite these challenges, the idea moves forward. The marketing and impulse purchase opportunities are simply too great to be ignored.

“There’s only a couple of reasons to keep evolving technologies,” Goldberg says. “One is to help make people more aware of events. The other is enticing the consumer to make a purchase. Technology has a role to play in both, particularly wireless.”

Fans could register to receive alerts when tickets of their favorite artists go on sale and immediately buy them without having to return home to the computer. Wireless ticketing also reduces ticket fraud and all but eliminates the market for scalping. Paper tickets can be lost or forgotten, but mobile ones can be replaced—and few people leave the house these days without their mobile phones.

It also opens the door to a host of in-venue marketing opportunities facilitated by the mobile phone. Network Live CEO Kevin Wall plans to test a wireless ticketing system for a concert this summer—and offer a free mobile video download of the event to participants.

Scottish mobile marketing firm Molpia operated a mobile ticketing system for the band Grinspoon at Sydney’s Metro Theatre last year. More than half the attendees at the two sold-out Australia shows opted for the mobile ticket instead of the paper version—35% of whom later redeemed the mobile ticket for a discount on the band’s CD.

But convincing customers to trust mobile tickets instead of paper ones may take time. Event staff at Verizon’s Fugees concert recalled less than 10 people who tried to enter using their mobile phone as a ticket.

“You’d have to be able to roll out a program in a matter of months that allows you to scan the face of a phone and gain entry to the venue,” says Jim Cannelli, director of sponsorship for House of Blues, “but that’s only going to apply to 5% of the audience, then it’s not worth doing.”

The primary effort today is less about using mobile phones as an actual ticket and more about using them as a marketing and point-of-sale device. In that sense, the Verizon event was promising. 2000 text messages were sent for a show ultimately attended by 10,000 fans. Many just printed an e-mailed ticket rather than attempting the mobile option.

Ultimately, that is the experience concert promoters hope to replicate.

“We’re more focused on making the sale on the mobile phone than we are about facilitating the delivery of the ticket,” Cannelli says. “All [fans] really care about is the end of the day is getting in the door.”

**PANDORA’S BOX**

Slim Device’s Squeezebox Internet music player now supports the Pandora personalized Internet radio service.

Users can enter the name of any song into the Squeezebox system and Pandora creates a custom radio stream of songs with the same musical traits. Pandora spent six years developing a song-recommendation database based on the input of 35 musicians and music analysts, who listen to each song and create a profile based on 400 attributes.

The Squeezebox system is a network bridge that streams music stored on a computer to a home entertainment system. It also connects directly to the Internet to access music services like Pandora Radio, Live365 and Shoducast, among others.

SqueezeBox customers can access Pandora Radio for 30 days, after which it costs $3.90 per year. The Squeezebox costs $250 for a wired Internet connection and $300 for a wireless version.

—Antony Bruno

**BITS & BRIEFS**

**TONGING YOURSELF UP**

mVisible Technologies, the company behind the MyxerTones do-it-yourself ringtone creation software, has introduced a new service that lets users share their ringtones as well, called MyxerTags.

Once MyxerTones users create the ringtones they want, they must post them to the myxertones.com Web site-operated by mVisible—and will then receive a MyxerTag link.

Users then post these links on their Web sites or blogs so others can download them. Fans selecting the MyxerTag option are redirected to the MyxerTones site, where they enter their mobile phone number to download the ringtone directly to their device. The MyxerTones Technology does all the work of formatting the ringtone for different types of phones.

**MTV NETWORKING**

MTV is hoping to create a social networking buzz around its third annual Best Music on Campus contest. For the first time it is allowing entrants to customize music pages on mtv.com with songs, videos, photos, playlists and other content similar to the band profiles found on myspace.com.

Contestants must submit three original songs in MP3 format to mtv.com by March 15. Fans can vote online and, beginning with the quarterfinals, submit their votes via Boost Mobile phones. The winning artist will receive a record deal with Drive-Thru Records and a video premiere on mtvU and online at mtv.com/uber and mtv.com.

**PERPLEXING THE U.S.**

U.K.-based phenomenon “Per-25, 2006—An alternative-reality game that hides clues to the location of a hidden object in the real world in online communities, tradable puzzles and Internet-based virtual worlds—is now available in the United States.

The first person to find the hidden object will win $200,000.

U.K. label Hesh Records released a CD recorded by the band Viard, called “The Silver City,” that contains hints to the object’s location. The game’s organizers hope to drop additional hints in TV shows and other events in the future.

**HOT RINGTONES**

MTV announced its annual Best Music on Campus contest earlier this month. To celebrate, it compiled a list of its most popular ringtones to date. The list includes tunes from the Fugees, The Black Eyed Peas, Faith Evans and the Fugees reunion, among others.

The contest finals take place in April, and the winner will receive a record deal with Drive-Thru Records and a video premiere on mtvU and on online at mtv.com/uber and mtv.com.

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Higher / Creed / WIND-UP

700,000 SPINS
One Headlight / Wallflowers / INTERSCOPE
When I'm Gone / 3 Doors Down / REPUBLIC/UNIVERSAL

600,000 SPINS
December / Collective Soul / ATLANTIC

500,000 SPINS
She Will Be Loved / Maroon 5 / OCTONE
Why Don't You & I / Santana Feat. Alex Band or Chad Kroeger / ARISTA/RMC
Let Me Love You / Mario / / JIVE
The Way You Move / OutKast / LAFACE/ZOMBA
How Do I Live / LeAnn Rimes / CURB
Dust On The Bottle / David Lee Murphy / MCA

400,000 SPINS
My Immortal / Evanescence / WIND-UP
Learn To Fly / Foo Fighters / RCA

300,000 SPINS
Run My / Chris Brown / JIVE/ZOMBA
Gold Digger / Kanye West / ROC-A-FELLA/DEF JAM
Photograph / Nickelback / ROADRUNNER
Hollaback Girl / Gwen Stefani / INTERSCOPE
My Happy Ending / Avril Lavigne / ARISTA

200,000 SPINS
Because Of You / Kelly Clarkson / RCA
Don't Forget About Us / Mariah Carey / MONARC/ISLAND/DEF JAM
Listen To Your Heart / D.H.T. / ROBBINS
My Hump / Black Eyed Peas / AM
Bless The Broken Road / Rascal Flatts / LYRIC STREET
Don't Phunk With My Heart / Black Eyed Peas / A&M
Some Beach / Blake Shelton / WARNER BROS
Let Me Hold You / Bow Wow Feat. Omari / SONY URBAN/COLUMBIA
Dance With My Father / Luther Vandross
Sugar, We're Goin Down / Fall Out Boy / ISLAND
You Don't Know My Name / Alicia Keys / J
Nothing To Lose / Josh Gracin / LYRIC STREET

100,000 SPINS
Check On It / Beyoncé Knowles Feat. Slim Thug / SONY URBAN/COLUMB
Grills / Nelly Feat. Paul Wall, Ali & Gipp / DERTTY/UNIVERSAL
There It Goes (The Whistle Song) / Juelz Santana / DIPLOMATS/DEF JAM/IDJ
Come A Little Closer / Dierks Bentley / CAPITOL NASHVILLE
So Sick / Ne-Yo / DEF JAM/IDJ
Probably Wouldn't Be This Way / LeAnn Rimes / CURB
Girl Tonite / Twista Feat. Trey Songz / ATLANTIC
Must Be Doin' Somethin' Right / Billy Currington / MERCURY
Gasolina / Daddy Yankee / EL CARTE/INTERSCOPE
Luxurious / Gwen Stefani / INTERSCOPE
Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off / Joe Nichols / UNIVERSAL SOUTH

50,000 SPINS
Be Without You / Mary J. Blige / GEFFEN
You're Beautiful / James Blunt / ATLANTIC
Jesus Takes The Wheel / Carrie Underwood / ARISTA
Unpredictable / Jamie Foxx / J
Honky Tonk Badonkadonk / Trace Adkins / CAPITOL NASHVILLE
Distance Dance / Fall Out Boy / ISLAND
Turn It Up / Chamillionaire Feat. Lil Flip / UNIVERSAL
Kryptonite / Purple Ribbon All-Stars / PURPLE RIBBON/VIRGIN
My Old Friend / Tim McGraw / CURB
Better Days / Goo Goo Dolls / WARNER BROS
When I Get Where I'm Going / Brad Paisley Feat. Dolly Parton / ARISTA
When I'm Gone / Eminem / INTERSCOPE
Just Might (Make Me Believe) / Sugarland / MERCURY
Twisted Transistor / Korn / VISION
She Says / Howie Day / EPIC
Hypnotize / System Of A Down / AMERICAN/COLUMBIA
Unwritten / Natasha Bedingfield / EPIC
Your Man / Josh Turner / RCA
Before I Forget / Slipknot / ROADRUNNER
Holy Is The Lord / Chris Tomlin / SPARROW
Bad Day / Daniel Powter / WARNER BROS
Ocean Breathes Salty / Modest Mouse / EPIC
Does It Follow / Los Horoscopos De Durango / PROCAN
I Can't Wait / Sleepy Brown Feat. OutKast / DREAMWORKS
Vermillion / Slipknot / ROADRUNNER
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**In Flames Ferrets Out Success**

New Jersey Indie Label Beef Up Veteran Metal Band’s First-Week Numbers

It is shaping up to be quite a 2006 for independent rock labels. With new albums from Epitaph’s My Chemical Romance and Victory’s Hawthorne Heights hitting this month, and such acts as Pan! (at the Disco and Bleeding Through still finding new fans, budding rock groups may want to think twice before inking that major-label contract.

Or veteran ones, for that matter. The latest indie label to have a stellar debut on The Billboard 200 is Brunswick, N.J.-based Ferret Records, which wound metal stalwarts In Flames away from Nuclear Blast in North America. No small task, as Ferret had to persuade the band and its management to ignore major-label advances.

In fact, Ferret—which operates with a six-person staff—offered In Flames the smallest advance of any label it talked to. Yet manager Dirk Zeiser was impressed with Ferret’s comprehensive marketing plan. In Flames’ “Come Clarity” debuted at No. 58 on The Billboard 200 and sold 24,000 units in its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The band’s last album, 1994’s “Soundtrack To Your Escape,” sold 10,000 in its first week and 90,000 to date, a number that essentially matches Ferret’s ship-out.

Nuclear Blast maintains rights to the band in Europe, but has limited office staff in the United States. Zeiser was won over by Ferret’s pitch to go after an extreme-sports market and advertise outside the metal world.

“We were wondering why all these bands influenced by In Flames sold more than In Flames,” Zeiser says. “Ferret, though, is coming from the hardcore scene.”

Music Choice was a key online partner for the label; it gave Ferret a one-hour special in exchange for the label tagging its name on all marketing items. The band is slated to tour the United States multiple times this year, and Zeiser says the RED-distributed Ferret will likely release “Come Clarity” with bonus material. Ferret president Carl Severson says a release is still in discussion. Severson adds that signing a band with the respect and catalog of In Flames was key to Ferret’s development. “This was us doing what we could to make a statement,” he says.

**AMP-ED UP:** Indie-rock Web destination Pitchfork (pitchforkmedia.com) has switched from Insound to newcomers Amp Camp for its CD fulfillment. Amp Camp is the music offspring of Neighborhoodies, the Brooklyn, N.Y.-based custom-design clothing company that entered the music biz last year (Billboard, Sept. 3, 2005). Neighborhoodies also just happens to be one of Pitchfork’s biggest advertisers.

Since last August, Neighborhoodies’ music offerings have grown from a handful of CDs to a full-on indie rock shop, which caters to the hip and the unsigned. Neighborhoodies founder Michael De Zayas says his music retail dreams have yet to turn a profit, but points out that few retailers enjoy the margins of a popular sweatshirt business.

Insound and Pitchfork had worked together for five years and enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. For example, Clap Your Hands Say Yeah’s self-titled album was Insound’s top-selling record weeks before Pitchfork raved about the act.

Amp Camp now operates as a separate division of Neighborhoodies run by De Zayas’ brother Danny, who says Amp Camp is frantically beefing up its catalog and content to complement Pitchfork’s coverage, and now has designs on a bigger slice of the indie retail market.

**At 3GSM, Next-Gen Mobile Showcases Music**

At the 3GSM wireless confab held Feb. 13-16 in Barcelona, the world heard about the further evolution of mobile phones—and the future sounds like music.

Motorola made the biggest splash through an agreement with Microsoft to add Windows Media technology to upcoming devices. Last year, Motorola made headlines as the first manufacturer to include Apple Computer’s iTunes technology in its phones—first with the much-maligned ROKR and more recently with the addition of the SLVR.

However, Motorola said that wireless operators have requested more devices that support Microsoft’s technology because it will let them offer their own music download services, while Apple’s technology will not. Verizon’s VCast Music service, for instance, relies on Windows Media.

Although Motorola now has licensing agreements with Apple and Microsoft, the company says it does not have any plans to combine the technologies into a single device.

For Motorola, the announcement serves as notice that the company is not content to simply ride on Apple’s coattails in the digital music space. Apple forced Motorola to artificially limit the number of songs that can be transferred to iTunes phones to 100. Critics also say that it takes too long to transfer songs from iTunes to the phones.

For Microsoft, the deal advances two of the company’s top-of-mind initiatives: establishing a greater footing in the wireless space and presenting a bigger challenge to Apple’s iPod.

Unlike past Microsoft mobile efforts, the Motorola deal is not concerned with operating systems, but rather the Windows Media Audio file format and digital rights management technology. Motorola representatives expect to see a far greater number of phones with Microsoft’s music management technology on them than Apple’s.

The first phones will support only the ability to sideload Windows-based music from PCs to the mobile phones, including subscription services and downloaded files from online services using Microsoft’s technology, such as Rhapsody and Napster. By next year, the phones will support over-the-air downloads.

In other Motorola news, the company demonstrated a mobile podcasting service in conjunction with Yahoo. The application would allow users to sync their mobile phones with the Yahoo Music engine to drag and drop saved podcast files to their phones, as well as download podcasts directly over the air.

The demonstration was part of an ongoing effort by Motorola and Yahoo to deliver access to Yahoo’s core products and services on Motorola phones, including Internet search and instant messaging functions.

Nokia, the leading mobile manufacturer in the world, took a step of its own in mobile music’s evolution by introducing a phone capable of connecting to Wi-Fi hotspots in addition to traditional wireless networks.

Such phones are expected to shake up the accepted model for how files are downloaded to mobile devices. Today, the only way to download music or video files to phones is through the carrier network. While carriers have spent billions upgrading their networks to high-speed, high-capacity broadband connections, it is still very expensive and often technologically difficult to download media-rich content.

Phones capable of connecting to Wi-Fi hotspots, however, could bypass the carrier network and allow users to download music and other files much more quickly and cheaply.

U.K. wireless operator Orange was named as the first carrier to support the new device.

Motorola and Nokia also introduced other music-capable handsets featuring FM radio access and embedded digital music playback capabilities. Sony-Ericsson joined the club as well, with a flash-based 4GB-capacity addition to its Walkman phone line expected in third-quarter 2006.

And in an interesting twist, the joint venture between BenQ and Siemens produced an MP3 player device that features a concealed mobile phone. Most mobile phones are incorporating some degree of MP3 player capabilities, but this is a rare example of an MP3 player adding limited mobile phone functions.
Retail Track

ED CHRISTMAN @echristman@billboard.com

TAKING STOCK IN LONDON, WHERE RETAIL IS VALUED

I n case you didn’t notice, HMV Group admitted on Feb. 7 that its board of directors had turned down a conditional offer by Permira Advisers to buy the chain for about 800 million pounds ($1.18 billion) (Billboard.biz, Feb. 7).

When news started leaking out about the bid on Jan. 30, the company’s shares shot up from 1.05 pounds to 1.92—slightly more than the 1.9 pounds per-share bid that was on the table.

Considering the valuations of U.S.-based retailers like Trans World (a $177 million market capitalization), Hastings ($58 million market cap) and Tower Records (its owners passed on a $170 million bid in 2004), you might be wondering how the HMV Group is performing. Well, in its half-year figures, HMV reported operating income of 2.8 million pounds ($5 million) on sales of about 760 million pounds ($1.15 billion). Roughly one fifth of sales comes from the Waterstone’s book chain, with the remainder from HMV multimedia stores.

Think about that. HMV is valued at about $1.4 billion on the stock market and by a potential suitor even though it barely eked out a profit in its six-months results. Whatever its shortcomings when it had U.S. operations, HMV has always been a fine music merchant with a strong brand and surely deserves the respect implied by its valuation. Likewise, Waterstone’s also has great pedigree as a bookseller, and no doubt its importance is also recognized in the company’s valuation on the London Stock Exchange.

So, I do not want anyone to get the impression that I think HMV’s board is crazy for turning down the offer. But I dare say that if any worthy record store/multimedia merchants on this side of the pond received a $1.4 billion bid, we would all be discussing what impact the new owners would have on the lucky chain.

Let me put it this way. Maybe Bob Higgins or Alan Rodriguez should either move their headquarters to London or try to get their companies listed on that country’s stock exchange. Because multimedia merchants command a lot more respect from the U.K. stock market than they do over here.

SOUR NOTES: Navarre posted a loss of $6.1 million, or 20 cents per diluted share, on sales of $214.1 million for the quarter ended Dec. 31. Most of the bad news that led to the red ink appears to be related to its music operations.

In announcing the results, the company reported it took a $12.7 million write-off resulting from the Musicland bankruptcy and a $4.1 million write-off related to an unidentified independent label. But there was also a $1.4 million net income gain from the restatement of Navarre’s financials to exclude Mix & Burn losses above Navarre’s investment in the kiosk company.

The latter development is too convoluted to explain within this space, but I will return to the topic of Mix & Burn, the download kiosk company, in a minute.

Meanwhile, back to Navarre’s numbers. For the nine-month period, the New Hope, Minn.-based distributor reported a net loss of $4.2 million, or 14 cents per diluted share, on sales of $512.9 million. The good news is that sales are up 12.8% from the $454.6 million the company reported in the corresponding period of the prior year.

Now onto developments in its music-related business, the second-smallest product line for Navarre, which also handles PC software, videogames and DVDs.

