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SXSW: BIGGER & BETTER THAN EVER

Twenty years on, the South by Southwest Music and Media Conference just keeps getting bigger and, surprisingly, better. Having attended nearly half of them, I have earned the right to complain. And in the past I have. But a week after returning from what has become the country’s premier music industry event, I have nothing but praise in my pockets (plus some cab receipts, two dozen assorted business cards, numerous demos and a few beer caps).

Some gripe that there are too many bands at SXSW (more than 1,300 this year). As one Billboard attendee wrote on our jadestdinsider.com blog, “There’s always the nagging feeling that no matter what you saw, something cooler was happening at about 50 other places.”

But this embarrassment of riches — and the 10,500 registered attendees — is what makes SXSW so special. The people and the conversations have to happen to the point of overload. And the conference itself, founded in the early ’90s, is now so big that it’s hard to fit it into one week, much less one day.

Furthermore, while the shadow events — unofficial daytime parties and concerts — have grown to rival and even threaten the conference itself, 2007 found a fair share of attendees sticking close to official activities at the Austin Convention Center.

This is due to the star power of the artist speakers — Neil Young, Morrissey and the Beastie Boys among them. As for the panels, subjects were relevant and the participants equally so. These sparked conversations and, amid the handshaking and card-trading, business got done.

Kudos to the SXSW staff for providing a forum where debate raged and lessons were learned. The most important, perhaps, is that the music business is neither dying nor dead. To echo an often expressed sentiment: It is just different, deal with it.

If it takes an annual trip to Austin to set that straight, so be it. You see there in 2007.

Still A Man’s World For Female Rappers

By Ted “Touché” Lucas

Today’s music industry is more competitive than ever. With the emergence of new rap music forms and the re-emergence of independent labels, consumers have more options than ever when choosing what to listen to. But even as the industry changes, one thing remains the same — men dominate rap music. I do not see changing any time soon.

In most cases, it is difficult for a female rapper to be successful unless she is part of a well-known, male-dominated clique. Even big-name female rappers like Lil’ Kim (who rapped with Junior M.I.A.), Eve (the “Ruff Ryders” crew) and Foxy Brown (who was down with Jay-Z) had to come under the auspices of male rappers to make it. Even my own artist, Trina, won acceptance early on because of her association with Trick Daddy. Like Kim, Eve and Foxy, Trina can now stand on her own.

But what about new female rappers trying to make it? Chances are they will not get a foot in the door unless a male artist walks in with them. Is this fair? It may or may not be, but there is a good reason for it.

As a record label head, I understand why other labels are gun-shy when it comes to women rappers. Most of us are leery of investing in them without something close to a guarantee that they will be successful — the kind of guarantee that only comes with the hot male-rapper association. Why? Quite simply, because male artists are usually more successful.

But there are other factors that make breaking and sustaining female rappers a challenge. Those factors have to do with the fact that female rappers are, well, females. In most cases, when a female artist rises to stardom, the cost of maintaining her superstar status rises as well.

Not to say that it is inexpensive to work a male artist. Breaking any artist these days can break the bank — but women require more. Hair, wardrobe stylists and makeup artists’ rates per project can be costly.

Some label execs might think, “I can put two male rappers in a studio, they can argue and sell enough records to convince a label head that she is worth the investment.”

It is unfortunate because I have encountered some really good female rappers who have a way of saying things that a young lady in the hood or a young professional business lady can relate to.

But for label executives, it is about money. They want to spend as little as they can and make as much as they can. Whenever possible, they want to invest in an established brand and increase their odds of winning. And most execs believe that the best way to do that with a female rapper is to make sure she is tied to a reputable male rapper. Female rappers need to realistic about how the industry and society perceives them.

They have to be on the mic, fast in the studio, easy on the budget, and they have to talk about things that both men and women want to hear.

Finally, fair or unfair, female rappers need to realize when it comes to making it in hip-hop, they usually need to affiliate with a hot male MC.

Ted “Touché” Lucas is CEO of Slip-N-Slide Records in Miami Beach.
B.I.G. Song May Cost Diddy
Jury Hits Bad Boy, Universal With $4.2 Million Sampling Verdict

A Michigan publisher and label's legal strategy to file nearly 500 lawsuits over unlicensed sampling of their music in copyright-friendly Nashville is paying off. A jury in the country music capital slammed Sean "Diddy" Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment and Universal Records with a $4.2 million verdict for a six-second sample used in Notorious B.I.G.'s "Ready to Die." The federal court then promptly ordered CDs of the 1994 album of the same name—still selling after the rapper's 1997 murder—pulled from retail shelves and online sites. Bridgeport Music and Westbound Records own rights in frequently sampled compositions and recordings, respectively, like those of George Clinton, Funkadelic and the Ohio Players. About 95% of the publisher's revenue since the 1990s has come from sample licenses, according to the trial testimony of Jane Peterer, the publisher's Vermont-based administrator who combs through rap recordings searching for unlicensed samples.

In 2001, Bridgeport and Westbound filed 476 claims against roughly 400 defendants in the U.S. District Court in Nashville, where their litigation attorney Richard Busch with King & Bellow practices. Under copyright law, a suit may be filed where the infringement—such as a CD sale—occurs. In a 2004 case against Master P's Los Angeles-based No Limit Films, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit in Tennessee created what it called a "new rule" in copyright law. The court held that a mere two-second, unauthorized sample of a sound recording is enough to constitute copyright infringement. This despite the de minimis rule under copyright law that using a small amount—determined by considering a number of factors including length—of a copyrighted work is lawful. The de minimis rule still applies to compositions—lyrics or arrangement of musical notes—it may apply to sound recordings in other jurisdictions. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California held in 2003 that a six-second sample of a composition—three notes—was too small to require a license even though it was looped more than 40 times in a rap recording. The Sixth Circuit Court's decision helped Bridgeport and Westbound settle cases filed within that court's jurisdiction—about 85%-90% of the claims to date, according to Busch.

In the Bad Boy case, the parties agreed at trial that producer Easy Mo Bee sampled a six-second

WMG To Acquire Rykodisc

NEW YORK—The Warner Music Group is on the verge of signing an agreement to buy Rykodisc, sources say, in a deal believed to be valued at $67.5 million that is expected to close at the end of April.

Rykodisc, which has annual revenue of about $80 million, will operate as a stand-alone entity, but under the banner of WEA, the major-label distribution arm of WMG, sources say. The Ryko company is currently overseen by corporate chairman and CEO Sam Holdsworth; formerly an executive with an ancestor company to JPMorgan Partners, the lead investment-owner partner in Ryko. Holdsworth is expected to leave the company when the deal closes. Since the March 2005 departure of Arthur Mann, one of the company's co-founders, William Hein has served as label president and Jim Cuomo as president of Ryko Distribution. Both will stay on.

Sources say the Ryko label generates about $10 million in U.S. revenue and another $20 million worldwide. In addition to the Rykodisc label, Ryko Distribution accounts for about $50 million in U.S. revenue.

The acquisition will make WMG the only major that owns and operates two independent distributors. WMG also owns Alternative Distribution Alliance, the largest U.S. indie distributor with revenue expected to be about $180 million this year. The Ryko Distribution market share will be incorporated with A.D.A.'s under the banner of the WMG independent market share in SoundScan, sources say.

WEA performs fulfillment for Ryko.

THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.'S "Ready to Die" includes a sample that a Nashville jury held was illegally used. It may cost Bad Boy $4.2 million.

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Sirius Deal Sets Stage For Wider Rate Talks

The long-running dispute between record labels and Sirius Satellite Radio over the $50 million levy for the content of music they supplied to the station has reached a new stage, with a court ruling that the levy is constitutional.

Sirius followed the court's decision with an announcement that it will start charging its customers a fee for listening to music.

The RIAA wants to ensure that radio broadcasts—whether satellite or over-the-air—are not transformed into disposable, on-demand downloads, such as those available on music libraries.

The satellite radio industry is facing a legal battle over whether the music it plays is protected under copyright law.

The RIAA argues that the levy is necessary to ensure that the music industry gets paid for the content it supplies to the station.

Sirius argues that the levy is unconstitutional and that it should be paid by the record labels.

The RIAA and the satellite radio industry are at loggerheads over the issue, and it is likely that the dispute will continue for some time.

The RIAA is planning to seek a higher rate for the levy, and Sirius is likely to challenge the decision in court.

The RIAA and the satellite radio industry are expected to work together to find a solution to the dispute.

The RIAA is seeking to ensure that the music industry gets paid for the content it supplies to the station.

Sirius is likely to continue to challenge the levy in court, and it is likely that the dispute will continue for some time.

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**Up North And On Web, A P2P Spat**

The Canadian Record Industry Assn. has long claimed that the industry’s $9.5 billion sales decline can be attributed to illegal music downloading. Now some influential bloggers have seized on a study that shows this may not be true.

What is raising eyebrows is the report’s source: the CRIA.

The CRIA commissioned Pollara to survey more than 1,200 people at the end of February, to support the CRIA’s submission on radio policy to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission: most of the 140-plus page report, available at billboard.biz, was dedicated to consumer habits regarding radio and music.

But a few days after the CRIA quietly released the study—there is no mention of it in the news section of the CRIA Web site—Dr. Michael Geist, research chair of Internet and e-commerce law at the University of Ottawa, posted an analysis on his blog. The largest “peer-to-peer” downloader demographic is also the largest music buying demographic, he wrote. “Reduced purchasing has little to do with the availability of music on P2P services.”

Pollara president Duncan McKie protested, loudly. His 11-page response, posted March 20, branded Geist as “misleading, incorrect and inconsistent,” and noted that the availability and consumption of P2P files negatively affects Canadians’ radio listening and legitimate music purchasing. “P2P downloading occurs in Canada to a greater degree than in any other G8 country,” McKie wrote.

On a four-page study, the numbers could probably support almost any viewpoint. But it does appear that apathy, according to Pollara respondents, and not downloading, might be the Canadian industry’s biggest problem. More than 80% of 18- to 24-year-olds agreed that they hear so much of the same song on the radio that they do not have to buy the track or album.

Los Angeles Philharmonic

Both are teaming up with Universal’s Deutsche Grammophon label to issue four digital-only albums per concert season, along with potentially more physical disc per year, recorded at live concerts. Each title carries a $9.99 suggested retail price for the full digital album, although consumers may also download an individual piece or movement from the concert. The iTunes store is the exclusive partner for the launch, but Universal anticipates bringing other digital stores onboard at a later date.

Universal says iTunes is planning promotions for the launch on the store’s main page and classical page as well as men’s American and many European orchestras, even those with the highest international profiles and reputations—including the New York and L.A. Philharmonics—have gone without record- ing deals for years.

Chris Roberts, president of Universal Classics and Jazz International and chairman of Universal Classics Group (U.S.), says that has been an ongoing frustration. “We really wanted to find a way to work more actively with orchestras,” he says. To make the performances available, the L.A. Phil worked out a new performance agreement with the orchestra musicians. In New York, the musicians revisited their fee structure, switching from a flat-rate payment to a revenue-sharing agreement.

Universal will avoid recording costs by having the orchestras deliver their own recordings, provided via partners such as radio broadcasters.

Roberts hopes to create similar opportunities for international orchestras. The label is in talks with several prominent European ensembles and announcements about additional partnerships are anticipated soon.

While the initial round of releases will be branded as “DG Concerts,” Universal Classics says that some of the forthcoming partnerships will be marketed in a “Decca Concerts” series, incorporating another of Universal’s prestigious imprints into the larger initiative.

Joan Baez, the managing director of Decca Music Group, sees the initiative as “the chance to represent the rich everyday musical life of cities like New York and Los Angeles, which have been going unrecorded.”

The L.A. Phil’s initial iTunes packages offer some signature programming of contemporary music from its current “Mini- mist Jukebox” series. The first two concerts, which were to be recorded March 24-25, arrive at iTunes March 31.

The New York orchestra’s first “DG Concert” includes Mozart’s Symphonies Nos. 39, 40 and 41, recorded live in February and conducted by music director Lorin Maazel. It is due March 28 on iTunes.
Apple Sour As French Opt For Interoperability

PARIS—After weeks of heated debate, the French Parliament adopted its highly controversial copyright bill March 21. And while lawmakers at least temporarily sidestepped the legalization of file-sharing trading, they stepped right into another hornet's nest—insisting that digital music services and devices play nice with each other.

The new legislation introduces the right to interoperability and challenges the notion that digital music retailers, such as Apple’s iTunes Music Store, have the right to limit their service to proprietary devices, such as the iPod.

French lawmakers voted 296-193 to force digitally sold music to work with any digital music player or software. The Parliament also mandated that digital rights management developers make public all information needed to achieve interoperability.

This would permit users to bypass DRM technologies in order to listen to digitalized music on any device. It would force Microsoft, Apple and Sony to disclose their DRM protocols—the WMA, FairPlay and Atrac systems, respectively.

Should users circumvent DRM for piracy reasons—a difficult motivation to define—they can face fines up to €3,750 ($4,560).

The French government said the law is designed to ensure that no single company dominates the rapidly growing music download market.

It took Apple—currently the dominant digital music retailer with an estimated 75% worldwide market share—less than a day to respond. The Cupertino, Calif.-based company claimed the bill would “result in state-sponsored piracy.” In a statement, Apple said, “If this happens, legal music sales will plummet just when legitimate alternatives to piracy are winning over customers. iPod sales will likely increase as users freely load their iPods with ‘interoperable,’ music which can be adequately protected.”

Jonathan Arber, an analyst at London-based consulting company Informa, called the legislation “potentially a big blow for Apple,” arguing that Apple’s business model with iTunes and the iPod “is built on its very lack of interoperability” with other devices and services. “This could force Apple to withdraw from France or certainly rethink its strategy in the country,” he says.

But Apple might want to consider the upside of the law. Shaw Wu, an analyst with American Technology Research, feels the move could boost iPod sales.

The ability to add music from other music services would make the iPod “more universal and versatile” and therefore more valuable.

“We do not believe Apple is that dependent on its iTunes Music Store, as we estimate that about two to three dozen songs are purchased from iTunes over the life of each iPod, meaning most consumers get their music another way,” Wu said.

France’s digital music market grew exponentially last year, selling 18.6 million units, up from 2 million in 2004. Such sales accounted for 4% of the French music industry’s revenue, with a value of €15 million ($18.2 million). According to record company GFK, there are about 20 online music retailers in France, including Apple’s market-leading iTunes Music Store, FnacMusic, VirginMega, Universal Music’s E-compliant and Sony Connect.

Piper Jaffray analyst Gene Munster estimates that France represents only about 2% of Apple’s iPod/iTunes business.

French minister of culture Renaud Donnedieu de Varennes, who sponsored the bill, told Billboard in February that he did not want technology to serve as an aid for any kind of “compartamentalization.” He added that companies, such as Apple or Microsoft, would eventually come to interoperability. “This will be a consumer requirement,” he said.

The French industry has generally welcomed the bill, though with reservation. Hervé Rony, director general of labels Body trade body SNEP, says, “We certainly are in favor of interoperability, but we wouldn’t want DRM to be its victim with anyone entangled to bypass them.”

The bill addresses music industry concerns in other ways as well—introducing a range of fines for copyright infringers, starting at €38 ($46) for downloading protected files for free and €150 ($182) for sharing them. This puts an end to disproportionate penalties such as sending an Internet user to jail.” Donnedieu de Varennes said during the debate.

The lack of rules on how to apply those fines is a source of concern for the industry. “If we are talking about €38 for each file, that is too much,” Rony says. “But it is for each 10,000 files, then it is just absurd.”

The bill also includes a €30,000 ($36,500) penalty for distributing technical means to crack DRM.

The Parliament finally did adopt a peer-to-peer amendment stating that distributors of a software “patently” geared toward the distribution of copyrighted works without authorization are liable to a €300,000 ($365,000) penalty.

The March 22 vote ended debate that started last December. Two subsequent amendments that opened the door to the legalization of file-sharing—by way of a global license—were temporarily adopted, but ultimately excluded from the bill.

“The debate on global license will resume inevitably,” says Patrick Bloche, a member of the Socialist party who sponsored the global license amendment.

The legislation—which requires Senate approval—would remain in agreement with the European Union’s Copyright Directive, which was passed in 2001.

New Life For CDs?

Even as consumers switch to digital music and physical sales decline, a study finds that physical product is still important to shoppers. The study shows that even teenagers increased their purchases of physical music by 5%.

The study, conducted by the NPD Group for NARM, discovered that while practices like CD burning, peer-to-peer file-sharing and legitimate downloading have an impact on physical sales, “there is still opportunity” for the CD, NARM president Jim Donio says. “There are still pockets of heavy buyers out there that embrace the physical product, and the industry needs to market to them and provide them with a better in-store experience to boost sales,” he says.

There are still pockets of heavy buyers out there that embrace the physical product.

—Jim Donio, NARM

The study shows that the physical goods world could still grow slightly over the next year or two, if merchants take the right steps, which include better display organization and improved shopping experiences for consumers.

For instance, the study found that traditional radio is the downdragging as a motivator to buy music, but “TV is really powerful” in driving sales. That finding was not quantified in the study, but was conveyed anecdotally, Donio says. Other tactics to increase sales include packaging music soundtracks with movies or videogames, he says.

The study—which had 1,700 respondents, 2,600 of whom bought physical music—found that the 13-17 age group accounted for 18% of all physical music sales last year, that is up from 15% in 2002 and up from 16% last year. In total, the average respondent in that group spent $57 last year on music, a number that also reflects digital sales.

On the other hand, the older demographics—people 36-50 and 50-plus—showed a drop in total physical sales. The 36-50 group went from accounting for 27% of physical sales in 2002 down to 25% in 2005, while the over-50 group accounted for 17% of physical album sales, down from 18% in 2004.

The study also broke out music sales by dollars for various age groups. Respondents older than 55 averaged $46 in purchases, while the 44-54 age group averaged $70. Those 15 to 44 years old averaged $76 annually, while those 25-34 spent the most on music in 2005, averaging $79. As for the 18-24-year-old group, the people most likely to get their music through unauthorized file-sharing, they also spent a healthy average of $67 on CDs last year.

In looking at music acquisition in 2005, 43% of respondents said they bought CDs, 29% said they ripped CDs, 22% said they acquired music through P2P file-sharing and 6% said they bought legal downloads. In other words, 51% did not pay for music—a number that has risen from 2004, when 51% said they acquired music by buying CDs.

The Parliament that day by age group, the study found that 81% of the over-55 group got music by buying CDs, a percentage that drops as the de-
Apple’s Next iPod Push ‘Vingles,’ Video Bundles

Apple Computer is exploring new ways to market and sell music videos in bulk as interest in downloadable video grows.

In a first, iTunes is selling all the clips from Tori Amos’ “Fade to Red”—a 21-song music video collection released on DVD via Rhino Entertainment—as individual downloads for $1.99 each or as a complete package for $24.99.

The iTunes Music Store has been steadily selling one-off music videos of current and catalog acts for $1.99 apiece since late last year. But the company is just now moving into higher-margin packages.

The Tori Amos offer is part of Apple’s larger video bundling push that includes iTunes-only “video albums” (offers of six to seven videos from an artist that have not been released as physical collections) and “vingles” (a bundled offer of a video and its corresponding single).

Apple officials expect video collections to be a growing trend.

“It’s a natural fit,” says Eddie Cue, VP of applications for Apple. “These are not replacements for people buying individual songs or albums. But they’re great for well-established artists with a fan base behind them that wants more product.”

John Whiterspoon, Amos’ manager, says that the rising number of consumers who have video iPods or other portable video players gives artists new opportunities to expose videos that were not available through cable music channels.

“Cue says some of the most exciting opportunities are around products that have no equivalent in the physical world. “We are taking advantage of the medium,” he says.

“This is the stuff that you can only do in digital music.”

Indeed, Apple has worked with such bands as Green Day and Foo Fighters to sell special “video albums” that compile a number of their respective videos not available for sale in stores.

Another area of opportunity is vingles, which take advantage of demand for hit songs by selling the video and a music download together for $1.99. Currently, iTunes is selling vingles from such acts as Nelly, the Pussy-Cat Dolls and Josh Turner.

“Over time there is no reason why we can’t have a vingle for every video,” Cue says. “Not every song has a video but every video has a song.”

“Fade to Red” 21-song music video set is available to buyers as a bundled collection or by individual songs through Apple’s iTunes.

Consumers Hot For ‘Hee Haw’

New Twist On Direct Marketing

“Hee Haw” was Time Life’s best-selling DVD collection of 2005—and that ain’t hay.

Time Life says it has sold more than 1 million units of the multi-title series since it began marketing it via infomercials and TV ads in November 2003. The company has spent more than $5 million promoting it over the last 28 months.

Time Life is no stranger to pushing sales of music and video series into the millions. But “Hee Haw”—the Gaylord Entertainment-controlled country music variety show, which ran on TV from 1969 to 1992—is an anomaly in the DVD business.

John Esposito, president/CEO of WEA, Time Life’s retail distributor, says that blockbuster feature films often achieve this level of sales, it is rare for a TV-on-DVD product to show such strength.

Also notable in the case of “Hee Haw” is where and how the sales are made. Time Life executives say consumers purchased almost half of the “Hee Haw” titles in stores like Walmart and Target rather than over the phone, as is typically the case with many direct-response campaigns.

In fact, Time Life executives report the success of “Hee Haw” validates an expanding strategy to supplement direct-response sales with traditional retail distribution.

Time Life has pushed select CD titles to merchants since the late 1990s, but it is just starting to acquire retail-distribution rights for DVD product. The company is looking to ramp up retail presence of all product categories across the board.