Navarre was the largest unsecured creditor to get burned by Musicland’s Chapter 11 filing. Without that hit, the company would have been profitable for the quarter and year-to-date.

Secondly, Navarre exited the major-label wholesale business after its billings there decreased to $8.4 million in the first nine months of its fiscal year, versus the $19.5 million it was billing during the corresponding period in the prior year.

Back in the days when the longbox went away, Navarre had carved out a nice little business preparing product from the majors specially for wholesale outlets like Sam’s Club and Costco. But as those merchant grew, the majors took over those accounts again until only EMI still used Navarre for Sam’s Club.

Last October, Navarre lost that account to Anderson Merchandisers, which in effect made it a business without an account base as far as Navarre was concerned.

Meanwhile, Navarre’s indie distribution business grew to $54.6 million for the nine-month period, up from $49.9 million in the nine-months ended Dec. 31, 2004.

As for Mix & Burn, its results show the expected red ink associated with new business models. According to Navarre’s 10-Q, Mix & Burn posted a $1.6 million loss on net sales of $424,000 for the nine-month period ended Dec. 31, 2005.

Navarre’s share price closed at $4.83 on Feb. 13, down from the $5.33 level on Feb. 7, when its financial results were released after the close of trading.

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SONY BMG IS TOPS IN BRAZIL

Despite Good News, Layoffs And Roster Cuts Continue In A Market Still In ‘Crisis’

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL—Sony BMG became Brazil’s market-leading record company in 2005, ending 10 years of local domination by Universal Music Group.

According to provisional data from labels body ABPD obtained by Billboard, Sony BMG accounted for 25.2% of recorded-music shipments by value during 2005, ahead of UMG with 23.9%, EMI (20.4%), Warner Music (15.1%) and independent label Som Livre (13.3%).

However, Sony BMG Brazil boss Alexandre Schiavo says the company will not rest on its laurels in a market that he says remains in crisis. In recent weeks, Sony BMG cut costs by laying off 35 staffers—a one-third of its employees. Among the highest-profile departures were international department director José Roberto Verda and promotion director Luís Felipe Couto.

The label is also looking to trim its 56-strong domestic roster and will cut back on the number of local releases this year, Schiavo says. “Our goal will be quality and not quantity of releases,” he explains. “The idea is to release albums by at least 14 local artists. Last year we did 35.”

ABPD figures for 2004 gave UMG a 20.3% market share; the pre-merger Sony and BMG accounted for 15.6% and 13.9%. However, industry observers suggest that Sony BMG’s move into pole position is not a mere matter of arithmetic.

“We expected that [dominance] because of the merger,” says Benjamin Martins, president/CEO of Sao Paulo-based leading music wholesaler A Universal Distribuidora. But Martins says Sony BMG’s success was also due to working its domestic roster during 2005. He singles out pop artist Ana Carolina, whose 2005 album “Per Fil” shipped 500,000 copies, making it the year’s biggest seller, according to ABPD.

Two other Sony BMG domestic acts’ albums were among ABPD’s top five best sellers in 2005: Zezé Di Camargo & Luciano’s self-titled album and “Roberto Carlos 2005” by the veteran vocalist, which shipped more than 200,000 copies within five days of its December release, according to ABPD.

The market figures are still being audited for 2005, but ABPD figures for the full market show a 15% drop in units shipped, from 55.9 million in 2004 to 47 million. Trade value fell 10.2% from 659.9 million reales ($304 million) to 592.5 reales ($273 million).

According to the IFPI, the retail value of the Brazilian market was $374.2 million in 2004. However, that represented only a quarter of its worth 10 years ago, prior to severe financial problems in the country’s economy during the late 1990s.

The Brazilian market has also been dogged by piracy; the IFPI reports the physical piracy rate is 52%. However, the government has made moves during the past two years to more rigorously enforce anti-piracy legislation, and a number of prominent counterfeiters have received prison sentences.

Schiavo says there are other reasons to be positive about 2006, particularly at retail. Leading national supermarket chain Pão De Acucar, which has approximately 4,000 outlets, announced in late 2005 that it plans to put a greater emphasis on selling music and video during 2006.

“I also see opportunities for the market to grow thanks to the aggressive entrance of Wal-Mart in Brazil,” Schiavo says.

In December 2005, Wal-Mart acquired mass merchant Sonae’s 140-strong national chain. It is the U.S. retail giant’s second major acquisition in Brazil, in 2004, it bought the 118-outlet Bompreço chain... In 2005, Sony BMG led Brazil in market share thanks to domestic acts including ANA CAROLINA, whose album "Per Fil" shipped 500,000 copies and was the country’s leading seller.

Labels Hail Asian Courts’ Moves Against File Sharing

Landmark court cases in Singapore and Hong Kong have raised hopes in the Asian music industry in its struggle against illegal file sharing.

In the first case of its kind, two men appeared in Singapore’s District Court Jan. 13 on charges of violating the Copyright Act (enacted in 1987 and subsequently amended).

The pair were accused of illegally distributing music by uploading several hundred songs by local and international acts since 2002.

On Jan. 26, the second groundbreaking development arrived in Hong Kong, when Deputy High Court Judge Poon Shiu-cho ordered the territory’s four largest Internet service providers to reveal the identities of 22 individuals suspected of breaching copyright laws by illegally sharing music files. This was the first such action by a Hong Kong court.

“File sharing is a massive problem, and these legal actions are the start of a process,” says Hong Kong-based IFPI regional chairman Lachie Rutherford, who is also president of Warner Music Asia Pacific.

“I don’t think we’re near controlling this problem at all,” Rutherford admits. “People can expect to see more of these kinds of cases.”

The two Singaporeans, the unemployed Mohamed Faizal Osman and factory worker Mohamad Azyri Zainol, were arrested in August 2005 by the Singapore police’s Intellectual Property Rights branch as a result of information received from local ISPs and the Recording Industry Assn. of Singapore.

District Judge Bala Reddy adjourned the case to an unspecified date in February. If found guilty, each of the accused faces a maximum sentence of five years and a fine of $58,000.

“This is the first such case in Singapore and should serve as a deterrent for those involved in illegal music downloads and uploads,” RIAS CEO Edward Neubronner says. RIAS confirmed it has passed details of other home users believed to be illegally distributing music files to the police.

The Hong Kong High Court order was in response to a writ filed in November by the local IFPI branch on behalf of seven record companies including the local affiliates of EMI, Sony BMG, Universal and Warner.

IFPI Hong Kong Group CEO Ricky Fung says the next step for the labels group will be to “seek some form of pre-litigation settlement with the infringers, as is common practice internationally.”

The four ISPs are Hong Kong Broadband Network, i-Cable, PCCW and Hutchison Global Communications. The 22 suspects are users of the popular peer-to-peer file-sharing service WinMX.

Fung says IFPI Hong Kong’s anti-piracy campaign will focus on the illegal sharing of prereleases. “That hurts the music industry the most,” he says. “When a prerelease is made available for circulation for free, the labels have no more hope that the title will be sold.”

The court action is not aimed at gaining financial compensation, Fung claims. Rather, “it is about sending a strong message to music lovers that the way they are enjoying music is killing the industry.”

Since September 2005, IFPI Hong Kong claims to have issued 32,000 warnings to people downloading music illegally via WinMX.

“If four positive actions continue to be ignored by certain members of the public, we are left with few other options than to enforce the law,” says Kelvin Wadsworth, a Hong Kong-based Sony BMG Music Entertainment senior VP who heads the company’s Asian operations.

“This will include defending the rights of our artists through legal means against corpora... and, regrettably, individuals,” Wadsworth says.

The IFPI blames the increase in file sharing for a five-year decline in sales. It claims total music retail sales in Hong Kong fell in local value by 25% from $842.2 million Hong Kong ($108.2 million) in 2000 to $631.6 million Hong Kong ($81.1 million) in 2004. Figures for 2005 are not yet available.

Another problem territory in the region is Taiwan, where Rutherford says the government has not yet responded to the industry’s appeals for action to counter file sharing.

The result has been a drastic decline in recorded-music sales in Taiwan, Rutherford says. According to IFPI Asia Pacific estimates, music retail sales in the territory fell 28% to $3.5 billion Taiwan ($108.6 million) in 2005. In the preceding five-year period, IFPI figures show local retail value fell slightly more than 36% from $7.5 billion Taiwan ($223.9 million) in 2000 to $4.8 billion Taiwan ($142.5 million) in 2004.

“The situation is disgraceful,” Rutherford declares, and adds that file-sharing services in Taiwan “are basically making money by charging members of the public to use material for which we receive no money whatsoever.”

Reporting by Steve McClure in Tokyo; Christie Leo in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Bram Rosenfeld in Hong Kong.
Canadian Songsmiths Enjoying Increased Control Of Their Copyrights

TORONTO—Backed by his country's copyright law, Canadian singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot is not about to let anyone in Canada cover his 1976 hit "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

"The song is so personal to Gordon that he doesn't want it to be recorded by others," Lightfoot's Toronto-based manager Barry Harvey says. "So we refuse to license it." Harvey oversees the artist's catalog through Lightfoot's own Moose Music and Early Morning Music companies.

In 1989, Canada's music publishers successfully lobbied for the abolishment of compulsory licensing and the right to negotiate directly with record labels for mechanical licenses. As a result, there is only one remaining statutory license that provides for the issuance of a license by the Canadian Copyright Board upon application, where the copyright owner cannot be located.

Until 1989, the Canadian Copyright Act's provisions—unchanged since 1924—forced Canadian publishers to accept a mechanical rate of 2 cents Canadian (1.75 cents) per song. The act also provided for compulsory licensing of mechanical rights after first use.

The United States is the last country to still have a compulsory mechanical license, which has come under scrutiny by congressional oversight committees during the last two years.

Since 1989, Canadian industry practice has generally adhered to a standard rate negotiated between the Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency—which represents most publishers in Canada—and labels body the Canadian Recording Industry Assn. The current rate for a mechanical license is 4.5 cents Canadian (7.4 cents) per track.

However, Toronto music lawyer Paul Sanderson of Sanderson Taylor notes, "There are people who charge (labels) 9 or 10 cents." He adds that the lack of a compulsory license gives publishers bargaining power including the right to withhold licensing.

The latter is most effective when labels seek a reduction to a three-quarter-controlled composition rate. "They usually pay the full rate because the song is likely already recorded," Harvey says.

Toronto music lawyer Susan Abramovitch of Goodman Carr adds, "A label represented went to get a mechanical license at full industry rate, and the artist—who was also the songwriter—essentially refused. He asked for four times the industry rate."

Abramovitch further notes that the lack of compulsory licensing can be a weapon within band dynamics. Any band member who owns even a portion of a song's publishing can withhold the right for the band to re-record the song. "In the United States, that can't happen," she says. (Publishing) co-owners could license the song if the others received a pro-rated share.

Lightfoot is one of a handful of Canadians—including 1960s folk-iron Ian Tyson—who originally signed with U.S.-based publishers and is now taking advantage of the Canadian copyright law's change. Both artists have regained their catalogs after using termination rights granted by the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 and the Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998, rights unavailable in Canada.

Tyson secured termination rights for his 1960s catalog from Warner/Chappell in the mid-1990s. He now has a worldwide administration deal with Warner/Chappell for his catalog, which includes the classics "Four Strong Winds" and "Someday Soon."

Tyson admits there are downsides to taking control. "I now see more papers," he grouses. "You can't read everything, but I always check if there are checks in the envelopes."

In the new film "Neil Young: Heart of Gold," Young prefaced a performance of "Four Strong Winds" with a reminiscence of going out to Falcon Lake (east of Winnipeg, Manitoba) in 1963 as a teen and plugging nickel after nickel into a jukebox to listen to the Ian & Sylvia version over and over again. He talks about that song being his favorite.

When told that Young performed "Four Strong Winds" on the televised Live 8 concert last summer, Tyson, who lives on a farm in rural Alberta, chuckles and says, "Well, I haven't seen anything on these yet. I expect I will."
FRENCH REVAMP COPYRIGHT BILL

Government debate regarding France’s controversial copyright bill will resume in the lower house of the country’s Parliament during the first half of March. The bill’s initial discussion and expected vote was suspended Dec. 22 after the adoption of two amendments that would have opened the door to widespread, low-cost file sharing. One would have introduced a compulsory license, whereby users could download unlimited tracks for a small monthly fee.

Music industry figures claimed the flat-fee system would kill the country’s nascent legal download industry.

The bill has now been redrafted, excluding the amendments. French minister of culture Renaud Donnedieu De Vabres announced Feb. 12 it will likely be presented to parliament “between March 7 and 10.” —Amyric Pichevin

O2 EXPANDS UNIVERSAL DEAL

U.K.-based wireless operator O2 has extended its existing content partnership with Universal Music to include a greater array of mobile products. Through the new pact, O2 users will have access to 100,000 Universal titles to purchase as full-track audio downloads, master ringtones, wallpaper or music videos.

The offering includes content from British-signed acts

Keane, Snow Patrol and Razorlight.

O2 was one of the first firms to deliver full downloads to cell phones in Europe when it launched in Germany in 2003. —Lars Brandle

ARIA RE- ELECTS HANDLIN

Denis Handlin has been re-elected for a record eighth term as chair of the Australian Recording Industry Assn. board. He is also chairman/CEO of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Australia and New Zealand. He will serve a 12-month term.

Simultaneously, Warner Music Australasia president/CEO Ed St. John has been named chairman of the annual ARIA Awards committee, and EMI Music Australia managing director John O’Donnell has been named chairman of the ARIA chart and marketing committee. —Christie Eliezer

AIR SEALED IN STRONGROM

AIR Studios, the London-based recording facility established by Beatles producer George Martin, has changed hands in a deal worth £3.3 million ($5.6 million).

Independent London-based recording studio operator Strongroom has acquired the studio from British music firm Chrysalis Group and audio equipment manufacturer Pioneer GB, which were joint partners in AIR. AIR and Strongroom will be run independently.

Martin, who retired in 2002, established AIR Studios in 1969. He sold a controlling interest in AIR to Chrysalis in 1975.

Boote launched Strongroom Studios in 1984. The company operates a multimedia complex in Shoreditch, East London, and has music publishing and artist management arms. —Lars Brandle

SEROBE EXITS HEITA

Former Sony Music South Africa managing director Lazarus Serobe is quitting as managing director of Heita Records, the joint-venture label he launched with Sony BMG Africa in December.

In a statement, Serobe says he will leave by the end of this month to pursue other media interests and that Sony BMG Africa has bought out his stake in Heita for an undisclosed sum.

The label will become a fully integrated Sony BMG Africa imprint. Its staff will be headed by Heita GM Matwetwe Ntombini, reporting to Sony BMG Africa CEO Keith Lister. —Diane Coetzee

The time is fast approaching when copyright holders may have to let the world know who they are and what they own if they want to keep control over their works.

The U.S. Copyright Office submitted its Report on Orphan Works Jan. 23 to Senate and House subcommittee leaders. It recommends legislation to permit individuals and companies to use copyrighted works even though the owners cannot be identified or located to secure a license (Billboard, Feb. 18).

Current copyright law does not require registration or a copyright notice identifying the owner. Many copyright owners are difficult—and in some cases impossible—to locate. As a result, potential users have shied away from using certain copyrighted works.

The Copyright Office wrote that its goal was to set up a workable system that encouraged voluntary licenses between owners and users. Yet the system should create conditions that permit people to use a work when they cannot identify and locate the owner.

The recommended changes in the infringement and remedies section of the Copyright Act would require potential users to conduct a “reasonably diligent” search to identify and locate the copyright owner.

The report encourages different sectors of the copyright industries—music, software, scientific journals, etc.—to develop guidelines on how to search for the lawful owners.

If the potential user cannot identify and locate the owner, the copyrighted work may be used as long as proper attribution of ownership is provided. That requirement would ensure that the public receives information that someone other than the user owns the work.

The report recommends that the user must prove that a search was performed and that it was reasonable. Once an owner is located, the new orphan works provision would not apply.

If a copyright owner surfaces after someone who follows this process uses an orphan work, then that owner’s remedies for copyright infringement against the user would be limited.

For example, a commercial user would only be responsible to pay reasonable compensation for the use rather than statutory damages—currently $150,000 per infringement—if the user conducted a proper search. Noncommercial users would not have to pay monetary damages if they stopped using the work once notified of the owner’s interest in the work.

Congressional subcommittee leaders are currently reviewing the full report.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: The crème de la crème of music industry lawyers attended the Grammy Foundation’s Entertainment, Law Initiative lunch and scholarship presentation Feb. 6 in Beverly Hills, Calif.

EMI Group chairman Eric Nicoli—who keynoted the event—said that while there is so much media attention on digital distribution of music, digital development is still in its infancy.

Nicoli characterized the industry as “being in its ‘silent movie’ phase of digital development.” He pointed out that broadband penetration is at about 40% and MP3 player penetration is about 15% in the most-developed markets. With digital music comprising about 60% of the global recorded-music market, there is a lot of room to enjoy growth.

“The extent to which we expect the growth opportunity is in our collective hands,” Nicoli told the audience.

He also called on all businesses that depend on intellectual property to join the Business Action to Stop Counterfeiting and Piracy initiative that he co-chairs.

During the event, EII Advisory Committee chairman Don Passman presented scholarships to the winning students. Carlos Ruiz De La Torre won the $5,000 grand prize scholarship.

The University of New Mexico School of Law student wrote an article focusing on legislative strategies to provide more music through digital distribution.

The four runners-up were Kevin Bernando (Ohio State Moritz College of Law), Car McDade (Marquette University Law School), Aaron Power (Southwestern University School of Law) and Carmen Kate Yuen (Yale Law School).
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- PRESIDENTS & ARTISTS: Label presidents and artists find common ground between creativity and business.
- THE ART OF THE TOUR: Promoters, sponsors and agents discuss the booking and execution of the most profitable tours.
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Hill, McGraw Bring Back ‘Soul’

Despite Traffic By Other Country Acts, Couple’s Third Tour Together Pegged For Success

LOS ANGELES—Timing is everything in life, and in touring.

Country’s superstar couple, Faith Hill and Tim McGraw, are kicking off their Soul2Soul tour this spring, and organizers say that the timing of the 70-plus-date trek could make it one of the biggest outings of 2006. Soul2Soul II (presented by Hershey) will begin April 21 at the Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio, and will run through early September, stopping in 46 cities.