Risk diversification is central to the new strategy. Retail sales can add legs to a direct-response campaign. Such sales can also offset TV advertising expenses. Time Life incurs promoting more modest-selling collections. Time Life, which claims $300 million in annual revenue, spends more than $70 million a year on TV advertising in the United States alone.

“We don’t want to be at the mercy of just licensing narrow direct-response rights,” says Jeff Pesch, head of Time Life’s video division. “In cases where we can acquire all rights, retail included, that’s what we want to do.”

RETAIL BY BRIAN GARRITY

UPFRONT

RETAIL

UPFRONT

RETAIL BY BRIAN GARRITY

Apple Computer is exploring new ways to market and sell music videos in bulk as interest in downloadable video grows.

In a first, iTunes is selling all the clips from Tori Amos’ “Fade to Red”—a 21-song music video collection released on DVD via Rhino Entertainment—as individual downloads for $1.99 each or as a complete package for $24.99.

The iTunes Music Store has been steadily selling one-off music videos of current and catalog acts for $1.99 apiece since late last year. But the company is just now moving into higher-margin packages.

The Tori Amos offer is part of Apple’s larger video bundling push that includes iTunes-only “video albums” (offers of six to seven videos from an artist that have not been released as physical collections) and “vingles” (a bundled offer of a video and its corresponding single).

Apple officials expect video collections to be a growing trend.

“It’s a natural fit,” says Eddie Cue, VP of applications for Apple. “These are not replacements for people buying individual songs or albums. But they’re great for well-established artists with a fan base behind them that wants more product.”

John Whiterspoon, Amos’ manager, says that the rising number of consumers who have video iPods or other portable video players gives artists new opportunities to expose videos that were not available through cable music channels.

“Cue says some of the most exciting opportunities are around products that have no equivalent in the physical world. “We are taking advantage of the medium,” he says.

“This is the stuff that you can only do in digital music.”

Indeed, Apple has worked with such bands as Green Day and Foo Fighters to sell special “video albums” that compile a number of their respective videos not available for sale in stores.

Another area of opportunity is vingles, which take advantage of demand for hit songs by selling the video and a music download together for $1.99. Currently, iTunes is selling vingles from such acts as Nelly, the Pussy-Cat Dolls and Josh Turner.

“Over time there is no reason why we can’t have a vingle for every video,” Cue says. “Not every song has a video but every video has a song.”

“Fade to Red” 21-song music video set is available to buyers as a bundled collection or by individual songs through Apple’s iTunes.

Consumers Hot For ‘Hee Haw’

New Twist On Direct Marketing

“Hee Haw” was Time Life’s best-selling DVD collection of 2005—and that ain’t hay.

Time Life says it has sold more than 1 million units of the multi-title series since it began marketing it via infomercials and TV ads in November 2003. The company has spent more than $5 million promoting it over the last 28 months.

Time Life is no stranger to pushing sales of music and video series into the millions. But “Hee Haw”—the Gaylord Entertainment-controlled country music variety show, which ran on TV from 1969 to 1992—is an anomaly in the DVD business.

John Esposito, president/CEO of WEA, Time Life’s retail distributor, says that blockbuster feature films often achieve this level of sales, it is rare for a TV-on-DVD product to show such strength.

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BITS & BRIEFS

SSSSSSOUNDTRACK CONTEST
Upstart social networking site TagWorld, in a continuing effort to slice away at rival MySpace’s market share, has teamed with New Line Cinema to offer aspiring artists the chance to have their music featured in the upcoming camp thriller “Snakes on a Plane.”
Artists of all genres have until April 11 to submit their music to the TagWorld site to be considered for the contest. TagWorld members will vote for the top 25 tracks from April 19 through May 3, and the movie’s producers will select the winner June 1.
The movie, starring Samuel L. Jackson, opens Aug. 18.

CONCERT REQUEST
Eventful.com wants to give music fans a voice in requesting which bands visit their hometown while on tour. The service has added a “demand” link to its site, where users may request the bands they want to see perform. Performers can also use the service to announce their availability by adding a “demand me” link on their site or blog.
Once created, the site adds links to social bookmarking sites, sends e-mails and distributes e-stickers to promote more fans to sign the “petition.” It then notifies promoters or venues when a certain threshold is reached in hopes of making the request a reality.

PLAY TIME DELAYED
Looks like the Xbox 360 will enjoy a few more months of a head start as the only next-generation videogame system in the market. Sony PlayStation has delayed the much-anticipated PlayStation 3 until November, a full year after Microsoft introduced its updated gaming system.
Sony says it still hopes to ship 6 million units worldwide by the end of the year. It also confirmed it will introduce an online gaming and community service called PlayStation Network Platform to compete with Xbox Live. Both allow gamers to play against each other online, as well as download other content to the console.

Sony blamed the delay on difficulties surrounding finalizing the copyright-protected specifications of its Blu-ray high-definition DVD standard.

Rihanna has the top debut of the month as her new single “SOS” debuts at No. 2. Look for her new album this spring.

Digital Offers DJs New Musical Means

Digital Offers DJs New Musical Means

With all the chatter over how many digital tracks were downloaded in a given month, or what revenue was gained via digital channels this quarter, it is often easy to miss the less-public impact digital music has had on the broader industry landscape.
Take, for example, how digital music is transforming today’s Djs—perhaps the oldest and most influential tastemakers of the music industry. One would think the vinyl-obsessed Djs would resist replacing their coveted crates with digital files. Yet digital music has not only caught on, it has become an entrenched part of the craft.
“Everybody’s in the digital realm now,” says Marlon Williams, more popularly known as DJ Marley Marl.
Williams is a hip-hop artist and producer who hosts a weekly rap show on WWPR New York, runs the Internet radio site futurelavonline.com and maintains a busy club schedule.
“Once you download your music, you can just go straight to your laptop with it and DJ that night,” he says. “In fact... you can be at the club, download while you’re DJ’ing and keep ahead of the pack with the newest stuff.”
But DJs like Marley are not just downloading music like consumers. They are taking advantage of products and services specifically designed to pair the DJ with digital music.
Simply downloading digital files to a laptop would be of little use to a DJ without the ability to manipulate those files like vinyl records on a turntable. That is where products like Serato Scratch Live come in.
Scratch Live, which began shipping in April 2004, almost single-handedly opened the digital floodgates to the DJ community by providing the ability to play MP3 files through a special vinyl “record.” This record plays host to any digital file streamed through it, thus allowing DJs to mix, cut, scratch and rewire the file by physically manipulating the vinyl.
To say that digital will replace vinyl among DJs would be an overstatement. Vinyl remains the heart and soul of the DJ, the badge that sets them apart. But for DJs traveling to shows across country, the prospect of replacing heavy cases of records with a hard drive made digital an easy sell.
“Who wants to pay $150 to get three crates of records out to Minneapolis when you could go with a laptop?” Marl asks.
With DJs now armed with the means to utilize digital music files, multiple services have emerged to help DJs acquire them.
DJs are established tastemakers. Record labels often test new releases with DJs who can influence how tracks are received on the street through mix tapes and club dates. As a result, DJs need to get new music before the general public.
Downloading from iTunes is not enough.
Even the venerable record pool—clubs that DJs join to access the newest music—has gone digital. Labels send promotional copies to the pool, often before servicing radio. The pool then distributes it to its members and acts as a feedback conduit to the label.
While many pools remain, there is a shift to online distribution. The advantages to Djs and record labels are simply too substantial to ignore—unlimited inventory, cheap distribution and better feedback and communication between DJ and label/artist.
The largest digital pool, Digiwaxx Media, maintains a database of 12,000 DJs worldwide, including Marl. All have access to the same music, which they can preview before downloading as an unprotected MP3 or use the included label contact information to request physical copies.
Digiwaxx requires users to complete an extensive feedback form before allowing them to download tracks and then provides this data to the labels.
“It’s a real good guide for us,” says Troy Marshall, VP of promotion for...
Indies Step Up At SXSW
Emergence Of ‘Major Indies’ Creates ‘Third Tier’ On Playing Field

I
uch talk in the industry during the past two years has focused on how the playing field between major labels and independents has leveled. Yet at this year’s South By Southwest Music and Media Conference in Austin, it was clear that the playing field has not leveled so much as it has added another tier.

What is emerging today is a record business with major labels, major indies and then everyone else.

How to define that third tier and its protocol was the subject of much debate among indie label executives in Austin. At a March 16 panel, led by American Association of Independent Music membership director Rob Weitzel, the topic was the growing strength of independent label market share and why U.S. indies have picked now as the time to unite under AAIM.

A hot subject was a recent Victory Records e-mail that directed street teamers to move a competitor’s album from the front of store shelves (Billboard, March 11). Weitzel wondered: “If anyone would care if a major label were caught doing the same thing.

On the panel, which included Yep Roc/Red Eye owner Glenn Dickler, Barsuk owner Josh Rosenfeld and Sub Pop CEO Jonathan Poneman, such tactics were generally viewed as not in keeping with the independent mind-set. During this time of general industry uncertainty, independent labels were generally viewed as just doing the right thing.

The discussion illustrated how the widening scope of the independent market puts many indies in direct disagreement with one another. While some fight for radio play, others are happy just to have their music downloaded for free on the Web.

“When I’m pirated that means I have a successful record.” —MARTIN GOLDSCHMIDT, COOKING VINYL

Many have pegged the digital world to be the great financial windfall of the indies. Beggars Group chairman Martin Mills noted that 30% of his sales now come from online ventures. But indies should not look to the Web as an equalizer, many cautioned. In an independent market overview discussion on the fest’s opening day, Wind-up CEO Steve Lerner said the online business will soon “be about who has the power to buy space at these digital stores.”

Wind-up’s business model includes a publishing and merchandising division, a setup that became its own hot topic for some indie execs. Bar None president Glenn Morrow said he has talked to labels with similar set-ups as well as independents looking to take a percentage of a band’s merchandise or tour revenue. Such arrangements, he said, are interesting, but put a label in more of a managerial sort of role.

Of course, a sense of humor goes a long way with all these differing viewpoints.

“We at Sub Pop take all [our artists’] revenue and every couple years buy our artists a new car,” Poneman joked. “It’s actually leased.”

INDIE RETAIL FREAKS:
Waterloo Records owner John Kunz was eager to brag about some of the latest independent retail exclusives that his store has received via Junketboy, the distribution outfit of the Coalition of Independent Music Stores. Kunz ran into this columnnist in the Austin Convention Center.

He was most excited about “20 Years of Weird: Flaming Lips 1986-2006.”

Much of the 11-track disc—a collection of rarities and live tracks—was originally given to those who went to a screening of the band’s film, “Fearless Freaks,” at SXSW last year. With the Flaming Lips in Austin to promote their upcoming Warner Bros. release, “At War With The Mystics,” frontman Wayne Coyne said the “Weird” CD will forever remain an indie-only exclusive. “We don’t want the indie guys to think we’re abandoning them because we want to be in Target.”

While a number of indie outlets have made the album available for purchase online, Coyne said the band will not have it for sale at its summer tour. “You have to go to those stores and buy them,” Coyne said. “I want people to remember that if you go to that record store and give them your money, you’re giving it to people who are working and have cool ideas and are knowledgeable about music. There’s someone right there in your hometown who is looking out for you.”

And accepts cash or credit.
Rockin’ Out In Austin At SXSW

Billboard enjoyed a bigger presence at this year’s South by Southwest Music and Media Conference—held March 15-19 in Austin—with its own VIP party, panel and artist showcases.

The line of events kicked off March 15 with Billboard’s Indie Label White Paper panel. Moderated by Billboard executive editor/associate publisher Tamara Conniff, panelists including elite members of BMI, the Recording Academy and the Beggars Group examined the state of indies and presented analysis based on exclusive chart data and research.

On March 16, Billboard and Fred Davis of law firm Davis, Shapiro, Lewitt, Montone and Hayes offered SXSW attendees an opportunity to mingle during the DSLMH annual SXSW Cocktail Reception at the Shoreline Grill. During the same night, Austin’s Dirty Dog Bar was the place to be as Billboard’s showcase featured numerous acts, including Steel Train and the Exit.

Taking advantage of Austin’s warm weather, Billboard presented a BMI Acoustic Brunch March 17 on the lawn of the Four Seasons Hotel. Guests enjoyed a Southwestern breakfast while listening to live performances by featured acts like Charanga Cakewalk, Ashley Monroe, Trevor Hall and Nate Campany.
WASHINGTON, D.C., is becoming America’s music hot spot. It is, in the halls of Congress, that the creative community’s future livelihood may be decided. The next two to four years will be the most significant legal period in the history of music for publishers and songwriters,” says David Israelite, president/CEO of the National Music Publishers’ Association. “There is an incredibly packed legislative agenda. The music publishing industry faces its biggest threats and its greatest opportunities.”

It begins this year with the Copyright Royalty Board, part of the Library of Congress. The CRB began proceedings last month to determine “reasonable rates and terms” for making and distributing phonorecord deliveries (DPDs) and online subscriptions. When DPD rates were first set, the government simply adopted the statutory rate for mechanical licenses since online distribution was in such a nascent stage.

Parties that filed notices to participate in the CRB proceedings include the NMPA, the RIAA, the Digital Media Assn., Apple Computer, America Online, Sony Connect, Yahoo and MTV Networks. The groups will soon begin gathering evidence to support their positions.

Meanwhile, Congress is still considering how to reform the way section 115 works. When it makes a move, “it will be the most fundamental change in the history of section 115,” Israelite says.

After Senate and House judiciary committees heard testimony followed by a “discussion draft” of a bill from the Copyright Office—sparked controversy last year (Billboard, July 2, 2005), private industry negotiations continued between the NMPA and DCMA for a blanket licensing system for distribution of all digital products. This license would likely cover digital distribution of recorded compositions via downloads, online subscription services offering temporary downloads, cell phone delivery and retail kiosks.

Current negotiations have reportedly narrowed to complicated issues surrounding reporting requirements and the structure of a licensing agency to administer the blanket licenses.

When most of the details get hammered out by interested parties representing labels, retailers and mobile phone providers are expected to jump into the final process.

Also on the agenda are issues surrounding high-definition and satellite radio. These services can deliver digital music to devices with new technology, are able to make and store perfect copies of recorded music for long time periods. The delivery then becomes more like a download than a radio broadcast, perhaps displacing a sale of the music.