Eight shows went on sale Feb. 11, with tickets moving so swiftly that additional dates were added in Columbus, Ohio, and in Boston. Shows in Dallas and Buffalo. N.Y. also sold out.

The tour’s organizers—which include Creative Artists Agency’s John Huie, Hill’s manager Gary Borman and McGraw’s manager Scott Siman—point to several factors that could equate Soul2Soul II with touring gold.

First, the couple’s 2000 point tour, dubbed Soul2Soul Tour 2000, was the last time Hill was on the road. That outing grossed more than $46 million and was attended by almost 945,000 people, according to Billboard Boxscore. Suny out of the 63 reported shows were sellouts.

The new outing marks the pair’s third tour together. Their first, in 1995-96 before they wed, grossed $9.5 million from 53 dates reported to Billboard Boxscore.

“The populous has been wanting to know when, not if, they were going to tour together again,” Huie says.

Huie adds that the health of country music tours in 2005 will only intensify this excitement. Kenny Chesney, for example, scored the No. 4 tour of last year, generating $63 million and total attendance of almost 1.2 million, according to Billboard Boxscore. Only U2, the Eagles and Neil Diamond grossed more.

Hill and McGraw also appeal to a growing group of non-country fans. “Both artists have had cross-over success,” Siman says. “We have a core country base that we are proud of, but there are a number of people who might have experienced Tim for the first time on the duc

Hill’s size of the 16-truck production heavily influenced tour booking, as did date availability. The spring dates are all weekends because Hill and McGraw wanted to tour around their three children’s school schedules.

“We are covering most of America and most of the major markets,” Huie says. “We did focus on cities where we could do multiple shows because of the level of production.”

Asking the right price was also a huge consideration for fans. Most venues are offering tickets in the $50-$80 range.

Nationwide Arena assistant GM Eric Granger believes that the price will be seen as a value to concertgoers.

“You see a lot of artists by themselves asking for this price or even higher,” Granger notes. The tour will take advantage of various projects that Hill and McGraw are promoting. The couple’s Feb. 8 Grammy Award win for their duet, “Like We Never Loved At All,” can only help with awareness too.

Soul2Soul II follows Hill’s August release of “Fireflies” (Warners Bros.), which has sold 1.6 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and reached No. 1 on The Billboard 200 and the Top Country Albums chart.

A new greatest-hits album by McGraw is due March 28 on Curb, preceded by a new single. Additionally, he stars in and will be featured on the soundtrack to “Flicka,” a Fox film out this summer.

McGraw’s last studio album, 2004’s “Live Like You Were Dying,” has sold 3.7 million units, and also reached No. 1 on The Billboard 200 and Top Country Albums.

Borman says Hill and McGraw will do various appearances to help market the trek during the course of the tour. Local promoters across the country will handle date-specific marketing.

Further, each select Hershey products as its candies will advertise the tour, and packaging will include a code for a free, exclusive download of their live duet “Like We Never Loved At All.”

www.americanradiohistory.com

**ON THE ROAD**

RAY WADDELL rwaddell@billboard.com

Here Comes McBride

Martina McBride is posting the most impressive numbers of her career on Timeless Tour. The outing, which started Jan. 13 in State College, Pa., is selling out most venues in advance, including her first appearance at New York’s famed Radio City Music Hall on Feb. 18. The leg runs through May.

McBride will perform in theaters and theater configurations in arenas, with capacities in the 5,000-7,000 seat range.

Brad Garrett, whose St. Charles, Mo.-based Police Productions is promoting 34 dates, has worked with McBride since the earliest days of her touring career, and even he is impressed.

“The best date for us on the tour is probably going to be Atlanta, and it’s sitting at 7,700 paid, $350,000 gross right now,” Garrett says of the April 22 show at the Arena at Gwinnett Center. “In Chicago, we did $297,000 gross at the Rosemont Theatre, and we basically only had 75 tickets left 45 minutes after we went on sale.”

Garrett says McBride is averaging grosses of $240,000 per night. “Not bad for a genre that doesn’t believe in female headliners,” he says, adding that there is more to the Timeless tour than numbers.

“It’s a five-truck, full production, with rear-screen projection and a very tasteful stage design,” Garrett says. “It’s a very powerful show. It’s good to see her being presented in a way that a lot of people may not have seen her in the past.”

Many of McBride’s successes are coming in nontraditional country markets like New York, which does not even have a country radio station. Jay Marciano, president of Madison Square Garden Entertainment, which runs Radio City Music Hall, says that “to have a country star sell out Radio City in her first appearance there is outstanding. To say we are thrilled would be an understatement.”

McBride is booked by Rod Essig at Creative Artists Agency, who says the artist’s touring career has been a steady build, setting the foundation for this year. “Now she’s kickin’ ass, we’re totally reaping the benefits,” Essig says. “She’s doing it phenomenally, and she’s doing it on her own, her way.”

The first half of McBride’s show features country classics from her self-produced “Timeless” record, and the second half includes hits and choice covers. The Warren Brothers open some shows.

McBride will play the West Coast in late June and July, then play more dates in September before prepping a new Christmas show to begin in mid-November.

**BACK IN THE BOWL:** The partnership of Bill Silva Presents and Andrew Hewitt has inked continued on >>p30
This one-day event brings together the best minds from the music, legal, financial and Wall Street communities for an in-depth examination of the financial realities and opportunities within the music industry.

SPEAKERS

Mark Desautels, Wireless Internet Development, CTIA
Joel A. Katz, Co-Managing Shareholder of Atlanta Office/Chairman of Global Entertainment Practice, Greenberg Traurig, LLP
Nicholas Firth, Chairman & CEO, BMG Music Publishing
John Frankenheimer, Co-Chairman, Loeb & Loeb LLP
Mark Levinsohn, Managing Partner, Levinsohn, Epstein, Levinsohn, Rodina, Horwitz & Weinstein, LLP
Horst Schlegel, President, Vogel Capital Management
Ted Casey, Head of Mobile Music, Verizon
Greg Clayman, VP Wireless Strategy & Operations, MTV Networks
Jerry Gold, Senior Managing Director, FTI Consulting
Rich Graefesfield, Managing Director, Media Analyst, Pali Capital
Jim Griffin, Managing Director, One House LLC
Shahid Khan, Partner, Interactive Broadband Consulting Group, LLC
Duncan Reid, Commercial Director, Ingenious
Simon Wilkinson, Sr. VP, GM, Content and Hosted Services Business Unit, Openwave

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a new multiyear contract to book shows at the Hollywood Bowl.

Hewitt and Silva—who also manages artists including Jason Mraz and Raul Midón—have jointly served as the exclusive promoter of the Hollywood Bowl since 1991. Major promoters including AEG Live and Nederlander have also made a run at the Hollywood Bowl contract.

**FIRST ROUND TKO:** Dan DeVita has joined the Kirby Organization as an agent specializing in international markets. He reports to CEO Dave Kirby. DeVita was previously with Concrete Marketing and Rick Sales Management. The TKO roster boasts the mellowsounding of the Cult, Anthrax, Bloodsimple, 3 Inches of Blood, Mudvayne, Life of Agony and Motörhead.

**IEG CHART RETURNS:** This week marks the beginning of the IEG Sponsorship chart, published in cooperation with IEG Sponsorship Report, the Chicago-based biweekly newsletter covering deals in sports, arts, entertainment and marketing. Compiled by IEG Sponsorship Report senior editor William Chipp, the IEG Tour Sponsorship Roundup, below, features information on tour and venue sponsorships, estimated fees and the agencies/executives behind the deals. We plan to run the chart monthly.

**ON THE ROAD**

from p28

**IEG/BILLBOARD TOUR SPONSORSHIP**

**Sponsor**

Honda American Honda Motor Co.

Rolling Rock Yellow USA

Sports Spectra/Arachnid Corp.

**Tour**

Honda Civic Tour Featuring the Black Eyed Peas, Match-Maker, 40 Stop

Rockstar/Alcatraz Inc.

B.B. King Tour: Autumn of '06

**Estimated Fee**

$1.5 million

$100,000

$5.5 million

**Estimated Per Stop**

$15,000

$10,000

$2,500

**Tour Name**

Honda Civic Tour Featuring the Black Eyed Peas, Match-Maker, 40 Stop

Rockstar/Alcatraz Inc.

B.B. King Tour: Autumn of '06

**Distribution**

Sponsor

Sponsor

Sponsor

**Description**

Honda is using the Orlando location of the Honda Civic Tour to tout its Civic line. Honda's active and feng shui identity; 10 cities, 10 days.

The tour of China bus routes the Idaho-based sponsorship on behalf of the nation's largest single category, whose pockets are increasingly using sponsorship to build brand equity and sample and promote their high-energy positioning. RockStar will engage with product sampling and premium giveaways, the tie-up, on the tour's exciting partnership with the rock band's enthusiastic consumers.

Ronnie Tucker, brand director for Rolling Rock and Rock Green Light, hail USA.

Kevin Lyman, co-founder and CEO, festival.

**Event**

Honda Civic Tour Featuring the Black Eyed Peas, Match-Maker, 40 Stop

Rockstar/Alcatraz Inc.

B.B. King Tour: Autumn of '06

**Attendances**

over 2.5 million

over 100,000

37,000

**GROSS/TICKET PRICES**

**ARTIST(S)**

**Venue, Date**

Honda Civic Tour Featuring the Black Eyed Peas, Match-Maker, 40 Stop

Honda Civic Tour Featuring the Black Eyed Peas, Match-Maker, 40 Stop

B.B. King Tour: Autumn of '06

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**FEBRUARY 25, 2006**

**BOXSCORE Concert Grosses**

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For research purposes, the box scores are not meant to be the official box scores, but rather a representation of the grosses. For more box scores, go to www.americanradiohistory.com.
David Gilmour has remained quiet since Pink Floyd's reunion last July for the Live 8 concert at London's Hyde Park. Quiet but hardly inactive. He has been busy laying the finishing touches on his third solo album in a career that spans close to 40 years.

The 10 tracks on the new set, "On an Island," bear Gilmour's trademarks—atmospheric guitar work and ethereal harmonies. Some of the songs, such as the title track and "A Pocketful of Stones," could easily fit on a Pink Floyd album. There are inroads to blues and jazz, and a couple of instrumental— including one, "Red Sky at Night," that has Gilmour playing the saxophone.

Gilmour co-produced the album with Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera and Chris Thomas. It is due March 6 on EMI in Europe and March 7 on Columbia Records in the United States. "I do really think it is about as good a piece of work as I have ever done," Gilmour says.

Starting in March, Gilmour will embark on a 25-date sold-out tour in Europe that will continue in America in April before a U.K. return at the end of May for a series of concerts at Royal Albert Hall. The set list will include tracks from the new album as well as Pink Floyd favorites.

Despite Gilmour's acrimonious split with Pink Floyd bass player and main composer Roger Waters, they agreed to appear together at Live 8, fueling speculation that Pink Floyd could regroup. Gilmour spoke with Billboard about his new album, his creative partnership with his wife and lyricist, Polly Samson; his aspirations in life; and, of course, Pink Floyd.

Q: You have recorded only three solo albums in 25 years. What triggered this one?
A: As well as the two previous solo albums, there's been two Pink Floyd albums in '87 and '94. So while it is not very frequent, quite a lot of more work has gone on in the intervening period. I have remarried and had four more children, and I have been enjoying bringing those children up. But in the last couple of years it felt it was time to start again and start working on a new album. It felt to me that this album should be me and not Pink Floyd this time. It's just a slightly different way of working.

Q: Did it change anything in the songwriting process?
A: It was me writing little pieces of music and picking up what I wanted to work on. But I don't think it would have made any difference to the selection of the pieces of music, whether it was Pink Floyd or me on my own. I want to be a little smaller and more compact in my work, and the Pink Floyd is much bigger and much more comfortable doing this.

Q: With your body of work, you could probably get any lyricist in the world to pen something for you. Why work with your wife?
A: When you've got such a good lyricist so close by, I could not feel the point in going elsewhere. She worked with us on [the 1994 Pink Floyd album] "The Division Bell," and I like to keep things around me to my friends and colleagues that I've worked with. I am a bit shy at times, and moving outside of that is sometimes difficult for me. Polly and I are on a working partnership as well as a life partnership, and she's as good as I can get.

Q: Which are the Pink Floyd tracks you really like and that stand the rest of time?
A: "Shine On You Crazy Diamond" and "Wish You Were Here" are standout tracks. "Comfortably Numb" is another one. "High Hopes" from "The Division Bell" is one of my favorite all-time Pink Floyd tracks. "The Great Gig in the Sky," "Echoes"—there's a lot of them. For the tour, we have a list of songs that we want to try to decide on and that we'll be rehearsing.

Q: Are you frustrated that the tour is sold as "the voice and the guitar of Pink Floyd?"
A: Well, I am David Gilmour, the voice and guitar of Pink Floyd. I have been since I was 21. I can't see any reason at all when trying to promote my shows and my album. I shouldn't mention the fact that's what I spent my life doing.

Q: You are playing a select number of midsize venues. Are you aware that you may frustrate millions of people who may wish to see you?
A: I can't help other people's frustrations. I don't owe people anything. If people would like to come to my concerts, I'd love them to come. And if they like the music that I make, I love that too. But I do not make music for other people. I make it to please myself. To go out and tour for两个月s and months on end is not just what I want to be doing at my age. Sorry if you don't like that, but it's my prerogative.

Q: What motivated you to do Live 8?
A: For one thing, the cause. What Bob Geldof was trying to make happen was to persuade the leaders of the G8 nations to cancel the world's debt. Obviously, if one can do something about that, one wants to help. The second reason is that Roger and I had a lot of bitterness and anger over the years, and this was the first time that he had seemed to be wanting to put some of that behind him. And getting rid of anger and hatred is a good thing to do. I also thought that if I did not do it, I would regret it. So there are a lot of reasons for doing it, and I did thoroughly enjoy doing it. And it is very good to get over some of the bitterness and very good to have some sort of closure on all of that.

Q: Have you spoken to Waters since?
A: Not since that week, no.
Q: He seemed very happy onstage.
A: Yes, he was. And so was I.
Q: Why did you decide to give back the royalties as you would earn from your performance at Live 8?
A: I felt that it was not an act of generosity, but it was a debt. I don't think that being invited on a concert like that and having that massive advertisement for your career is something that's yours. It belongs to the cause, so I absolutely think that it is morally wrong to hang on to a profit that you have made out of something like that.

Q: Is it correct to assume that you turned down an offer to tour after Live 8?
A: Yes, we were offered a lot of money to go on tour. And if I had turned it down, yes. The offer was made to tour with a lot of money, and it was well without Roger. But I have no interest in going on a tour to make money without making new product, new art. So just going out and replaying our old hits again on a tour does not appeal to me at all.

Q: Will there ever be a chance to see the band live together?
A: Who knows? I have no plans at all to do that. My plans are to do my concerts and put my record out.

Q: What is your life going to be like in the next couple of years?
A: I have no idea what the future holds. I hope that I am going to get through my tour and enjoy it, and then I will be back home looking after my children, while my 16-year-old boy gets ready for his exams. And I shall be trying to steer and guide my children into their future.
HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS HAS THRIVED OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM.

BY TODD MARTENS
As the Grammy Awards came to a close at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, one of America’s hottest rock bands was getting ready to take the stage about 10 miles from the industry gala. For this group from Ohio—signed to an independent label in Chicago—performing in the shadow of the music industry’s biggest party was fitting.

Hawthorne Heights has spent much of the past two years on the road and on the Internet. Like an increasing number of indie-label acts, the band has thrived by operating just outside the mainstream. Now the group is on the verge of something far grander.

On Feb. 28, Victory Records will release Hawthorne Heights’ "If Only You Were Lonely," the follow-up to the act’s 2004 album, "The Silence in Black and White." To date, the latter has sold 762,000 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It did so with substantial touring—and negligible radio play.

Additionally, the band has won a sizable fan base without the media hype associated with such independent acts as the Arcade Fire or Clap Your Hands Say Yeah. Hawthorne Heights never had the ear of the tastemaker blogs, and the media never tapped the group as the next big thing. Instead, Hawthorne Heights has built its community of fans by harnessing the power of online destinations like MySpace and PureVolume.

“When we were trying to get everything going, all of us would spend at least four hours everyday just adding MySpace friends,” singer JT Woodruff says.

While much of the music industry and press were looking the other way, teenagers were paying attention. And what they found in Hawthorne Heights was a five-piece band that took hardcore elements and melded them with the pop sensibility of a Jimmy Eat World. With Woodruff’s earnest songwriting, Hawthorne Heights has become the kind of heart-on-its-sleeve rock band whose lyrics grace the folders of high school kids everywhere.

“We were finally able to sit back and take a break from each other this past December,” Woodruff says. “As soon as we all got back together, we all looked at each other and said, ‘My goodness, have you guys realized what has happened to us?’ ”

What has happened is that the band has managed to make it to the next level with no loss of identity. Victory is projecting “If Only You Were Lonely” to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 with an estimated first week of over 200,000 albums sold. If the prediction holds true, Hawthorne Heights will be the first independent rock band in the SoundScan era to debut atop the big chart.

Of course, nothing is guaranteed. Hawthorne Heights will be going head to head with the Def Jam debut from R&B newcomer Ne-Yo, “In My Own Words.” During the course of the last two months, Ne-Yo’s “So Sick” has reached No. 6 on The Billboard Hot 100. It is No. 7 this issue.

“It is not about where you start,” Victory founder Tony Brummel says. “It is about where you finish.”

“The Silence in Black and White” has tallied 60 weeks on The Billboard 200. The only rock albums currently on the chart have put in more time are releases from Green Day and the Killers.

Whatever we come out of the gate with will be fine,” Brummel adds. “This is not a sprint. This is a marathon. The fact of the matter is we have to roll up our sleeves and work harder than we have the last 20 months getting the first [Hawthorne Heights] album to platinum. The larger media and broadcast outlets are not independent-friendly."

Still, Woodruff admits it would be pretty cool to debut at the top. "Rock music is the hardest to debut at No. 1," he says. “The little guys need to win one.”

**WE HAVE A LOT TO PROVE**

Hawthorne Heights is used to being the underdog. Take, for example, this song title from the band’s new album: “Where Can I Stab Myself in the Ears.”

The band’s members—all in their mid-20s—have stated that the title comes from an anti-Hawthorne Heights post on absolutepunk.net. While any act that suddenly becomes popular faces some sort of backlash, Hawthorne Heights has long been on the front lines because of its use of the Internet to interact with fans on a daily basis.

“We definitely have a lot to prove,” Woodruff says. “That fuels a lot of our passion. I don’t hate our first record, but you listen to it and you can pick out the parts that you know you rapped.”

The band was drawn to the experience of former RCA A&R executive David Bendeth, who produced the set. Woodruff says it was Bendeth’s work mixing acts like Killswitch Engage and As I Lay Dying that impressed him, particularly because he put guitars ahead of the acts’ vocals.

“This band strikes that nerve straight down the middle of America, no different than the Replacements did,” Bendeth says. “They just do what they do, and it’s very natural. Kids who go see Hawthorne Heights can see themselves onstage playing.”

Those kids will have plenty of opportunities. The band is in the midst of a Midwest and East Coast tour with Anberlin and Bleed the Dream, and will then start a major tour with Fall Out Boy in March. Additionally, Hawthorne Heights appeared on “Jimmy Kimmel Live” Feb. 16, and is scheduled to perform on “Late Night With Conan O’Brien” in March.

Bendeth, who has worked with acts ranging from Antigone Rising to Vertical Horizon, says he has rarely seen a band with the work ethic of Hawthorne Heights. For the two months the group recorded at Water Music in Hoboken, N.J., Hawthorne Heights would get on a plane every Saturday at 5 a.m. to perform at radio festivals on the West Coast.

“On Sunday, we would just lay and watch football and fall asleep,” Woodruff says.

Despite the grueling hours, Woodruff says he has no interest in signing with a major. He recently started his own label, Carbon Copy Media, which will use Victory for distribution. In a first, the Cincinnati-based imprint will be upland to upstream acts to Victory.

“I’m not saying we will never sign to a major label, but we’re happy where we are,” Woodruff says. “I don’t think we would have seen the success we’re seeing on a major.”

With such alumni as Thursday and Taking Back Sunday, Victory is no stranger to the top of The Billboard 200. Thursday’s debut for Island, “War All the Time,” failed to match the success of the band’s Victory releases. The Island album has sold 349,000 copies compared with the 357,000 units of Victory’s “Full Collapse.”

Brummel acknowledges that some key acts have moved on from the label. “In all of those cases the artists would have been better off staying with us,” he says. “The fact that Thursday sold more albums on Victory than Island Def Jam speaks volumes on many levels. If we did not know what we were doing, IDJ would have blown little Victory out of the water, sales-wise.”

Victory is going to great lengths to set up “If Only You Were Lonely.” The concert on Grammy night was broadcast live by Network Live on America Online, and AOL has been streaming the full album for weeks prior to release.

Victory has also created its own community for Hawthorne Heights fans at thisiswhoweare.org. Those who register can invite others and post profiles and photos, as well as view exclusive Hawthorne Heights videos. As of Feb. 13, more than 5,000 fans had signed up.

Brummel says Victory will ship 1 million copies by March 14, if not sooner. There are two different CD covers, each with different liner notes. Victory graphic designer Paul Fiorello came up with the idea to use the different booklets to tell a story through pictures.

Victory VP of sales Ramsey Dean says the label will have a full endcap at Best Buy in March, focusing on Hawthorne Heights and Atreyu’s “A Death Grip on Yesterday,” due March 28. Independent retail is also being supported. Hawthorne Heights will perform at an in-store Feb. 27 at Looney Tunes in Babylon, N.Y., and the following day will appear at Vintage Vinyl in Fords, N.J.

Justin Espino, promotions coordinator at Dimple Records in Sacramento, Calif., says Victory supplied his outlet with promotional bracelets. The store will aggressively price Hawthorne Heights the week of release to compete with big box retailers.

**TV’S IN; WHAT ABOUT RADIO?**

Victory has been running ads on MTV and Fuse; the label has a Sunday-morning TV show on Fuse, "VicTor." The band can also be heard in the “MVP 06 NCAA Baseball” game from EA Sports. And then there is radio.

Stations are just now tuning around to Hawthorne Heights. “Saying Sorry” is No. 25 after three weeks on Billboard’s Modern Rock chart. Despite a sales history that outshines most major-label rock acts, Hawthorne Heights received little airplay in 2005.

“[This is an opportunity for radio] to do the right thing before someone starts investigating why 20% of U.S. market share comes from the independents and only a minuscule 0.005% of radio’s playlists contain independent content,” Brummel says.

Brummel adds that he hopes “If Only You Were Lonely” can be a “catalyst for change.”

“I hope that it will cause jaded programmers to think and act differently for their own survival and relevance,” Brummel says. “If Hawthorne’s album cannot turn the tide, then the Atreyu album debuting top five a month later better. If not, we will be forced to start calling people out.”

Or in the words of Woodruff, “It just seems that we have to do a lot of things that other bands don’t have to do to get the same exposure. But we’ll do them. We’ll do whatever it takes.”
There is no hole in the middle, but radio programmers say they have finally found a replacement for the 45 single as an indicator of song popularity.

Digital tracks—legally bought or illegally downloaded—are increasingly playing a role in radio programming decisions.

Radio PDMs say that song tallies purchased from the likes of iTunes or downloaded from unauthorized peer-to-peer sites offer an important read on developing hits.

The legitimate market is reflected in Nielsen SoundScan data (used for Billboard’s Hot Digital Songs chart) and on iTunes, which lists its top 100 songs. Data company BigChampagne tracks the popularity of downloads on unauthorized sites and provides a weekly ranking to clients, including Billboard Radio Monitor.

The download information is particularly valuable for recognizing acts not yet being pitched by their labels.

Case in point: James Blunt, whose “You’re Beautiful” reached No. 1 across much of Europe last summer. By the time Atlantic signed the British singer/songwriter for the United States, the song had been downloaded on stateside P2P sites nearly 1 million times, according to Joe Fleischer, founder and president of BigChampagne.

James Blunt already had a vibrant audience that was very excited about the release,” Fleischer says. “When it finally got airplay in the States, the song hit a ready audience. He’s a real artist who the Internet allowed people to discover quickly.”

The song, which appeared to be headed for an AC-only audience, was introduced to and found fans at top 40. This week, “You’re Beautiful” is No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100 and No. 1 on Hot Digital Songs.

Programmers had been without a measurement tool for individual song sales since the demise of the 45 single in the late 1980s.

Enter the digital download. Digital track sales in the United States reached 352 million in 2005, a 147% increase over 2004’s total of 142.6 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan. In the seven-day stretch between Christmas and the new year, nearly 20 million tracks were downloaded from iTunes and other retailers—shattering the former one-week record of 9.5 million tracks, set the previous week.

Programmers agree that as track sales grow, the data becomes even more meaningful.

Tom Poleman, senior VP of programming for Clear Channel/New York and PD of mainstream top 40 WHTZ (Z100), says, “Fifteen years ago, callout research was our most reliable source of information. Then, SoundScan made it better. Now, we can check downloading and understand actual behavior to make us better programmers.”

Other songs whose popularity on P2P sites piqued radio’s interest demonstrate that it is not just top 40 that benefits from monitoring digital downloads. Fall Out Boy’s “Sugar, We’re Goin’ Down” saturated top 40 and modern rock, and Ying Yang Twins’ “Bedroom Boom” was a hit at R&B/hip-hop and rap radio. In both cases, massive downloads alerted PDMs. The Pussycat Dolls’ “Stickwitu” and Relient K’s “Be My Escape” are also cited by PDMs for scoring online before radio was convinced they were hits.

“It was difficult in the beginning to convince programmers which format Relient K belonged in, whether it was alternative, adult top 40 or rock,” Fleischer says. “But wherever it received airplay, it reacted, and it was downloaded like crazy. The format wasn’t relevant because it was a record that fit demographically. People at the label and at radio worked together to gain an understanding of that phenomenon.”

Poleman believes that for now top 40 may benefit most from many indicators we use,” he says.

Ditto for mainstream top 40 WKQI (Q95.5) Detroit. “I’m looking for movement and consistency. Songs that are moving up big indicate buzz on a record that we need to be aware of,” PD Dom Theodore says.

While download sales are still relatively small, Fleischer suggests that downloads from file-sharing services are already an indicator of music consumers at large, and cut a wide demographic swath.

“In 1999 or 2000, you may have found it a more common practice among young males, but today the Internet is designed to transfer information among peers of all ages,” he says. “They’re using peer-to-peer, instant messaging, e-mail, folder sharing, Wi-Fi, and, at this point, it’s all only picking up speed. There is simply no demographic distinction anymore.”

However valuable the information, PDMs agree that download tallies are just one piece of the playlist puzzle.

“If I see a spike on the downloads chart in addition to other pop culture factors like national callout, requests and the like, then I know it’s something we need to pay attention to,” Theodore says. “If it’s not showing the signs elsewhere, I proceed with caution, because the behavior of music downloaders alone is not necessarily a reflection of the big picture, as many downloaders are not heavy radio users.”

Tom Calococci, PD of R&B/hip-hop KKB (the Beat) Los Angeles, says, “Anytime I see anything that indicates movement, whether it’s downloads, sales or talk in the streets or office, I tend to want to look into it more. So it becomes a tool to use along with callout, magazines, myspace.com, staff input and, of course, gut instinct.”

Poleman adds, “In our music meetings at Z100, we look at all of the traditional sources: Internet callout and callout research, scores from our sister radio stations, SoundScan sales, monitors of market station airplay, national audience charts—and then we track downloads. No indicator is the be-all, end-all, but this is a good one.”
A&R executive once addressed the question of why record companies so eagerly sign artists when they are young.

Marketing considerations aside, the executive said young artists "believe they can walk through walls."

Unbridled confidence and determination are traits of young music business executives as well. Those who have chosen music business careers in recent years have faced far more than the conventional business cycles that challenged earlier generations. They have confronted historic changes that have transformed every corner of the music industry.

And the best have thrived, regardless.

Billboard's Power Players series highlights the achievements of outstanding individuals across every sector of our business. This first Power Players report of the year focuses on 30 Under 30, an alphabetical roundup of some of the most promising young executives under age 30 working today in a range of roles—record labels, artist management, touring, marketing, media, distribution and more.

Billboard's writers and editors chose those profiled here after surveying numerous sources, who helped identify promising young talent.

Embracing the future, many of these young executives work in digital entertainment. Bearing a fresh perspective on their careers, many are entrepreneurs, who work for themselves as well as their clients.

Together, they focus their talents on all barriers to success—and the walls come tumbling down.

—THOM DUFFY
1. Carolina Arenas
Label manager, Machete Music
Carolina Arenas is a music industry baby. The daughter of songwriter/producer Gustavo Are- nas, at 18, she was assistant/press manager to songwriter/producer Rudy Perez.

After stints in Universal Music Latino's A&R and production departments, Arenas, at 26, is a well-rounded label manager in the Miami office of Latin urban label Machete Music.

Her key priorities are finding innovative marketing strategies for her acts and streamlining the licenses and clearances within the often convoluted reggaeton realm.

"She is one of the fastest up-and-coming stars of our business," Machete president Gustavo Lopez says, citing her "unique ability to adapt and execute beyond the call of duty."

2. Perry Bashkoff
Director of e-commerce, wireless accounts, WEA Distribution
Perry Bashkoff, 26, has given WEA Distribution a leadership position in the growing market for wireless music, WEA president John Esposito says.

Along with ensuring that Warner Music Group artists and releases are represented in the repertoire offered by wireless accounts, Bashkoff also has to understand the unique positioning of each carrier and content aggregators and create marketing strategies for each account.

At the same time, Bashkoff has convinced carriers to coordinate promotion of the same album—the Notorious B.I.G.'s "Duets: The Final Chapter"—at the same time in December, a unique accomplishment in the developing business where each account likes to focus on its own exclusive.

Adam Mitabella, WEA senior VP of e-commerce, says, "He has an incredible creative streak for sales and marketing and always throws a creative wrinkle into the mix."

3. Will Benthal
Digital development and marketing manager, EMI Classics
Will Benthal, 24, is the digital development and marketing manager for EMI Classics in London, a position created less than a year ago. The London-based Benthal is responsible for building the label's digital business worldwide.

His introduction to the business came in 2000, when he worked as an intern at the prominent artist management firm IMG Artists.

In addition to his responsibilities within the digital realm, he also retains product management and international marketing responsibili-

4. Suranga Chandratillake
CEO, Blinkx
With so much digital content available from so many sources, search engines are considered a key ingredient for connecting customers to the entertainment media they are looking for.

Suranga Chandratillake, 28, is at the helm of one of the early stage success stories in this sector—Blinkx. The company operates a multimedia search engine gaining quite a bit of traction. AOL acquired rival Truveo for $50 million, leading to speculation that Yahoo or News Corp. may bid for Blinkx.

But Chandratillake insists the company will continue to go it alone, currently negotiating another round of venture capital funding to propel it even further in this young market.

5. Lainie Copicotto
President/CEO, Aurelia Entertainment
Dance music's emissary to the corporate world is Lainie Copicotto, the 28-year-old New York native behind Aurelia Entertainment, based in Bronxville, N.Y.

"She has great ears for contemporary sounds, keen instincts about hit songs and has an impressive amount of get-up-and-go," Columbia Records president Steve Greenberg says. "She is also one of the most organized twentiesomething things I've ever known."

6. Jeremy DeVine
Founder, Temporary Residence
Jeremy DeVine, 29, started Temporary Residence during his first semester at Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Two years later, he dropped out of school.

This year, Temporary Residence turns 10, and the New York-based label has been gaining steam thanks to instrumental rock act Explosions in the Sky. Those who do not closely follow the indie scene may recognize the act as the group that scored the film "Friday Night Lights." Temporary Residence has an intriguing roster of releases for 2006, including the debut of the Ladies, which features Pinpack principal Rob Crow, and the es-

Young executives today confront historic changes throughout the business.

"She has a unique business plan," DeVine says. "Jack Laister's a rock star, and we are trying to build a home for that kind of stuff."

In just a few short years, the energetic entrepreneur has done what no one before her had done: She has brokered marketing deals that have helped elevate the genre from mere soundtrack fodder to a fully co-brandable lifestyle.

As the brand-development director for the wildly successful Ultra Music Festival, Copicotto brought on big-name partners like Starbucks, Vitamin Water, MTV and Music Choice. She is also the executive producer of Armanii Exchange's A&J Music Series, commissioning marquee DJs like Peter Rauhofer, DJ Rap, Junior Jack and Roger Sanchez to mix installations.

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7. Maria Egan
Manager of A&R, Columbia Records
After writing for fanzines then working in artist management, 27-year-old U.K. native Maria Egan came to the United States in 1999 to work with Wendy Laister's Magus Entertainment.

There, she helped manage such artists as Carly Simon and Tina Arena. She then moved to Nettwerk, where she helmed the careers of such high-profile electronic acts as Fischerspooner and DJ Tiesto, as well as helping with A&R duties for the Nettwerk America label.

She joined Columbia's A&R staff in New York in June 2005. In addition to working with emerging act Aqualung, she just signed Nor-

8. Shawn Fanning
Founder and chief strategy officer, Snocap
Although the Napster that he led was sued out of existence, Shawn Fanning's vision for the future of peer-to-peer music distribution deserves recognition if for its sheer audacity alone.

With Snocap, which is based in San Francisco, Fanning, 25, hopes to build a constantly updated repository of digital tracks that P2P services looking to go legit can use to recognize and filter copyrighted music from being traded unless the user pays the appropriate fee. Label executives see it as the potential holy grail of digital music—marrying the viral distribution of P2P with a legitimate business model.

Since he appeared on this list in 2005, Fanning has convinced all the major labels and several indies to register their music with the system. Now all it needs is a live P2P service that uses it. To date, the only publicly announced digital music service to adopt Snocap is Mashboxx, which remains in a limited trial phase.

9. Jordan Feldstein
Artist manager, Career Artist Management
Jordan Feldstein, 28, started in the music business with ICM's concert division. But after receiving a tape from his childhood friend Adam Levine of his new band Kara's Flowers, Feldstein wisely decided to move into management.

Kara's Flowers evolved into Maroon5. The band's Octone/J Records debut, "Songs About Jane," has sold more than 9 million copies worldwide.

After managing the band through Leopold Management, Feldstein hung out his own shingle in Los Angeles in 2005. In addition to Maroon5, his clients include Phantom Planet, new Atlantic act Big City Rock, Samantha Ronson and Epic signee Sara Bareilles.

"Jordan has all the right priorities," Atlantic Records Group chairman/CEO Craig Kallman says. "He's really about building a core fan base, brick by brick."

Feldstein's former boss Bill Leopold adds: "His tireless efforts on behalf of all of his bands encourages everyone with whom he works to be at the top of their game."

10. Lori Genes
Director of media, RCA Label Group
The group Lonestar indirectly had a hand in bringing Lori Genes, 27, to Nashville. The band, which records for RCA Label Group, was among Genes' clients when she was a senior account executive with publicity firm Paul Freundlich & Associates in New York, along with fellow country acts Keith Urban, Shedadis and Trick Pony.

When RLG had an opening in Nashville last fall, Genes was tapped to fill the role.

"Her knowledge of the inner workings of the New York media and fashion make her a valuable asset to our organization and the Nashville music community," says Allen Brown, RLG VP of media and marketing.

11. Perry Greenfield
Product manager, Blue Note Records
"My job as middleman is to make sure communication takes place on all levels," says Perry Greenfield, 28, product manager at Blue Note Records in New York.

In 2005 the three-year

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vet of the label provided day-to-day marketing support for the instant jazz classic “At Carnegie Hall,” the newly discovered live performance of the Thelonious Monk Quartet with John Coltrane, and for singer/songwriter Amos Lee’s self-titled debut.

Greenfield reports to Zach Hochkeppel, VP of marketing at EMI Jazz & Classics, who says, “Perry’s got an advanced understanding of the marketplace but doesn’t let the sometimes sobering realities dash his unbridled zeal.”