The RIAA has taken the lead role for the music industry in negotiations over an audio broadcast flag or similar technology to protect content (Billboard, March 18). The NMPA supports the RIAA’s work on these issues. The two may part ways if the RIAA negotiations with radio trade group the NAB and the Consumer Electronics Assn. move closer to rate discussions. If the RIAA makes concessions regarding content control in return for sound-recording performance royalties, then the NMPA will likely enter the fray to protect publishers and songwriters’ royalties.

Other matters on the agenda include anti-piracy legislation introduced by the Department of Justice, orphan works (Billboard, Feb. 25) and tax issues.

BY THE NUMBERS: ASCAP recently released financial results for 2005. The performing rights organization reported revenue of more than $749 million, an increase of $50 million or 6%, from the prior year. The increase resulted in royalty payments to members topping $645 million.

“At a time when the music industry is in a state of rapid change and many view technology as a challenge to copyright and music creators, we are using sophisticated technology along with other innovative business strategies to grow our participation in the music market and to secure the value our members deserve for their creative efforts,” CEO John LoFrumento says.

In 2005, cable TV revenue grew more than 20% to $126 million, while new-media licensing provision.

To be the largest financial result, according to the organization’s “Statistical Report on the Music Industry,” is $749 million.

CENSING SYSTEM would be a step closer to curtailing its split personality.

For most of the past decade, the country has had two rival annual award ceremonies. The Premios de la Musica gala—organized by authors society SGAE and artists’ association AIE—vied for attention with labels body Premis musicales de los Premios Amigo awards. This year, there is just one.

Both shows were launched in 1997. However, Premis musicales scaled down the Premios Amigo gala in 2003 in protest of local piracy levels. It did not present any awards at all in 2005, nor will it this year.

Despite Premios de la Musica having the field to itself in 2005, the televised event failed to capture the public’s imagination and viewing figures were low. The organizers are now taking steps to raise its profile, drawing praise from their supposed rivals at record labels.

The 2006 gala May 5 in Madrid will be “a celebration of the survival of the Premios de la Musica as the national music awards,” SGAE executive pres-
Chloe Lattanzi (Olivia Newton-John's daughter); plus hip-hop acts Butterfingers and MC Scribe.

St. John has high hopes that Eskimo Joe's third album "Black Fingernails, Red Wine"—due June 11—will find mainstream radio support Down Under. He suggests Lattanzi may have a strong future in the United States.

Lattanzi's debut album, "Lonely Nights in Paradise," is SCAE domestically in September. She is managed by Los Angeles-based Jordan Feldstein, who also handles Maroon5. St. John says no acts have been dropped since Warner bought FMR. Warner Music's own direct domestic signings Shihad, Thirsty Merc, Magic Dirt and Evermore will choose whether they switch to Mushroom, but all new signings to Warner will go to the revived imprint.

"I strongly believe that the growth of a record company in this market depends on the growth of your local roster," St. John says.

Butterfingers' "The Deeper You Dig," due May 27, will be the act's major-label debut. Its first album, "Breakfast at Fatboys," was released through its own Valley Trash Records and sold 25,000 units domestically, according to David Crane, the band's bassist/manager.

Parisi's presence "made us feel comfortable going to a major label," Crane says. "He's got experience working with alternate music acts like Regurgitator, who came from Brisbane like us."

Parisi is also held in high regard locally. One admirer is Sydney-based Andrew Klippel, managing director of production and management company the Engine Room, which licensed the Veronicas to Sire and the Vines to Capitol.

"Mushroom being a brand name will get attention abroad for its acts," Klippel says. "But the music's got to do the talking. With the acts that Parisi has signed, he's about to enter a golden era."

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Aussie act BUTTERFINGERS is part of the former independent Mushroom Records roster. Mushroom is now a Warner Music Australasia imprint.

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EMI Music has named Birgit Adels president of its German affiliate, effective April 3.

The company looked outside the music industry to find a replacement for Nikol van Hoy, who exited the company in January (billboard.biz, Jan. 10). Adels joins from fashion house Prada Group in Düsseldorf, where she has been CEO of Northern European operations since 2002. She reports to London-based EMI Music Continental Europe chairman/CEO Jean-Francois Cecillon, who chairs EMI Music Germany's supervisory board.

Adels has previous label experience with BMG. She joined the company's parent media group Bertelsmann in 1995 as a sales and marketing executive before moving to BMG International in 1995 as director of European special marketing. In 1997 she became GM of international at BMG Italy, leaving in 2000 to launch e-commerce consultancy A-net in Germany. —Lars Brandle

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Aston "Family Man" Barrett, the longtime bassist with Bob Marley & the Wailers, launched a claim March 16 in London's High Court over the band's royalties. Barrett is suing Universal Island Records and the Marley family claiming that he and the estate of his late brother, drummer Carlton Barrett, have not been paid royalties due to them under two recording agreements made by Marley in 1974 and 1975.

The works involved include such key Marley/Wailers albums as "Natty Dread" (1976), "Rastaman Vibration" (1976) "Exodus" (1977) and "Kaya" (1978).

The defendants claim that Barrett, now in his 60s, surrendered his right to future royalties in a 1994 agreement in which a payment of "several hundred thousand" dollars is said to have been made. Barrett's representatives suggest the total claim could be worth $60 million ($105 million).

The hearing is scheduled to last three weeks. —Roger Pearson

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British pop star's five-times platinum compilation was one of eight albums to gain certification during the month. Platinum status is awarded to albums for European shipments in excess of 1 million units.

February also saw Coldplay pass the 4 million milestone with its 2005 release "X&Y" (Parlophone). Gorillaz' "Demon Days" (Parlophone), also by Blur's Damon Albarn, attained triple-platinum status. —Lars Brandle

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Epic Records was named best video at the 10th annual Space Shower Music Video Awards, held March 17 at the Nippon Budokan concert hall in Tokyo. "Joy" also took best female video.

The show was broadcast live by Tokyo-based music TV channel Space Shower, which claims to reach 5 million Japanese households, mainly via cable. The winners of 18 categories are decided by a panel of the station's staff. One other category, the "your choice" prize, was voted for online by 600,000 viewers.

That award went to the video for rock band Remiromen's "Kounayuki (Powder Snow)" (Ookigokum/Speedstar). Madonna took the biggest international video award with "Hung Up" (Warner Music Japan). —Steve McClure

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Britain's market-leading mass-merchant retail chain Tesco is taking the buying of its music and video to conduct in-house under a new arrangement with the Handleman Co. Handleman's U.K. division will provide distribution, in-store merchandising and category management support across Tesco's 5,700-plus U.K. stores, effective April 2007.

Tesco is currently supplied by British wholesale distributor Entertainment UK. The chain accounted for more than 10% of total U.K. albums expenditure in 2004, according to the most recent figures published by the BPI. —Lars Brandle

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EMI Music's "Greatest Hits" (Chrysalis/EMI) passed the 1 million mark in February, according to the latest IFPI Platinum Europe Award list. The British pop star's five-times platinum compilation was one of eight albums to gain certification during the month. Platinum status is awarded to albums for European shipments in excess of 1 million units.

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**WELCOME**, fellow freaks, misfits and outcasts. This week Arctic Monkeys, the Len Price 3, Ray Davies and Zombina (which just dropped off the chart) are mounting a bit of a new British Invasion, which is refreshing after 25 years of dance/pop/new romantic/angst-inclined/art rock.