Greenfield finds inspiration in “soaking up the vision” of president/CEO Bruce Lundvall, who returns the compliment: “With his serious musical knowledge, Perry has a very bright future at Blue Note.”

12. Nick Hartley
Personal manager. Fitzgerald Hartley Co.

Nick Hartley, 26, was not sure he wanted to follow his father, Fitzgerald Hartley Co. co-founder Mark Hartley, into the music business. But he eventually realized he had a passion for it. So in college, he started managing an artist who went on to land a major-label deal.

“By the time I graduated I was already going on the road and meeting with record executives on a regular basis,” he says, “Things just developed from there.”

Hartley has worked at Fitzgerald Hartley in Ventura, Calif., for five years, and is now a partner with the firm. He manages the country duo Hanna-McEuen, as well as singer/songwriter Crosby Loggins. His duties also include bringing in new, music-related projects to the company.

Company president Larry Fitzgerald calls the young manager “a rising star [who] is making very significant contributions to our company, totally understands what it takes to be successful [and] has a tremendous work ethic. I predict that he will be a major player in our business in the very near future.”

13. Shawn “Tubby” Holiday
Senior VP of A&R, Interscope/Geffen

“He’s one of the best young men in the urban business.” That is how Windswept Holdings CEO Evan Medow described Shawn “Tubby” Holiday in 2004 after the latter accepted the VP/GM post at partner company Interscope Music Publishing.

“The job marked a return engagement. Holiday, 29, had earlier served as director of creative A&R for Windswept Pacific/Hitco, the latter of which was co-founded by Island Def Jam chairman Anthony “L.A.” Reid.

Also listed on Holiday’s resume is a two-year stint as creative director at EMI Music Publishing.

Having worked with such songwriter/producers as Kanye West and Sean Garrett, Holiday joined Interscope/Geffen late last year as senior VP of A&R.

14. Jamie Kantrowitz
Senior VP of international marketing, MySpace.com

Marketing executive Jamie Kantrowitz, 28, is at the forefront of transforming social networking into big business at myspace.com in Los Angeles. Most notably, she is helping the entertainment industry branch out into blogs.

Her work with major and indie labels during the last year has led to a series of high-profile album debuts on myspace.com by acts ranging from Neil Diamond to Nine Inch Nails.

Next up for the Los Angeles native is building the MySpace brand in Europe, where she will head international marketing in the company’s newly formed London office. Music will play a big role.

Kantrowitz says, “A lot of bands in the U.K. are already on the site, but with presence there we can do more promotion through festivals and exclusive album releases.”

15. Noah Kerner
President, Noise Marketing

Sure, Noah Kerner once paid the rent by manning the turntables for Jennifer Lopez, followed by stints at VH1 and Edel Records. But now, at 29, president of Noise Marketing in New York, he is executing strong marketing campaigns for the likes of Chevrolet, SLS Speakers, J.P. Morgan Chase, Bombay Sapphire and David Barton Gym.

For Kerner, music and entertainment are key elements of such strategies. Kerner is, after all, a founder—along with veteran artist manager Irving Azoff and music manager Jordan Bratman—of Soundproof, a Los Angeles-based agency that creates original music for brands.

Forthcoming from the Cornell graduate is a book he is co-penning with Gene Pressman (of Barney’s fame) for Simon & Schuster. With the working title “Chasing Cool,” Kerner says the book, due in the fall, focuses on corporate America’s quest for cool.

16. Evan Kroft
Director of music programming and talent relations, CMT

What started as a career in radio turned into a TV programming job for Evan Kroft when he joined CMT in Nashville in 2004.

Chris Farr, CMT VP of music programming and talent relations, calls Kroft “a very integral part of the music selection and music direction at CMT. He’s proven himself to be a very sharp programmer [who] understands the big picture.”

Kroft’s duties at CMT include booking the talent for cmt.com’s “Studio 330 Sessions” show, and he says that “CMT has given me the freedom to grow and explore my creative abilities beyond radio and television.”

Mostly, Kroft, 26, enjoys “finding and sharing great music with everyone” and says he wants to continue to evolve with the music industry and the many ways it is impacting pop culture.

17. Brian Manning
Agent, Creative Artists Agency

A music agent at Creative Artists Agency in Beverly Hills, Calif., Brian Manning, 29, represents a roster that includes Maroon5, Simple Plan, R. Kelly, Talib Kweli, the Dropkick Murphys and Big City Rock.

Manning joinedCAA in 1999 as an assistant in the music department. He was promoted to agent in early 2002.

Manning has a simple philosophy about developing acts by touring on an ever-widening circuit. “We have a lot of bands that know it’s going to take 50 or 100 or 200 dates before you catch that momentum that’s going to take you over the top,” Manning says.

“One such band is Maroon5, which grew to headliner status on one album cycle.

“A lot of the credit needs to go to the band, their management and their label,” Manning says.

Mitch Rose, CAA’s Los Angeles music department head, says, “Brian has the wonderful ability to immediately connect with artists and managers and is great at identifying emerging talent early in their careers. He is incredibly insightful and valued for his contributions to the department and the company.”

18. Philip McIntyre
Artist manager, Philymack

You never know who may be watching. Philip McIntyre, 23, was a production runner at the Bryce Jordan Center in his hometown of State College, Penn., when his hard work and attention to detail caught the eye of Britney Spears tour management staff.

Shortly thereafter, he was offered a spot on her touring team, where he remained for three years.

Next he worked with Spears’ former co-manager Johnny Wright for two years to learn the ropes before starting his own management company, Philymack, based in Los Angeles.

“And he went from a free intern to a co-manager in less than a year-and-a-half. That shows how much confidence I have in him,” Wright says.

His Los Angeles-based firm partners with Wright Entertainment Group to handle a number of clients, including the Backstreet Boys (and member Brian Littrell), the Jonas Brothers, Everlife and Jump 5.

Additionally, he is executive producer of AEG Live’s new talent search TV show, “Gifted,” and a consultant for Denise Rich Songs and her 785 Records.

19. Sharon Normant
Director of licensing, Platinum Rye Entertainment

In just a few short years, Sharon Normant, 26, director of licensing at Platinum Rye Entertainment in New York, has become an expert traffic cop at the intersection where music publishers, ad agencies, brand marketers and artist managers meet.

Most recently, she licensed five songs—including James Blunt’s “High,” Jason Mraz’s “Life Is Wonderful” and Persephone’s “Nice Day”—for Hilton’s new “Travel Should Take You Places” campaign, created by Young & Rubicam.

Normant also connected the dots between Madonna’s “Hung Up” and Motorola, as well as the Allman Brothers’ “Melissa” and Cingular Wireless—both helmed by BBDO Detroit.

In her previous gig, at Production Advisors, Normant worked her magic with Deutsch LA and Mitsubishi. You may know the song: “Days Go By” by Dirty Vegas.

Throughout, Normant makes it all look incredibly easy. Perhaps this is a side effect of having majored in psychology at New York’s Barnard College.

20. Erin Owens
Director of publicity, Palm Pictures

Erin Owens, 26, has expanded the reach of the music documentary genre through her work publicizing such critically acclaimed films as “Dig!,” featuring the Dandy Warhols and Brian Jonestown Massacre.

At Chris Blackwell’s Palm Pictures, she has been on the forefront of positioning music documentaries in theaters and as DVD releases.

For “Dig!,” which won the 2004 Sundance Grand Jury Prize, DVD publicity efforts included TV spots on MTV, Fuse and VH1; radio spots in the top 30 U.S. markets; such customized merchandise as lighters made for specific retailers; and, at last year’s South by Southwest Music and Media Conference, promotion of the title on taxi receipts.

Owens is currently publicizing “Be Here to Love Me,” the biopic about Townes Van Zandt, which is coming to DVD March 14.
21. Baillie Parker  
Co-owner, Anticon Records  
Baillie Parker, 29, spends about as much time running a label as he does acting as a negotiator. As co-owner of San Francisco-based Anticon Records, Parker has to navigate among seven partners, all of them artists.

“When I came on, things were sort of unraveling,” Parker says. “It was more an artist collective.” Parker left his day job with Internet company Ask Jeeves in 1999 to help build an independent hip-hop label. He learned the business after working with Revolver Distribution, and Anticon’s artists, such as Sole and Sage Francis, became darlings of the indie hip-hop scene.

Today, the label’s roster has diversified into rock and electronica, and along with Rhymesayers, Stones Throw and Definitive Jux, Anticon continues to define underground hip-hop.

22. Aaron Rosenberg  
Attorney, Greenberg Traurig  
Aaron Rosenberg, 28, vividly recalls the summer after his first year at Harvard Law School. That is when the Kansas City, Mo., native became hooked on entertainment law after an internship at Arista Records.

Under the mentorship of Andy Tavel, a partner in Greenberg Traurig in New York, Rosenberg focused on building the firm’s urban music practice. His first client a high school classmate’s friend, named John Stephens. Fans know Stephens today as eight-time 2005 Grammy Award nominee John Legend. Subsequent clients during Rosenberg’s Big Apple sojourn included Lauryn Hill. Now based in the firm’s Los Angeles office, Rosenberg last year secured a release for the rap group the Lox from a disputed music publishing pact with Sean “Diddy” Combs and also renegotiated a Sony Music contract for Three 6 Mafia.

23. Kirk Sommer  
Agent, William Morris Agency  
Now an agent for some of the hottest acts on the rock scene, Kirk Sommer, 29, began his career organizing weekly events in his native New York, from open-mic nights to music parties. He also spent time “pushing paper” in legendary promoter Ron Delsner’s office.

Sommer was hired at the William Morris Agency as an agent trainee in May 2000. He was named a club agent in May 2003 and became an arena agent last July.

The agent’s roster includes the Isaac Line, the Killers, the Bravery, Louis XIV, Hard Fi, the Von Blondies, Pepper and the Fire Theft. A believer in working with acts at the ground level, Sommer routinely scouts for talent in the States and the United Kingdom, sometimes signing on before management.

He likes to see acts on the fast track, having helped the Killers grow to arena headliner in 2005, but he is all about careful development.

“We’re here to build careers, and that’s not a line,” Sommer says. He wants to sign acts who knows will grow to command “a higher ticket price and...larger venues.”

24. Mike Spinella  
Music director, AOL Radio  
With more than 6 million visitors per month, the free AOL Radio Network is redefining how people listen to music online. As New York-based music director for 13 dance stations, Mike Spinella, 27, has the genre’s biggest platform.

“I guess we being under 30 is fitting for [AOL’s] overall strategy,” Spinella says. “We like to think of ourselves as a new generation, a new place for people to go and explore.”

Spinella has carte blanche to program the channels, which range from commercial (chart-topping ‘Top Dance’) to obscure (crate-digging Abstract Beats). He was also instrumental in creating the first completely virtual dance album, "AOL Music Sessions: Mixed" by John Digweed. More installments with new DJs are expected in the coming year.

25. Román Suárez  
National director of Latin sales and marketing, UBO  
Román Suárez has parlayed his experience in sales to developing marketing savvy as well. As national director of Latin sales and marketing for fledging music group UBO in New York, Suárez, 28, has helped craft a variety of dazzling campaigns, including Bimbo’s gasoline giveaway and Andy Andy’s aggressive pricing at retail.

“I always get retailers’ feedback, because no record will be successful if they don’t support it,” says Suárez, a former Latin specialist at Universal Music & Video Distribution who also did street marketing for Prestigio Records in New York.

Aside from working new urban genres, Suárez also has high hopes for salsa.

“I wish to bring it back to what it was in the ‘80s,” he says. Plans beyond that? Heading his own label, of course.

26. 3H  
A&R executive, HHH Artists/Shady/Interscope  
He is so good that, at 23, he already goes solely by his nickname. After five years at Capitol, 3H in 2004 segued to Interscope, home to his HHH Artists, which goes through Eminem’s Shady Records.

Among the artists 3H helped bring to Interscope is Diddy Yanke, and he is overseeing the greggton superstar’s Interscope studio album debut. He also works as a producer, including co-producing “My 1st Song” on Jay-Z’s “The Black Album.”

“He knows what’s coming next because he lives and breathes the lifestyle of the streets,” says Evan Lamberg, EMI Music Publishing’s executive VP of creative for North America. “He’s one of the most respected young executives in our business.”

Kanye West says, “3H has really great ears—he wanted to sign me and 50 [Cent] before we had deals. What a label that would have made.”

27. Tina Wells  
CEO, Buzz Marketing Group  
Want to know what today’s youth are thinking or craving?

If so, consider placing a call to Tina Wells, 25, who helms marketing and communications agency Buzz Marketing Group in New York, a company she launched while attending Hood College in Maryland.

Wells works with a team of tastemakers and trendsetters who are tweens, teens and young adults (dubbed “buzzspotters”), as well as her close-knit Buzz staff. Her company provides musical solutions for clients like St. Martin’s Press, for whom she recently engineered a partnership with Island Records artist Fefe Dobson.

Earlier this year, Buzz debuted bMusic, a research division focusing on the music industry. Her first client: Sony BMG, home of Teddy Geiger, a newcomer that buzzspotters apparently like.

28. Jessica Wolstenholm  
Senior director of marketing, Myrrh Records  
In less than a year at Word Label Group, the parent of Myrrh Records, Jessica Wolstenholm, 29, has established herself as one of the Nashville-based company’s most talented young executives.

“Jessica was extremely instrumental to the successful relaunch of Myrrh Records in 2005,” says Rod Riley, senior VP of marketing for Word Label Group. “With over eight years of industry experience, running the gamut between product development and artist management, her expertise, integrity and passion made her perfect for this role.”

Wolstenholm is excited about shepherding the next chapter in Myrrh’s history.

“I am so honored to be a part of relaunching a label that has had such a legacy in the Christian music industry,” she says. “As I look to the future of Myrrh I am excited about working with new artists that share the same passion that I have.”

29. Sam Yagan  
CEO, MetaMachine  
Peer-to-peer service eDonkey was once one of the most popular outlets for online music piracy, at one point boasting 2.7 million active users.

Then the U.S. Supreme Court handed the record labels a major weapon in their fight against P2P piracy in the form of the Grokster ruling.

Soon after, Sam Yagan—the 28-year-old Stanford grad and CEO of eDonkey parent company MetaMachine—pledged during a congressional hearing to rid the network of unauthorized files, and in doing so sent ripples throughout the P2P world.

Yagan is now searching for a way to convert New York-based eDonkey into a legitimate service, either through technology or a sale. How the company pulls this off (or fails) could foreshadow how other P2P services may fare in a post-Grokster world.

30. Chris York  
A&R director, EMI CMG Label Group  
Chris York has spent nine years at EMI Christian Music Group in Nashville, starting as a post-production assistant, archiving tapes.

Now 25, York worked his way into the A&R department where he has spent the past four years.

“Chris York is one of the brightest young A&R people in the industry today,” EMI CMG president/CEO Bill Hearn says. “His passion for music and understanding of the art of relationships with artists is uncanny given his age.

“He has helped to sign and/or develop many great artists and future stars, including Shawn McDonald, Sanctus Real and Dizmas,” Hearn adds. “He is also responsible for EMI’s A&R relationship with Switchfoot and has recently signed new Rechkin artist the Colour. Chris York is what the future looks like.”

This special feature was written by Antony Bruno, Ed Christman, Leila Cobo, Brian Garry, Jill Kipnis, Todd Martens, Kerri Mason, Gail Mitchell, Melinda Nunnan, Dan Ouellette, Michael Paolotta, Deborah Evans Price, Phyllis Stark, Anastasia Trouilas and Ray Waddell.
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MATISYAHU: SPIRITED AND SPIRITUAL

O ften the artist-development stories to emerge in 2005, Matisyahu’s was perhaps the most unique. Not only was his breakout album, “Live at Stubbs,” hastily recorded for $8,000, its first single, “King Without a Crown,” is a modern rock smash—a nearly unheard-of feat for a reggae track. And then there is Matisyahu himself: a Hasidic Jew whose reggae- and rock-tinted sound celebrates his faith.

Yet while the 26-year-old artist is devoutly religious, he is not letting that stand in the way of getting his music heard. “Who doesn’t want success?” he asks. “There’s some artists that say they don’t, and they’re not looking for it, but I’m not one of those artists.” Clearly his music is resonating with the public. “King Without a Crown” moves to No. 7 this issue on Billboard’s Modern Rock chart and is now starting to react at top 40. “Live at Stubbs” has topped Billboard’s Top Reggae Albums chart for eight weeks. It has sold 340,000 copies so far and is No. 43 on The Billboard 200. On March 7, his new studio album, “Youth,” comes out on J Dub/Or/Epic. Sources say the initial shipment for the album, produced by Bill Laswell, Jimmy Douglass and Ill Factor, will be 400,000 units.

Is Matisyahu an artist with staying power or a novelty? Believers say he has longevity. “Is it novelty? Of course it’s not. It’s too real to be novelty,” declares Bruce Warren, assistant GM for programming at the influential noncommercial WXPN Philadelphia, which was one of the first stations to play “King Without a Crown.” “It was our sense that this was the kind of musical discovery our listeners listen to public radio for,” Warren says. The song is “very spiritual, and it touches people regardless of what their race or religion is. It reminds me of Bob Marley in that Mati has a universal message and some great grooves to match.” "Live at Stubbs” has sold well since release," says Dave Alder, senior VP at Virgin Entertainment Group. “It was a title that emerged through our developing-artist program, Virgin Recommends, and we have seen accelerated sales trends over the past few months. Much of the success of the album has been down to positive word-of-mouth. There is certainly a strong buzz on the new album.”

Matisyahu’s debut album, “Shake Off the Dust...Arise,” was released on March 7. The album’s title track, “Youth,” has been featured on Billboard’s Top Reggae Albums chart for eight weeks. It has sold 340,000 copies so far and is No. 43 on The Billboard 200.

FACT FILE

Label: J Dub/Or/Epic
Management: Jacob Harris and Aaron Bisman
Booking: The Agency Group
Publishing: Neither/Nor Publishing (ASCAP)
Last/best-selling album: “Live at Stubbs” (2005), 350,000

>>>GREEN ON THE GO
RCA Label Group has signed top Texas singer/songwriter Pat Green to its BNA Records imprint. Green previously recorded for Republic/Universal. His last two albums debuted in the top 10 on Billboard’s Top Country Albums chart. The first single from his BNA debut goes to radio this summer. The three-time Grammy Award nominee has charted 10 songs on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs chart, including “Wave on Wave,” which hit No. 3 in 2003.

—Melinda Newman

>>>ELTON’S LEGEND
John Legend will perform March 5 at the 14th annual Elton John AIDS Foundation party. Each year John hand-picks a performer to appear at the event, which takes place in Los Angeles immediately following the Academy Awards.

—Melinda Newman

>>>ISHAM SCORES
Mark Isham will receive ASCAP’s Henry Mancini Award for Lifetime Achievement April 11 at the performing rights organization’s 21st annual Film & Television Awards at the Beverly Hills Hotel. The award recognizes a composer’s contributions to the world of film and TV music. Among the movies scored by Isham are “Crash,” “A River Runs Through It” and “Quiz Show.”

—Melinda Newman

>>>EQUITY FOR WILLS
Equity Music Group has signed Mark Wills to its artist roster, which also includes Clint Black, Little Big Town and Carolina Rain. Wills is recording his first project for the label, due in early summer. The first single from the CD is due in April. Wills previously recorded for Mercury Records from 1996 to 2005, where he notched eight top 10 singles, including the No. 1 hits “Wish You Were Here” and “19 Somethin’.”

—Phyllis Stark
Matityahu (cont.)

From >>41

with relatively little fanfare in 2004 on Juby. a nonprofit label and event production company. When Michael Caplan, co-founder and then-president of Or Music, first heard of Matityahu, he wrote him off as a novelty. But several months later, I watched a clip of him performing on the Jimmy Kimmel show, and my reaction was like most people’s: The first 30 seconds, it’s novelty. And 90 seconds in, you realize it’s real,** he says.

Caplan, who is now senior VP of A&R for Sony Music, got in touch with Juby and found out Matityahu was playing at a Jewish high school the next day. Impressed by his live show, Caplan and his partner, Larry Miller, signed him to Or Music (now Or Media Group).

Caplan thought that the studio album did not represent where Matityahu was artistically, so one of the label’s first moves was to have him record “Live at Stubbs.”

There was a strategy to taping in Texas. “Austin was perfect because it screams ‘yinkey.’” Caplan says with a laugh. “It wasn’t like taping it in Crown Heights. I wanted to show it works here too.”

Indeed, Caplan says that so far, Matityahu is playing well to the mainstream. “This is an informal observation, but secular Jews have more of a problem with it than (now) Jews. In the larger world, people are yearning for spirituality. Some people are going, ‘Is this a Christian song?’”

The clip of Matityahu performing on “Jimmy Kimmel Live” was also circulated on the Internet. Digital success continued when mtv.com embraced the video for “King Without a Crown.” The song ended 2005 as the Web site’s most downloaded video.

After “Live at Stubbs” sold 20,000 units, it was streamed from Or Music to Epic. At 35,000 units it moved from RED, Sony’s independent distribution arm, to Sony Distribution.

With Matityahu’s jump to the majors came the difficult task of getting radio to play him as more than a gimmick. His appearance and beliefs never struck him as something that might hinder his success, however. “I became religious, and that was a very serious thing for me, and music was always a serious thing for me, so this was just an expression of my life—the decisions I made and the music that I make.” he says. “I was never worried about it.”

Calling every week she has worked “King Without a Crown” a breakthrough each week, Epic VP of marketing Jacquelinie Saturn says the project has been an uphill climb.

“There’s been a lot of pressure about working this record,” she says. “The one thing that’s undeniable is that if that song gets on the air one time, the phone blows up. To that end, the label did not have an official add date, and many times, Epic’s goal was to get just one spin and let audience reaction take over. That is exactly what happened at modern rock KNDD Seattle, where Saturn

Is it novelty? Of course it’s not. It’s too real to be novelty.’

—BRUCE WARREN, WZPN

saying that one spin led to 30 phone calls asking about the song.

Modern rock KROQ Los Angeles has a similar story. “We threw it on and it got immediate on-air response,” music director Latasha Worden recalls. “Lyrically, it’s really striking a chord with people. For several weeks, “King Without a Crown” was KROQ’s most-played song.

Matityahu won over Leslie Fram, PD of modern rock WNNX Atlanta, after performing live on the station’s morning show. WNNX still hesitated to add “King Without a Crown,” but feedback and sales information, combined with the song’s uniqueness, convinced Fram and music director Jay Harren to add it.

In a time when modern’s most-played artists are shared by other formats, she says, “It’s important to have one of our own.”

Caplan credits RED, and especially RED VP of artist development Danny Buch, with starting the ball rolling. “Danny just wouldn’t let it go,” Caplan says. Although the live album was initially seen as a steppingstone to the new studio album, RED’s stuff persisted in showing that it could be a stand-alone project.

Epic VP of marketing Scott Carter says the label is taking a grassroots approach to setting up “Youth.” “Even though radio is stepping up, and our video spins will step up, we still have an online presence,” he says. That’s where his fans have been so far. Carter says that about 33% of the tickets Matityahu sells are bought online; his e-mail list is more than 30,000 strong. He is already confirmed to play the Coachella and Bonnaroo music festivals. Two shows at New York’s Hammerstein Ballroom (March 6-7) are sold out.

Considering that at the end of 2004 Matityahu was doing a regional Hanukkah tour, he has enjoyed the past year. “I didn’t know what to expect,” he says of his success. “I’ve always been a lover of music, and I’ve always wanted to be able to perform and make music. When it’s just an idea or a dream, you’re not aware of the details of the process, what goes into it.

And there continues to be a fine line to tread between pushing the music and observing his beliefs. Because of his religion—Matityahu belongs to the Chabad-Lubavitch branch of Hasidim—he cannot touch women or sing romantic love songs, which means his days of audience diving may be over—unless there is advanced planning.

When he made the first low-budget video for “King Without a Crown,” he asked his rabbi if he could jump into the crowd. Caplan recalls. “The rabbi said, ‘Sure.’ He tries not to jump on a woman. His wife says, ‘I don’t think you can do it.’” The rabbi comes back and says, ‘What? There’s women in the crowd? No, you can’t do that.’” So, Caplan adds, for the “Youth” video, the audience that Matityahu jumps into is all male: “His religion is the most important thing to him.”

Additional reporting by Melinda Newman in Los Angeles.
CAMILO PAYS HOMAGE TO GERSHWIN ON ‘BLUE’

W
hen pianist Michel Camilo first came to New York in 1979 from his native Dominican Republic, he stood in awe of the skyscrapers and was mesmerized by the city’s bustling magnificence. The theme music for the experience? George Gershwin’s majestic extended work “Rhapsody in Blue,” which represented to Camilo not only the romance of New York but also its creative opportunities for an immigrant.

For his latest Telarc recording, Camilo pays homage to the renowned composer with “Rhapsody in Blue,” a grand jazz-meets-classical album of Gershwin music performed with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Ernest Martinez Izquierdo. The CD, which also includes “Concerto in F” and a solo piano rendering of “Prelude No. 2,” streets Feb. 28.

“This is a dream come true,” says Camilo, who has performed Gershwin’s music worldwide throughout his career. “His music speaks to me. It transcends cultures and divisions. I admire his genius for being in so many different musical worlds.”

While Camilo plays “the ink” of Gershwin’s scores, he embelishes the works with grooves and accents. “Gershwin improvised his own piano part at the 1924 premiere of ‘Rhapsody in Blue,’” Camilo says. “That spirit of spontaneity in his music has disappeared over the years. I wanted to go back to the original mind-set, which was close to the jazz of that time.”

As for his solo spot, Camilo says, “It’s a little jewel for the end. I play this as an encore for my live dates. It’s an improvised one-on-one get-together with Gershwin.”

GERI CHANNELS MARY:
A contemporary of Duke Ellington, pianist Mary Lou Williams was not only jazz’s premier female instrumentalist but also a brilliant, yet underappreciated composer. Now, one of her rarely played masterworks, “Zodiac Suite,” dedicated to fellow musicians born under each of the 12 astrological signs, receives an invigorating update by the Mary Lou Williams Collective.

Under the direction of pianist Geri Allen and featuring former Williams bandmates bassist Buster Williams and drummers Billy Hart and Andrew Cyrille, the Collective delivers “Zodiac Suite: Revisited.” The title was released Feb. 7 on Mary Records, Williams’ own label revived by the Mary Lou Williams Foundation. The foundation’s executive director is Peter O’Brien, who was Williams’ personal manager from 1964 until her death in 1996.

“Geri studied these pieces down to Mary Lou’s exact voicings, then got so inside the compositions that she was able to express herself while bringing new life to them,” says O’Brien, who produced the new album and plans to release a second Collective album this fall.

Moved by the experience of interpreting Williams’ compositions, Allen says, “Her music is challenging and fiercely captivating with each new performance.”

Allen will go into the studio in March with bassist Ron Carter and drummer Jimmy Cobb to record her second Telarc CD, “Timeless Portraits and Dreams,” a collection of tunes composed by a range of artists, from Billie Holiday to Nino Rota to Smokey Robinson. The album is scheduled for a third-quarter release.

The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., which premiered Allen’s take on “Zodiac Suite” last year, will present its 11th annual Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival May 10-13. Performers include trombonist Sarah Morrow, pianist Jessica Williams, B-3 organist Trudy Pitts, guitarist Mimi Fox, drummers Sherrille Maricle and Terri Lyne Carrington and singers Dee Dee Bridgewater, Abbey Lincoln and Ernestine Anderson.

Counting such distinctions as “Billboard Radio Personality of the Year” and creator of the prestigious “Aplauso 92” award among her accomplishments, Betty Pino is known as a true guru of Latin radio. This special feature will include an in-depth interview with Betty offering a first hand retrospective of her amazing longevity in the Latin music business and exciting future.

This Billboard Stars feature is your chance to commemorate the incredible career of Betty Pino and recognize the unique contributions she has made to the worldwide Latin music industry!

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Santaolalla Goes To The Movies

When composer Gustavo Santaolalla read the script for “Brokeback Mountain,” he interpreted it as a “great love story of universal dimensions,” and wrote the haunting, plaintive score accordingly.

Today, “Brokeback” basks in its eighth Academy Award nominations—including one for Santaolalla’s original score. The song “A Love That Will Never Grow Old,” penned by Santaolalla and Bernie Taupin and performed by Emmylou Harris, has already won a Golden Globe award.

The twist is that the recent accolades for Santaolalla’s work in this uniquely American film come after a lifetime spent almost exclusively working on Latin alternative music. Santaolalla is regarded as a pioneering artist, composer, producer and arranger who has been pivotal in the evolution of the genre for his work with the likes of Juanes, Molotov and Café Tacuba.

But for the public at large, his name was not well-known until he climbed onstage last month and picked up his Golden Globe for best original song.

The win propelled the “Brokeback Mountain” soundtrack to No. 54 on The Billboard 200. Although sales have slowed since then (this issue, it is No. 128 on the big chart), they will likely increase after the March 5 Oscar ceremony.

For Santaolalla, a native of Argentina who now lives in Los Angeles, the recognition is sweet, particularly as a Latin musician working outside the Latin field. Still, he stresses, his ethnicity has never been a handicap in his career.

“My agenda was very focused on my personal interest, which was Latin alternative music, and I wasn’t that interested in getting into the Anglo world,” he says. “It had to be something extremely original, and something that was very appealing to me.”

Original is a description that fits most of Santaolalla’s work, which dates back to Soluna and Arco Iris, the rock/folk fusion bands he founded in Argentina in his teens.

In 1978, Santaolalla left for Los Angeles and hooked up with Anibal Kerpel, his partner to this day.

But he maintained strong ties to his native country, releasing a series of solo albums that explored Latin folk and roots music, and touring extensively with fellow singer León Gieco, one of his early discoveries.

While these efforts all garnered critical acclaim in his home country, outside of Argentina Santaolalla was still largely known only in Latin rock and alternative circles. That changed in the mid-1980s when he produced Mexico’s Malvita Vecindad. “El Circo,” released in 1990, sold more than one million copies worldwide, according to Universal Records.

Several more hits later, Universal partnered with Santaolalla and Kerpel in a joint venture, Surco Records.

“I proposed making a purely creative, boutique label,” says Jesús López, chairman of Universal Music Latin America/Iberian Peninsula.

“I had just signed Molotov to Universal Mexico, and I transferred the contract to Surco. They were Surco’s first act, and that first album sold over one million copies.”

Although Surco’s roster still includes Molotov—as well as Bersuit Vergarabat, Arboí, La Vela Puerca and Bajofondo Tango Club—its most visible artist is Colombian rocker Juanes, who catapulted to fame with two solo albums produced by Santaolalla.

“Gustavo is the best musical guide I have found, with an indescribable musical sensibility,” Juanes says.

That musicality complements Santaolalla’s relationship with Universal.

“Gustavo has a more liberated vision,” Lopez says. “You could say that he flies and I land. When he’s inside a studio, his fixation with perfection makes him one of the best.”

These days, it is hard to pinpoint just what Santaolalla does best.

“I truly love interaction with other artists,” he says. “It gives me the opportunity to peek into other people’s way of articulating reality. That enriches me.”

As far as movies go, “Brokeback” comes in the wake of several acclaimed scores, including director Alejandro González Iñárritu’s “Amores Perros” and “21 Grams” and 2004’s “The Motorcycle Diaries.”

He is now scoring González Iñárritu’s “Babel,” starring Brad Pitt, Gael Garcia Bernal and Cate Blanchett.

Ironically, Santaolalla’s other film score of 2005 was for another distinctly American film, “North Country,” which took place in Minnesota. Although Santaolalla adapted the instrumentation for the setting, he also used typical South American instruments, like he did for “Brokeback.”

In both films, he says, “there are certain things I do and play where I feel my Latin identity, even if I’m playing ‘American’ music. I feel my background in (whatever) I do.”

Latin Notas

Some themes are meant to be recycled. Take the story of Betty, “La Fea”—Ugly Betty.

In 2001, Colombian TV network RCN aired a comic soap opera titled “Yo Soy Betty la Fea” (“I Am Ugly Betty”), the tale of an ugly duckling who wins the heart of a handsome stud.

“Betty” broke viewership records in Colombia, and was successfully exported throughout Latin America. In the United States, it delivered unprecedented high ratings for the Telemundo network.

In January, Televísia in Mexico started airing a new adaptation of the soap, titled “La Fea Más Bella” (“The Prettiest Ugly Girl”), it stars Angelica Vale and Jaime Camil and features music as an integral ingredient.

“La Fea” is produced by Rosy Ocampo, who has made a name for herself with Televisa kiddy musical shows that have often led to successful albums (Billboard, Sept. 10, 2005). In typical Ocampo fashion, “La Fea” has “theme songs” that play for certain characters during the show—a simple setup for original soundtracks.

To produce the “La Fea” soundtrack, Ocampo went to Warner Music Mexico’s new head of A&R, Alejandro Abaroa. The two had long worked together at Televisa.

The album, which came out Feb. 13 in Mexico, features six previously unreleased tracks, including a title song performed as a duet by two Warner artists: Jorge Villamizar of Bacilos and tropical singer Margarita (aka La Diosita De La Cumbia). The track was penned by Alfonso Lizárraga of Banda El Recodo. The group is featured on another song on the album, which also includes a duet between Bacilos and Celso Piña. Bringing Villamizar and Margarita together, Abaroa says, was a deliberate attempt to have international appeal (from Villamizar) and local, popular appeal (from Margarita).

Warner is looking at “La Fea” as an opportunity to cross-promote its acts and soundtrack.

On Feb. 21, for example, the label will release in Mexico an album titled “Margarita Sinfónica,” a live concert by Margarita and her band with the Puebla Symphony and with guests Bacilos, Pesado and Banda El Recodo. The album includes the title song to “La Fea Más Bella.”

Warner is also staging a massive show in Mexico City’s Zócalo in March, which will feature performances by the stars and Margarita. Because “La Fea” takes place at a fictional video production company, musical acts will make guest appearances when their “videos” are shot. Warner act Benny has already visited the set.

Abaroa says Warner will release the “La Fea” soundtrack in other territories, including the United States, once there is a release schedule for the soap. That should happen this year. Other Warner acts featured on the “La Fea” soundtrack include Banda Machos and Angels.

As for Villamizar and Bacilos, the group will go on hiatus, but not before releasing their greatest-hits album this spring and embarking on a tour (Billboard, Nov. 19, 2005). Details will be provided shortly.

Villamizar will continue as a solo artist recording for Warner.

UPDATE: Patrick Consell has joined Eman Publishing as its VP of creative. Eman is a division of Eman Enterprises, the indie music company owned by Mark Mean (that includes Respec Records). Consell was previously VP of creative and international for Warner Chappell. He will be based in Miami.

‘Ugly Betty’ Is Sitting Pretty

Mexican Spinoff Of Colombian TV Show Breeds Cross-Promotion With Warner Music

"La Fea" is the name of a Mexican spinoff of the popular Colombian TV series "Betty: La Fea," which aired in the United States on the UPN network. The show revolves around a girl who looks ugly but has a kind heart and becomes a successful fashion designer. The Mexican version, "La Fea Más Bella," features a cast of characters who also have their own personal and professional struggles, ultimately leading to a romantic connection.

The music for the show is produced by Rosy Ocampo, who also produced the original "Betty: La Fea." The soundtrack features new songs by various Latin artists, including Jorge Villamizar of Bacilos and Margarita (aka La Diosita De La Cumbia). The label, Warner Music Mexico, released the album titled "Margarita Sinfónica," which features a live concert by Margarita and her band with the Puebla Symphony.

In addition to the concert tracks, the album also includes a duet between Bacilos and Celso Piña. The group produced by Alfonso Lizárraga of Banda El Recodo, is featured on another song on the album. The show’s success has led to cross-promotion opportunities with other Warner artists, such as Banda Machos and Angels.

The album, "Margarita Sinfónica," was released in Mexico on February 21, 2006, and is available for worldwide distribution through Warner Music Mexico. The release of the album has helped to increase the visibility of the show and its cast members, further solidifying the show’s cultural impact in Latin America and beyond.
juanes

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Precocious that moment all over again. We didn’t tamper with the live recordings. Just mastered them. Some of the stuff is taken off a cassette player, if you can believe that. Even if there are wrong chords or wrong notes, you can’t ever take away that joy or that wonderful moment. I wanted to share that. Then I wanted to pick out some things that nobody’s ever heard before.