The Len Price 3 continues to impress us with their latest classic album. If you are looking for an example of what defines garage rock, look no further.

Meanwhile, America got its first look at the new Arctic Monkeys on “Saturday Night Live.” It will be interesting to see what happens, but it is safe to assume America’s response will not be as dramatic as England’s. Has Oasis ever really broken here? Does America get excited about anything anymore?

The answer is “maybe,” but we all have to get used to a permanently fragmented world where success will happen but in a much more limited way.

So keep your standards high and expectations (and costs) low, and we will all be right.

The rock ‘n’ roll rebirth is on, baby!

For more of this column, go to billboard.com.

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**COOLEST GARAGE SONGS**

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<td>I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR</td>
<td>ARCTIC MONKEYS</td>
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<td>WALK OF FAME</td>
<td>BOINK!</td>
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<td>WELCOME TO MY HEAD</td>
<td>WILLIE NILE</td>
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<td>CHINESE BURN</td>
<td>THE LEN PRICE 3</td>
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<td>SHE CRIED</td>
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<td>HAPPY</td>
<td>SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY &amp; THE ASBURY JUKES</td>
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<td>WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM, THAT’S WHAT I’M NOT</td>
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**WWE Sees Music As The Perfect Match**

Wrestling Promoter Ramps Up Entertainment Offerings

World Wrestling Entertainment—better known as the WWE—is ramping up its music initiatives with the formation of the WWE Music Group. Helmed by GM Neil Lawi, the New York-based operation will concentrate on further connecting the WWE brand with mainstream and under-the-radar music via multimedia platforms.

“There has always been a musical element to WWE,” says Lawi, who reports directly to WWE executive VP of TV production Kevin Dunn, and who will closely work with WWE music director Jim Johnston. “Now, we’re taking a more music-centric approach to everything we do.”

In the process, the WWE brand is becoming more of a full-fledged entertainment company, encompassing music, TV, film, the Internet, ring tones and videogames.

Dunn and Lawi stress that, like the music industry, WWE is about entertainment. With its new music division—and with the help of in-house talent and established artists—their aim is to push the WWE brand further into pop culture.

Last spring, WWE champion John Cena scored a hit with his hip-hop debut, “You Can’t See Me.” Credited to John Cena & Tha Trademarc, the WWE/Columbia album debuted at No. 15 on The Billboard 200, No. 10 on the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums chart and No. 3 on Top Rap Albums. It has sold 292,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The WWE Music Group officially kicks off April 2 when WrestleMania 22 commands the stage of Chicago’s Allstate Arena. Michelle Williams of Destiny’s Child will be on hand to perform “America The Beautiful.” With band P.O.D. will perform wrestler Rey Mysterio’s entrance theme. Peter Gabriel’s “Big Time” is the event’s theme (Billboard, Feb. 4).

The sold-out event will be available via pay-per-view and as a webcast at wwe.com. To be sure, the WWE reach is far and wide. Its RAW and SmackDown brands (weekly TV shows, PPVs, tours) are household names in more than 100 countries.

Still, even with these numbers, many do not take the WWE brand seriously. In fact, one of Lawi’s priorities is to educate major and indie labels, artist managers and music publishers about the ways WWE champions music.

Music World Entertainment’s Matthew Knowles, who manages Williams’ career, says tag-teaming his artist with WWE made sense. “WrestleMania has been changing and evolving over the years,” Knowles says. “It’s become a multicultural, family event—and that is attractive to us.”

Williams’ WWE appearance reaching millions of people around the world should be a major lift for her solo album, due in the fall on Music World Music/Sony Urban Music/Columbia.

“We could put out Michelle’s album, with $1 million [in] marketing dollars from the label and get one type of success or failure,” Knowles says. “Or we put out the same record, but with a brand partner and utilize their marketing dollars and initiatives, too.”

Every time WWE works with a mainstream act, like Williams or P.O.D., any stigma associated with WWE is further wrestled to the mat.

P.O.D. has worked with WWE on more than one occasion. Most recently, the group’s “Boom” opened WWE’s return to NBC with the March 18 two-hour special, “Saturday Night’s Main Event.”

In May, WWE/Columbia will issue “Wreckless Intent,” a compilation featuring P.O.D., Three 6 Mafia, Killswitch Engage and others performing the entrance themes of WWE’s superstar wrestlers.

Four months later, 20th Century Fox and WWE Films will release “The Marine,” a feature film starring Cena. It will be accompanied by a WWE soundtrack through a label partner yet to be determined.

Meanwhile, Lilian Garcia—the ring announcer for RAW—“is working on an album with producers George Noriega (Ricki Martin) and Tim Mitchell (Shakira).”

A&R execs take note: Garcia’s project is without a label to call home.

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**MICHELLE WILLIAMS** is working with the WWE Music Group to gain exposure for her next album.
Chesney Poised To Be Country King Of The Road

NASHVILLE—This Kenny Chesney thing is getting big. As the country singer preps yet another summer mega-tour, it is not a stretch to rank Chesney among country's truest and most successful touring acts of all time. All he lacks is longevity.

Remarkably, Chesney has headlined full time for only five years, yet his fan base has expanded. "It's about Kenny knowing his audience and consistently trying to come up with great music," his manager/agent Clint Higham says. "Even more than that, Kenny is really focused in on who his audience is and tries to make his concerts an event every year."

Chesney has quickly risen to the touring elite. Country's top-grossing act of all time is George Strait, who has racked up $267 million since Billboard Boxscore started tracking his grosses 20 years ago. Chesney's total since he began headlining is $183.7 million, ahead of Tim McGraw ($177 million), Shania Twain ($163 million) and Garth Brooks ($145 million), though Brooks' ticket prices rarely topped $20. Toby Keith's career box-office total is $141.4 million.

During the past four years, Chesney has been on fire with grosses totalling $176 million and ticket sales of 4.3 million. In that same time period, rock's most consistent seller, Dave Matthews Band, has drawn 4.4 million and grossed $187.9 million.

This year, Chesney has added nine stadiums to his route, including NFL stadiums in Boston, Nashville, Seattle, Detroit, and Tampa, Fla., and Major League Soccer stadiums in Dallas; Chicago; Columbus, Ohio; and Los Angeles. The stadium dates will be part of the Road & The Radio tour, which begins with a double March 23-24 at the Nutter Center in Dayton, Ohio.

Chesney's promoter, Louis Messina of the Messina Group, admits even he is sometimes amazed at the business Chesney does. "But seeing the guys night after night, the guy's a star, he's a rock star," Messina says. "He gives the people their money's worth. Why wouldn't they come back?"

Messina points out that top-notch acts like Rascal Flatts, Gretchen Wilson and Keith Urban have provided support on recent Chesney tours. Dierks Bentley, Sugarland and Carrie Underwood will open certain shows this year, with Big & Rich and Wilson added to the stadium dates. "He doesn't have to go out with such strong support, but he does because he's giving people their money's worth," Messina says. "His production is bigger every year, he invests money in himself."

As Chesney began to sell out doubles at arenas and amphitheaters in several markets, Higham began adding stadiums to the route. Last year, Chesney played three stadiums.

"There are very few artists in the business, not just country music, that can do stadiums," Higham says. "We sort of got our feet wet last year and decided that they were so successful we wanted to do it again."