Q: Did Alabama manage to have the kind of longevity it did in this often fickle music industry?
A: If you learn to cooperate with the business, the business will cooperate with you. When you realize you’re not the only game in town, you have a chance of staying in this business.

Q: How did Alabama retire from touring in late 2004? Any regrets?
A: Not at all. Careers sometimes suffer from being on the road so much. People get tired of seeing you, and we get tired of playing. We kept going and I never really had a chance to catch up and have my time to myself [to] think about the death of my daddy [in 1980], two weeks after the group signed with RCA. All these places I went to I had such a heavy heart. It’s been a well-needed rest for me as far as touring. I just felt like I needed a year just to think and get myself together. This year [off the road] has gone by really, really fast. When you’re focused on one thing for so long that you can’t do anything else, it takes your heart and soul. That’s what I put into being in the group.

Q: A lot of your fans think you retired too early. Why did you bow out when you did?
A: We wanted to go out and do the best shows we could do. We wanted to leave like that, not being old men, or acting like old men. That’s never been what I wanted to do—be out on tour and die.

Q: What was the most important thing you wanted to offer your fans in this boxed set?
A: Something that they might—if they were actually at the show—go back [to] and experience that moment all over again. We didn’t tamper with the live recordings. Just mastered them. Some of the stuff is taken off a cassette player, if you can believe that. Even if there are wrong chords or wrong notes, you can’t ever take away that joy or that wonderful moment. I wanted to share that. Then I wanted to pick out some things that nobody’s ever heard before.

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Q: Because of time constraints, we never got to make an acceptance speech when you were inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame last November. What would you have said?
A: The first thing I have would have done is thank the country music business. I had [planned to read] the names of the promoters and people who booked the group at county fairs and state fairs because, for Alabama, that was a huge part of our success. That’s what drove our record sales. That and the willingness of radio stations to play our music.

Q: When you found out Alabama was being inducted, you had band members Teddi Greenery, Jeff Cook and Mark Herndon over to your house for breakfast just to break the news to them. What was their reaction?
A: Everybody was very excited, and very surprised that this could happen. You’ve got to remember that all the disappointments [came along] with all the success. Until you’ve been in the trenches with the guys, there’s no way to explain that success. They know how tough things have been sometimes.

Q: You signed Alabama to a contract worth $28 million. A quarter century of music from seminal country group Alabama is celebrated in the new RCA/Legacy boxed set “Alabama—Livin’ Lovin’ Rockin’ Rollin’”. The 25th Anniversary Collection.

The three-CD set, which hit stores Jan. 31, features 51 tracks, including nine previously unreleased cuts. The package includes a 52-page booklet featuring rare photos, a band timeline and track-by-track annotations.

The package debuted at No. 28 on Billboard’s Top Country Albums chart in the Feb. 18 issue.

Alabama frontman Randy Owen says compiling the boxed set was a challenging, but ultimately rewarding process for the now-retired band, which was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame last year.

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music album.

The album was produced by Nick Gold, owner of London-based World Circuit Records, which released "In the Heart of the Moon" in Europe. Gold says the disc has shipped 100,000 units in Europe and 20,000 in the United States.

"It seems to have become an important record in people's lives, I think the Grammy reflects that," Gold says. "It was one of those moments that occur so rarely in the studio, when you know something special is happening." The album was recorded in Madrid, Spain, and in the United States, Mexico, and Chile in March, with other Latin American countries following. The set was released in December 2005 in Spain, peaking at No. 16 on the Pro-musicsa/Media Control chart Jan. 4.

Raphael released his first album, "Tu, Cúpidó" (His- pavoxx/EMI), in 1961. Most of his output since has been with EMI, but the 16-track compilation also includes recordings made between 1987 and 1995 for Sony Music. The DVD offers live material recorded between 1985 and 2005 in Spain and Chile.

In December, Raphael signed an exclusive agreement with Madrid-based RLM Booking International. The company's international booking director Santos Armonarz calls Raphael an "exceptional" signing. "He is bursting with enthusiasm to break new ground," Armonarz says. RLM plans a fall 2006/winter 2007 tour of Spain, Latin America and the United States. 

-HOWELL LLEWELLYN
BeatBox

KERRI MASON kmason@billboard.com

CLUB SPINNERS STARTING BANDS

Super groups are nothing new in rock. But in dance music, they are rare, and almost always purely exist in the studio or the club. Datar was the union of DJ/producer legend Danny Tenaglia and Tarentella & Redanka, for U.K. label Noo Choos; Francois K., Danny Krivit and Joe Claussell have played and traveled for years under the Body & Soul banner.

But a crew of dance stars getting together to record and perform? No one has been crazy enough to try it, until now. DJs Are Alive is an unlikely collective dream up by DJ Skribble and producer-performers the Scumfrog and DJ:Fuse during a gig gone wrong in Dallas. “We only knew each other 24 hours, but we really bonded quickly over a lot of liquor,” confesses the Scumfrog, aka Jesse Hoak, who has four Hot Dance Music/Club Play No. 1s to his credit. “We were all drunk, and the crowd had been waiting for something to happen—there was no sound at all for four hours. So we went up to the promoter and asked, ‘Why don’t you just put us all together? The three of us will do something on stage, something crazy!’

The result was a hodgepodge of live drumming, scratching, singing and general tomfoolery. But the notion of creating a live band based around beats was irresistible to the trio. So they approached Static Revenger, a Berklee College of Music graduate and multi-instrumentalist, and Kristine W, one of the decade’s most successful dance artists (nine Hot Dance Music/Club Play No. 1s and her latest, “I’ll Be Your Light” on Tommy Boy, still climbing).

Soon, they were a full-fledged five-piece, complete with pioneer as a gear sponsor and one heck of a rehearsal space at the W Hotel in Las Vegas. Together they sing, spin and play drums, guitar, keyboards, and saxophone. With all those bodies and gear, their stage show is a busy, potentially messy opposite of the scaled-down DJ performances of today, which often consist of a single bobbing head behind a glowing laptop screen. And that might be the core question behind DJs Are Alive: “Can we please make this fun again?” Instead of composing new material, their plan is to perform combinations of recognizable dance tracks and on-the-fly remixes, or mash-ups, if you will.

“We wanted to do something that people can relate to, perform songs that have been big crossover records,” Scumfrog says. “So we’ll have Kristine sing the vocals from something like Kings of Tomorrow’s ‘Finally,’ but over an underworld track.”

Taking an act like this on the road is involved, costly and might very well be impossible. But showcase dates in New York and Miami are planned. The group will also release a series of singles, kicking off with “Gimme Some Love” on Effen Records. “We have absolutely no illusions that this will work or be profitable,” Scumfrog says. “We’re just doing it because it’s fun.”

Whichever, essentially the point.

IT’S GOOD TO BE KING: King Street Sounds is known for releasing some of the best classic-styled house being produced today. But the label might have a crossover hit on its hands with “Glory of Life” by 22-year-old Japanese singer Mink. The vocal is great, the hook is catchy, and the remixes—by Chris Cox and Creamer & K— are proper for a radio push.

“We ultimately want to see King Street become the new Strictly Rhythm where we’re still putting out hot underground jams but also release the bigger-room stuff to pay the bills,” director of promotions A.R. Joe Bernato says. “It’s a business after all, and there’s only so much income underground soulful house can produce.”
Arctic Monkeys

Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not

Producer: Jim Abbiss

Release Date: Feb. 21

Within seconds, Arctic Monkeys' genre-crashing track "I Feel It Coming"—the UK pop chart hit and becoming a new heroes, thanks to an infectiously exciting Internet wave, the hype reminds one of Oasis, but that hasn't hurt yet. Unlike Oasis, the lads from Sheffield, England, take their cues from the Clash and the Libertines, mixing chunky punk-funk guitars with distorted vocals and frantic rhythms. No. 1 single "Do I Look Like I've Landed on the Dancefloor" is a spiky pub rock anthem that clocks in at less than three minutes. Likewise, hipster critique "Fake Tales of San Francisco" and ballad "Cold Rain and Snow" get right to the point. Barely out of high school, singer Alex Turner has a gritty voice and offers fresh lyrical goods with a snotty confidence. A remarkable debut by a band full of raw energy.—SP

Ray Davies

Other People's Lives

Producer: Ray Davies

Release Date: Feb. 21

Ray Davies' first solo studio collection has all the tasty ingredients that epitomized the Kinks—primarily Davies' knowing lyrics and world-weary vocals. Much of the album is informed by his experiences living in New Orleans, although the Big Easy does not lend any discernable influence on the album's sound. Powerful opening track "Nothing's Gonna Change (The Morning After)" has the crunchy guitars that could sound at home on any energetic rock station. "Next Door Neighbor" and "The Tourist" are saviors of life carved with Kinks-like precision, while "Thanksgiving Day" is a warm homage to America's family values. But the best treat is the jaunty "I'm That Life After Breakfast?" Here, Davies reminds us all how to rise above life's setbacks to enjoy that next cuppa tea.—KS

Howard Tate

Howard Tate Live

Producer: Howard Tate

Doo-Wop Factory

Release Date: Feb. 21

The recent passing of Lou Rawls and Wilson Pickett underscore a irresistible fact: We are losing our soul pioneers, which makes it all the more imperative that we appreciate those that are still here. Among the talented few is Howard Tate. Missing and beloved dead after retiring in the late '70s, he bounced back with the 2003 Grammy Award-nominated "Re-discovered." Here Tate presents his first live album while reprising the '60s hits ("Stop," "Ain't Nobody Home," Look at Granny Run, Run") that made his initial fame. Recorded in June 2004 at the Tucson Island Music Festival in Denmark, this set reveals why Tate remains an original. From juke-joint funk ("Mama Was Right"), to frank, yet poignant blues ("Wrong Young Number"), he colorfully conveys the bumps, bruises and hallmark of a true soul master.—GM

Pink

Stupid Girls

(3:12)

Producer: Billy Mann

Writers: Pink, B. Mann, M. Olivas, R. Lynch

Publishers: various

LaFace/Zomba

(CD)

Pink proved two albums ago that she possesses a rainbow of creativity and verve that many pop artists could never hope to match. Unlike the tabloid queens, she has truly kept it real, an era where doing so comes at the cost of being portrayed every week in Us or OK! magazines. That means her music has to speak for itself, and indeed it does. Pink's return makes justified fun of her peers who rely on physical charms and gaudy headlines to perpetuate fame. All the while, the tough singer/songwriter nails her best pop hooks in some time, with a slapstick video that makes the point without being scurrilous. "Stupid Girls" is not only great fun, it cements Pink's impression as an artist whose talent is honest-to-God above the neck. This deserves to be her first No. 1 hit.—CT

Nickelback

Savin' Me

(3:39)

Producers: Nickelback, Joe Moi

Writers: C. Kroeger, Nickelback

Publishers: various

Roadrunner/UMG

(CD track)

Following its recent top five pop single 'Photograph' and less successful bid for rock cred, "Animal" the Canadian rock band Nickelback returns in 2006 with the hard-hitting 'Savin' Me,' a song that punches all the buttons that fans expect from lead singer/yrics Chad Kroeger and company. So far, the group remains inventive enough with its catch-all choruses to maintain momentum. Some nice strings, echoes and a clever pre-chorus save this track from being a rehash. But it is getting close. Certain melodic patterns are becoming rather predictable—but the 'story's played out like this/Just like a paperback novel' from 'Someday.' Let's hope that there is something more daring coming from current album 'All the Right Reasons.'—CT

Mastodon

Remission

Producers: Iggy Pop, Gus Unger-Meikle

Release Date: Feb. 21

Mastodon's 'Remission' has its moments of pure mayhem, but overall it is a muddled, unbalanced album that is one of the year's biggest disappointments. To get the most out of the album, you have to ignore the songs that are simply not good, which is almost the majority of the material. The band is capable of producing some of the most intense music around, but unfortunately there is little to give it a chance to be heard.—Shawn"Ash"Kinney

Teddy Thompson

Separate Ways

Producers: Teddy Thompson, Brad Albertha

Verve

Release Date: Feb. 21

Fresh from his appearance on the "Brokedown Mountain" soundtrack, Teddy Thompson delivers a sophomore effort that showcases his talent for marrying smart, introspective lyrics to memorable melodies and spirited grooves. Many moments on this disc deserve notice from adult-oriented radio—especially uptempo cuts like "Shine So Bright," "I Should Get Up," "Everybody Move It" and "I Wish It Was Over." The wide-ranging set also features sparse, acoustic numbers and sweet and smooth ballads that showcase his talents as a vocalist and songwriter. This album is a must for fans of simple, sweet and bluesy pop, and it gives Thompson a strong chance at being something special.—JW

Jesse Harris

Mineral

Producer: Terry Manning

Secret Sun Recordings

Release Date: Feb. 21

The pace of Jesse Harris' albums generally falls somewhere between deep sleep and a post-work haze, "Mineral" being no exception. Ditching his longtime collaborator the Ferrin-Andos, Harris spaces out his already spacey pop songs, the gobs filled in primarily by percussionist Kenny Wollesen and the divine ear of organist/pianist Larry Goldings. While Harris' songs are simple and sparse, accusations and vague melodies on songs like the blues-based "Corina Corrina" and the intimate "No More" leave marks on the memory. It is Goldings who really shines throughout, treating the ropes with tasteful accompaniment and jazz-aware flourishes. "Holding Your Hand" and "Somewhere Down The Road" prove too sleepy for appeal but, overall, this pleasant effort will strengthen fan loyalty.—KN

Mastodon

Call of the Mastodon

Producer: Matt Washburn

Release Date: Feb. 7

Atlanta's Mastodon has come a long way in a five-year life span. On the heels of 2002's "Remission" and 2004's "Leviathan," the quartet has deservedly become one of the most buzzed-about bands in the underground metal and landed a contract with Warner Bros. "Call of the Mastodon" is a chance for newcomers to catch up on the band's beginnings, as it rounds up a remastered version of their debut EP "Lifesblood," along with four other tracks recorded during those sessions. The bonus CD is particularly memorable, fitting more into the continued on >p.50
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Jack Be Quick; Grammys' Grip; Cupid's Calendar

The new champ on The Billboard 200 this week is the self-titled album by Jack Johnson, which represents the first No. 1 album in the career of Jack Johnson, and also likely marks a severe demographic swing from those consumers who bought the chart’s last two toppers.

As evidenced by ast summer’s Greek Theatre concert in Los Angeles, Johnson draws heavily from college kids and fans in their 20s, but since this album is the soundtrack to the film “Curious George,” it stands to draw from a substantially younger crowd.

Those age brackets stand in stark contrast to the more mature shoppers who crowed Barry Manilow and neo-operative group Il Divo the last two weeks.

Although “Curious George” becomes the singer/songwriter’s first No. 1 set, first-week sales of 163,000 fall shy of Johnson’s best Nielsen SoundScan week. Last year’s “In Between Dreams” sold 229,000 when it bowed at No. 3 behind 50 Cent’s “The Massacre” and Jennifer Lopez’s “Rebirth.”

“Dreams,” Johnson’s third album, peaked at No. 2, two years after sophomore set “On and On” reached No. 3. Reaching by Over The Counter at the BRIT Awards in London on the day SoundScan released this week’s chart, Johnson said it was “surreal” to experience his first No. 1 set, especially with a children’s album.

“George” becomes the first soundtrack to lead The Billboard 200 since the summer of 2001, when the Diddy-produced “Bad Boys II,” another set from distributing label Universal, bowed at No. 1, its first of four weeks on top.

The animated film “Curious George” opened at No. 3 on the box-office list.

WIN FOR LOSING: Win some Grammy Awards, win some sales. And, even if you do not win one of those awards, a performance on the telecast usually means you will not leave the cash register empty-handed.

As noted here last week, the Grammys’ Feb. 8 telecast on CBS did lose out during the hour that ratings champ “American Idol” aired, but after that Fox show ended, the awards were the most-watched program for the next two hours, surpassing 19 million viewers from 9 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., even topping ABC’s popular “Lost,” according to Nielsen Media Research.

In hindsight, I wonder if Monday night might have been a nifty home for the Grammys—providing the network was willing to give up top 20 shows “CSI: Miami” and “Two and a Half Men,” which garnered 18.7 million and 15.1 million viewers, respectively, on Feb. 6. The best any of the network’s competitors did that night was 13.7 million for Fox’s “24.”

Still, rewinding to 2005, when competition from “Desperate Housewives” drove the Grammys down from 26 million viewers, the prior year to 18.8 million, the Grammys were still the most-watched music awards show of the year.

The Country Music Assoc. Awards in November were the next closest with 11.6 million. The American Music Awards that same month drew 11.6 million while the Academy of Country Music Awards in May pulled 11.9 million.

Even with a dip to 17.5 million viewers, the Grammys will likely remain king of this year’s music award shows, as all but May’s ACM’s saw ratings drop in 2005.

Moreover, no less than 21 albums on The Billboard 200 put at least another 11 titles on the rest of our retail charts show growth in the Grammys’ wake, several with eye-opening gains (see story, page 14).

LOVE LOST: Valentine’s Day generates sales gains for certain adult-leaning fare, no matter what day of the week it falls. However, it is hard to appreciate the event’s full impact when it falls on a Tuesday, as it did this year, or a Wednesday. Its effect is more far more conspicuous when Cupid lands on a Monday or during a weekend.

Figure that most of the growth seen by romance-themed fare on this issue’s charts were generated by female shoppers and men who plan ahead. Gifts bought at music stores by the rest of the guys will show up on next issue’s charts, a thought that occurred to me as I scourcd around stores on Feb. 13.
## The Billboard 200 Artist Index

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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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**POP 100** | **POP 100 AIRPLAY** |
---|---
| **CHARTS LEGEND** | **CHARTS LEGEND** |
| US | US |
| R | R |
| B | B |
| S | S |
| M | M |
| C | C |
| V | V |
| D | D |
| CM | CM |
| L | L |

**Data for week of FEBRUARY 25, 2006** | **CHARTS LEGEND on Page 66**
### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Label (Price)</th>
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<tr>
<td>279</td>
<td>50 CENT</td>
<td>The Breakthrough</td>
<td>Def Jam (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>278</td>
<td>ERIC BENET</td>
<td>On Top Of Our Game</td>
<td>Virgin (13.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>JAMIE FXX</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td>DTP (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td>HEATHER HEADLEY</td>
<td>In My Mind</td>
<td>RCA (13.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>MARIAN CAREY</td>
<td>The Emancipation Of Mimi</td>
<td>RCA (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>DMX</td>
<td>The Way It Is</td>
<td>Shady (17.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>REMY MA</td>
<td>There's Something About Remy: Based On A True Story</td>
<td>The Def Jam (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>CHRIS BROWN</td>
<td>Chris Brown</td>
<td>Def Jam (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>EMINEM</td>
<td>Curtain Call: The Hits</td>
<td>Interscope (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>BUM FRANCIZE BOYZ</td>
<td>Go Do Dat Shit-Vol. 2</td>
<td>The Def Jam (18.98)</td>
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### Top Blues Albums

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label (Price)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>GEORGE THOROGOOD &amp; THE DESTROYERS</td>
<td>Greatest Hits: 30 Years Of Rock</td>
<td>Epic (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>DELBERT McCLINTON</td>
<td>Cost Of Livin'</td>
<td>MCA (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>B.B. KING</td>
<td>The Definitive Collection</td>
<td>Blues (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>SIBAN TESDECHI</td>
<td>The Complete Collection</td>
<td>Transatlantic (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>E'-TA JAMES</td>
<td>The Definitive Collection</td>
<td>Not On Label (18.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>B.B. KING</td>
<td>The Complete Collection</td>
<td>Blues (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>BUDDY GUY</td>
<td>Bring 'Em In</td>
<td>Blue (18.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>N.JRTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS</td>
<td>Blue Watermelon</td>
<td>Blue (18.98)</td>
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<td>RAY CHARLES</td>
<td>Greats</td>
<td>Blue (18.98)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>AEROSMITH &amp; GEORGE THOROGOOD</td>
<td>Best Of Blues: 50 Hits</td>
<td>Epic (18.98)</td>
</tr>
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### FANS BUY INTO FRANCHISE BOYZ

In December, Dem Franchise Boyz noted Virgin's first No. 1 since 2001 on Hot & B-Hop Songs. Now the group's "On Top Of Our Game" gives the label its best de-

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**Data for week of FEBRUARY 25, 2006**
*Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data*
### Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Playlists

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<td>Death Row</td>
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<td>Live It, Rock Wit</td>
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<td>Lean Wit It</td>
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<td>Future</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I'm N Liv (Wit A Stripper)</td>
<td>Trj Camillion</td>
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<td>Gettin' So You</td>
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<td>Don't Forget About Us</td>
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<td>Sittin' On The Fence</td>
<td>Keyshia Cole</td>
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<td>There It Goes (The Whistle Song)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Where Would I Be (The Question)</td>
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<td>Virgin</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>We Belong Together</td>
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<td>Conceived (There's Something About Remi)</td>
<td>K.Rino &amp; Remi</td>
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<td>Ms. New booty</td>
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<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Betcha Can't Do It Like Me</td>
<td>2 Chainz</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
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### Adult R&B

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### Rhythm & Blues Playlists

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COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE

BETWEEN THE BULLET: radioactivebillboard.com

RADIO SHOWS FAITH IN UNDERWOOD

With 3.43 million audience impressions, Carrie Underwood nails a sixth week at No. 1 with "Jesus, Take the Wheel," marking only the second time in more than a decade that the Nielsen BDS end score for Faith Hill's "Breathe" ended a six-week run in the No. 1 spot. Underwood's peak topper this artist who logged five weeks each at the top with a debut album track, including Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart" (1992), Blake Shelton's "Austin" (2001), Steve Holy's "Good Morning Beautiful" (2002) and Gretchen Wilson's "Redneck Woman" (2004). Underwood's label, Arista Nashville, does not plan to solicit spins on her follow-up track. "Don't Forget to Remember Me," until April's second week, but a handful of impatient programmers are already on the bandwagon. The song bows this week at No. 54 with plays from five stations. Two stations kept "Breathe" on their charts for a second week (No. 65). Looking ahead, Underwood's album should see a spike from a halftime performance at the Feb. 19 NBA All-Star Game in Houston.

—Wade Jones
### HOT LATIN SONGS

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### TOP LATIN ALBUMS

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Data for week of FEBRUARY 25, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

**Latin Play Chart**

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**Latin Albums**

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**Regional Mexican**

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**Regional Mexican**

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<th>Top 10 Latin expenditures</th>
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Go to www.billboard.com for chart data and reprints.
**Japan**

**Singapore**

**United Kingdom**

**Germany**

**France**

**Australia**

**Canada**

**Italy**

**Spain**

**Brazil**

**Flanders**

**Sweden**

**Ireland**

**New Zealand**

**Argentina**

**Euro Digital Tracks**

**Hits of the World**

**3rd Edition**

**2006**

**February 25, 2006**

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

**Data for week of February 25, 2006**

**Charts Legend** on Page 66
## EUROCHARTS

### SINGLE SALES

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## ALBUMS

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## RADIO AIRPLAY

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## SOWETO GOSPEL CHORAL GROUP

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## CHARTS

### TOP CHRISTIAN

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### TOP GOSPEL

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<tr>
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<td>I SAY</td>
<td>VIRGIN</td>
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</table>

**Legend for rules and chart data:**
- *#1* indicates the highest position in the chart.
- *#2* indicates the second highest position in the chart.
- *#3* indicates the third highest position in the chart.

**See Chart Legend for rules and explanations:**
- © 2006 Nielsen SoundScan, Inc. All rights reserved.
- See www.americanradiohistory.com for complete chart data.
Singles Chart

RADIO AIRPLAY SINGLES CHARTS

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

BONUS: Singers using multiple listens and Nielsen SoundScan. For merchant, and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.

Airplay charts

Promosquad using multiple listens and Nielsen SoundScan. For merchant, and internet sales reports collected, compiled, and provided by Nielsen SoundScan.

Titles are removed from Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs and Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the chart for more than 40 weeks and rank below 75. Songs are removed from the Pop and Pop 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the chart for more than 50 weeks and rank below 75. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 30. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 30. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 30. Titles are removed from Hot Country Songs if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 30.

Singles Sales Charts

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

NEW FOR MARCH: Singles with the greatest sales gains.

Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Crazy Love&quot;</td>
<td>Sugar Ray</td>
<td>VONE CITY RECORDS RE幢</td>
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<td>&quot;What Makes You Beautiful&quot;</td>
<td>The Corrs</td>
<td>SONY BME</td>
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<td>&quot;One&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;I Don't Want To Miss A Thing&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;Let Me Be Your Love&quot;</td>
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| "Think Of You"             | Static & Hot

Radio Airplay Singles Charts

Table:

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>&quot;Lose Yourself&quot;</td>
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<td>SONY BME</td>
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</table>
| "Let Me Be Your Love"      | Static & Hot

Singles Sales Charts

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**FEB 25 2006**

**Chart Codes:** CS (Hot Country Songs), H100 (Hot 100 Songs), LT (Hot Latin Songs), POP (Pop 100 Songs and RBH (Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs). TITLE (Publisher - Licensing Org) Sheet Music Dist., Chart, Position.

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DEATHS

Ethan Cutkosky Crimmings, 42, died in his sleep of respiratory complications, Feb. 10 in Seattle.

Crimmings combined his passion for music and travel through jobs in sales and special markets for EMI, Angel, Concord and Disc Marketing. Most recently, he had begun work on a digital music project at amazon.com.

Crimmings is survived by his wife, Jo, who is director of publicity at Concord Records; parents Marcy and James Crimmings; four sisters; and 10 nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his name can be made to Save the Children at savethedon.org.

Jockey Shabalala, 62, of natural causes, Feb. 11 in South Africa. Shabalala was a long-time member of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the renowned South African a cappella ensemble founded by his brother, Joseph.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo came to global attention when it was featured on Paul Simon’s landmark 1986 album “Graceland.” Ladysmith’s own album “Shaka Zulu” won a Grammy Award in 1987 for best traditional world music album. The group was also nominated for a Grammy Award in 2004 for best world music album.

Jockey recently retired from international travel to spend more time with family, but continued to perform with Ladysmith in South Africa. He is survived by his wife and four children.

Producer J Dilla Dies At 32

Hip hop producer James Yancey, professionally known as Jay Dee or J Dilla, died Feb. 10 at his home in Los Angeles, The 32-year-old, who reportedly suffered from lupus, died of cardiac arrest.

Born and raised in Detroit, Yancey and high school friends T3 and Baatin formed the group Slum Village in 1988. By 1996, he was amassing significant credits for his production work on tracks by artists like De La Soul, Tramaine Hawkins, and DJ Quik. Yancey also had a successful solo career in the early 2000s with his debut album “Donuts” in 2001.

Yancey’s music was characterised by its instrumental hip hop sound and his unique sampling style. Among his many fans were a number of major artists such as Kanye West, Outkast, and the Black Eyed Peas.

His death was confirmed by his mother, Maureen; his father; and his two daughters. The news was met with widespread sadness and grief from the music community and fans worldwide.

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Singer/songwriter Jules Shear, center, taped songs from his latest album, "Dreams Don't Count," on Jan. 10 for a session of NPR's "World Cafe" program, abetted by renowned sidemen Rob Hyman, left, and Eric Bazilian at Philadelphia's WXPN studios. (Photo: John Senios)

SoundExchange celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Digital Performance Right in Sound Recordings Act by gathering some of the leaders who helped to win the legislation enacted Feb. 1, 1996. From left are the RIAA's Cary Sherman, Jay Berman and Hilary Rosen, SoundExchange's John L. Simson, American Federation of Musicians' Patricia Polach and Music Managers Forum's Barry Bergman. (Photo: Shawn T. Moore)

Recall Music for Films hosted a Q&A session moderated by Billboard executive editor/Tamara Conniff with Academy Award winner Tom Lee Jones, right, and composer Marco Beltrami at the Banes & Noble at New York's Lincoln Center. The three discussed the score and soundtrack to Jones' directorial debut, "The Three Billys of Meiquiades Estrada." (Photos: ©ott Katre)

Fans recently voted online to name Christian sister act BarlowGirl the winner of Yahoo Music's "Whose Next?" producer Neil Weiss and band members Rebecca and Lauren Barlow. (Photo: Courtesy of Word Label Group)

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Disney Channel Worldwide celebrated the chart-topping success of its "High School Musical" soundtrack (Billboard, Feb. 16) during the film's screening party at Disney Studios in Burbank, Calif. From left are Disney Channel Worldwide's Gary Marsh, "High School Musical" cast members Zac Efron and Vanessa Anne Hudgens, and Disney Channel Worldwide's Rich Ross. (photo: Adam Levine)

On Jan. 29, the I Have a Dream Foundation's eighth annual Gospel Brunch honored actor Samuel L. Jackson and AEG president/CEO Tim Leiweke with the Dream Keeper Awards for their commitment to mentor and foster the academic development of children in Los Angeles. Shown here, from left, are Leiweke, film director and award presenter George Lucas and Jackson at the event, held at the House of Blues in Los Angeles. (Photo: Alberto Rodriguez)

Legendary singer Tony Bennett, left, was on hand as national Endowment for the Arts chairman Dana Gioia inducted Bennett as a NEA Jazz Master during a special awards ceremony held at the International Jazz Education Confab at the New York Hilton Hotel. (Photo: Tom Poling)

The BMI Sundance Songwriter/Showcase recently featured performances by singer/songwriters Cary Brothers, Josh Rouse and Van Hunt at the Sundance Film Festival held at the Sundance House Kimball Art Center in Park City, Utah. Thom left are BMI's Samantha Cox, Alison Ray and Lee Verdone. Seated from left are Jordan Seay, Brothers and Jason Knakor, BMI's Doreen Ringer Ross and Linda Livingston, and BMI. (Photo: cbmphotography.com)
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LIVE AT THE BRITS, PT. 2
Unlike the relatively sober Grammys, BRIT Awards guests have the opportunity to drink during the show. That provides a more relaxed atmosphere and such spontaneous scenes as EMI Group chairman Eric Nicoli pogo-ing and EMI head of continental Europe Jean-Francois Cecnilion playing “air guitar” during a performance by Paul Weller, who received an Outstanding Contribution to Music award.

The Warner Music international crew attended the BRITs without a leader. Outgoing chairman Paul-Rene Alber-tini was understandably absent (his departure was announced only two days before), and new boss Patrick Vien did not attend, despite being in town for initial meetings with his new staff.

Sony BMG’s new COO Tim Bowin was the source of much attention. He told Track that he does not plan to settle in New York. Instead, he will commute between the Big Apple and London.

KANYE WEST at the BRIT Awards

SMALL THINKS BIG
Heather Small is looking for a U.S. label to call home. Judging from the A&R execs and agents attending the singer’s Feb. 15 showcase at New York’s S.I.R. Studios, a deal could come soon. No doubt, many in the room—including reps from Reprise, Atlantic, Jive, Columbia, Universal, Sony BMG International and the agency A&R Worldwide—were motivated by Small’s appearance late last year on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” (Billboard, Jan. 7). Realizing the importance of her Oprah gig, Small opened her showcase with the anemic “Proud,” the song she performed for Winfrey. A funky retelling of Paul Simon’s “50 Ways To Leave Your Lover” followed. Especially proud of the performance were Small’s U.K. team, Brian Lane and Kate Allen of Ban-dana Management, and Sir Harry, the managing director of Private and Confidential Music. Small’s British label.

RUNNING ON A FULL TANK
Track hears that popular Australian lifestyle label Petrol Records—founded by former INXS manager Chris Murphy—is poised to expand its global reach via a multiyear, revenue-sharing deal with EMI. In addition to licensing Petrol’s back catalog, EMI will provide marketing, distribution and sales support for physical and digital releases. EMI will also seek sync licensing and ringtone opportunities for Petrol. The worldwide partnership also includes an arrangement that expands the songwriter and catalog artists. That is, the partnership arrive this summer. They include multi-artist compilations “Cuban Revolution” and “Road Trip.”

PETTY TO TELL TUNEFUL TALES
Track has learned that Tom Petty will share his songwriting insights April 22 at the special guest at ASCAP’s “I Create Music” expo. The conference, which takes place April 20-22 in Hollywood, is open to all songwriters (not just ASCAP members) and will feature top tunesmiths and composers, including Alan & Marilyn Bergman, Glen Ball-ard, Desmond Child, Jill Scott, Timbaland, Linda Perry, Jimmy Webb and others.

MUSIQ ANCHORS AT ATLANTIC
Track hears that Musiq—the artist formerly known as Musiq Soulchild—has signed with Atlantic Records. The R&B singer/songwriter, born Tarlton Johnson, was formerly signed to Def Soul/Def Jam. Expect the artist’s Atlantic debut (his fourth album overall) later this year.

LIVE AT THE BRITS
In signature fashion, the BRIT Awards proved to be quite festive. The Feb. 15 show, held at London’s Earls Court, featured many strong musical and visual moments. Prince stole the show with performances of “Purple Rain” and “Let’s Go Crazy.” During Kanye West’s rendition of “Diamonds From Sierra Leone,” the stage was filled with no less than 77 barely clad women. Elsewhere, the Kaiser Chiefs’ first-of-three acceptance speeches was disrupted by an individual who managed to break through security and offer the band an award of his own: an empty plastic water bottle. Those who have attended these ceremonies will remember this as a classic example of how rockers should never meet. Then there was Coldplay frontman Chris Martin, who has a knack for leaving EMi shareholders scratching their heads. Last year, EMi felt the hit on its share price when the band announced that its fourth forthcoming album ("X&Y") would be delayed. While accepting one of two BRITs, Martin alluded to the band’s upcoming hiatus. “We won’t see you for a long time,” he said. “I mean it. It’s going to be years before we have the chance to say this again.” The following day, EMi shares were down 1.8% to 245.5 pence. This prompted Parlehone, the band’s U.K. label, to issue a statement saying, “Coldplay are not quitting. They are on the road until July, when their 16-month X&Y World Tour ends in Japan. They will then continue working on new material.” Following the announcement, the stock rebounded.

EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

Katapult Records in Nashville names Chris Borchetta manager of regional promotion. He was manager of promotion at Lofton Creek Records.
Razor & Tie Entertainment in New York promotes Michele Debreceni to director of new media. She was associate director of new media. Razor & Tie Entertainment also uses Tim Foisset to director of digital marketing. He was new-media marketing manager. Lofton Creek Records in Nashville ups Brad Taylor to secondary promotion manager. He was promotion assistant.
Lyric Street Records in Nashville names Kris Lamb promotion coordinator. He held the same position at Curb/Asylum Records.

PUBLISHING: BMI in New York names Mark Barron assistant VP of corporate marketing. He was assistant VP of marketing and sales.
Ten Ten Music Group in Nashville names Van Wesley Stephenson II catalog manager. He was tape-room clerk at Famous Music Corp.

HOME VIDEO: New Line Home Entertainment in Los Angeles elevates Laura Abell to VP of marketing. She was executive director of marketing.

DIGITAL: Neurotic Media in Atlanta names Ed Douglas COO. He was president of Brash Music.

RELATED FIELDS: Casablanca Records executive VP of urban music Ed Woods has been elected president of the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Assn.
Labor lawyer Ivy Kagan Birman rejoins Loeb & Loeb as partner. She was a partner in the entertainment and labor groups of Morrison & Foerster.

Baker & Hostetler in Los Angeles names Tom Speiss as an attorney in the firm’s entertainment and intellectual property practice groups. He was a senior attorney at Wasserman, Conden, Casselman & Pearson.

Send submissions to shan@billboard.com.

MARX, BOLTON UNITE
Richard Marx and Michael Bolton will co-headline an April 15 benefit concert for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Southern California at the Grove in Anaheim. All proceeds will benefit the foundation. For ticket info, log on to thegroveanaheim.com.

MCDONALD FIGHTS HUNGER
While on the road for his current U.S. trek, Michael McDonald is raising money for World Hunger Year via its Artists Against Hunger and Poverty program. At each stop along the tour, 20 fans—who have each made a $150 donation to WHY—will enjoy a meet-and-greet with McDonald.

GOOD WORKS

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