Stadium dates are notoriously expensive to produce and have become increasingly rare during the past decade. There has not been a full-blown coast-to-coast stadium tour in years, but Messina maintains that the Chesney team makes the stadium dates work financially.

"There are financial rewards in everything we do," Messina says. "I'm not going to lie to you, sell 50,000 tickets, it's a little better than union scale."

With production budgets in the high six figures, stadium concerts are also risky and "some people just don't want to take that risk," Higham says. "We just felt like we had an artist in Kenny that could take that step."

Chesney is upping the ante in a very competitive country touring market, with high-profile tours on the books by Tim McGraw/Faith Hill, the Dixie Chicks and Rascal Flatts along with other strong outings by Wilson, Alan Jackson, Brad Paisley, Urban, Brooks & Dunn, Keith and Strait.

"This year, there's more competition than ever in the five years we've been doing this," Higham says. "It's all dollars out of the markets, and that doesn't include all the pop acts we compete with. So it's even more important that we keep our ticket price affordable."

Chesney charges $50-$62 for arena and shed dates, and stadiums top out at $85. "We still are one of the most affordable tickets out there," Higham says.

Country music bookers tend to cooperate when it comes to staggering on-sale dates and holding concert dates in a given market.

"There are a few of us in town who try to work together and respectfully stay away from each other," Higham says. "But there are also a few who absolutely just don't care."

Live 360 Taps Familiar Faces
CEO Dave Lucas Surrounds Himself With Former Clear Channel Colleagues

Dave Lucas, CEO of Indianapolis-based entertainment company Live 360 and former CEO of Clear Channel Entertainment (now Live Nation), has reassembled his former team, most recently naming Annie O'Toole as a senior talent buyer (billboard.biz, March 16).

O'Toole comes to Live 360 after serving more than seven years with what is now Live Nation. She worked with Lucas at the Indianapolis-based promotion company he founded, SunShine Promotions (later acquired by SFX), from 1998 to 2002.

Most recently, O'Toole served as VP of booking for Live Nation in its St. Louis office. She rejoins Lucas with other recently announced additions to the Live 360 staff in Eric Milby (senior production manager), JeNahd (marketing director), Andy Wilson (PR director) and Annie LoPresti (booking coordinator). All were previously with Lucas at Sunshine, SFX and CCE, and had hired them again when his "no-hire" clause with CCE was lifted, he says.

"It's a pretty strong first-string team," Lucas says. "They were definitely my A-team, and so after my consulting this last year and my nonhire [clause] was lifted, it was natural for me to reunite with the team that I had."

Lucas says Live 360 will promote shows of all sizes, including theaters, arenas, stadiums and alternative outdoor venues.

"We are also looking for alliances and joint ventures," he says. "If there are people that are experienced, strong bookers out there, we're looking to sit down and talk with them about coming onboard with our company. It doesn't have to be to the Midwest, could be anywhere in the country."

After his years at a corporate entity, Lucas says it feels "absolutely fabulous" to be among the independent promoter ranks. "I had some wonderful times at Clear Channel, I made some great relationships and friendships, and I still honor and treasure them," he says. "But I truly am so glad to be independent. We make decisions in minutes, not weeks. It's very fulfilling personally."

And, apparently, less stressful. "I had a little bit of gray hair when I left Clear Channel, and now it's gone," Lucas says.

BACK TO ROCK: By virtue of working with Canadian rock act Nickelback, Messina Group president Louis Messina is back to being a "badass, rock n' roll promoter," he says.

While Messina cut his teeth in rock, even before leaving his VP role at Clear Channel Entertainment, Messina was becoming better-known as a country promoter. He still produces country's top touring artist, Kenny Chesney, and also works with Gretchen Wilson and others.

But now TMG and partner AEG Live are promoting the 55-date first leg of Nickelback's current North American tour and are "waiting for them to approve the second leg," Messina says.

Messina is working on Nickelback with TMG talent buyer Brad Russo and Dallas independent promoter Lane Arnold, who is also a partner on this tour. "Lane has always been a Nickelback fan, and he's the one who put Nickelback on my radar." Nailing Nickelback has been worth the effort, Messina says.

"They're one of the few acts on our roster we have. They remind me so much of how it used to be. They're basically doing 90% business every night."

www.americanradiohistory.com

AUG. 1, 2006
### BOXSCORE Concert Grosses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross</th>
<th>Artist(s)</th>
<th>Venue, Date</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Promoter</th>
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<td>$2,573,899</td>
<td>CELINE D'ON</td>
<td>Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, March 8-25</td>
<td>18,723</td>
<td>Concerts West/AEG Live</td>
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<td>$846,224</td>
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<td>Cardenas Marketing Network</td>
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<td>Belle Vue, Sheffield, England, March 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>The Melissa Group &amp; Concerts West/AEG Live, Fastlane Concerts</td>
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<td>$416,029</td>
<td>BRAD PAISLEY, TERRI CLARK, JOHNNY REID</td>
<td>Save-on Foods Centre, Kamloops, British Columbia, March</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>House of Blues Canada</td>
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<td>House of Blues Concerts, Jorma Entertainment</td>
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<td>PNC Music Pavilion, Charlotte, N.C., March 14-15</td>
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<td>$311,363</td>
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<td>House of Blues Atlantic City, Set Up Promotions</td>
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<td>$295,305</td>
<td>NICKELBACK, CHEVELLE, TRAPT</td>
<td>Veteran's Memorial Coliseum, San Antonio, Texas, March 12</td>
<td>8,266</td>
<td>The Melissa Group &amp; Concerts West/AEG Live, Fastlane Concerts</td>
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<td>$291,033</td>
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<td>Entertainment Centre, Adelaide, Australia, March 16</td>
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<td>Frontier Touring Co.</td>
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<td>$287,004</td>
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<td>Colisée Pepsi, Quebec City, Canada, March 19-20</td>
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<td>Gritlett Entertainment Group, Productions J</td>
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<td>NICKELBACK, TRAPT, DEFAULT</td>
<td>Jiffy Lube Live, Maryland, April 27 &amp; 28</td>
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<td>$282,360</td>
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<td>PNC Bank Pavilion, Holmdel, N.J., June 5-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>$282,395</td>
<td>M. DIVO, HAYLEY WESTENRA</td>
<td>The Know, Denver, Colorado, March 24</td>
<td>3,581</td>
<td>Live Nation</td>
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<tr>
<td>$201,445</td>
<td>QUANTUM</td>
<td>Wokia Theatre, Grand Prairie, Texas, Feb. 10</td>
<td>9,510</td>
<td>AQG Live</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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FOR PROMOTERS, PRODUCERS, AGENTS, MANAGERS AND EVENT PLANNERS.
Q: Have you ever worked on a comedy project before?
A: Yes, I've worked on several comedy projects before.

Q: What do you think makes a comedy record successful?
A: A comedy record should be based on strong material and good timing.

Q: What's the biggest challenge you've faced as a producer?
A: One of the biggest challenges I've faced as a producer is getting the right balance between the artist's vision and the audience's expectations.

Q: How do you balance your time between producing and songwriting?
A: I try to balance my time by working on both projects simultaneously.

Q: What's the most important advice you've received as a producer?
A: The most important advice I've received is to always be open to feedback and suggestions.

Q: What's the best advice you've given to an artist?
A: The best advice I've given to an artist is to stay true to their own voice and not try to please everyone.

Q: What's the biggest mistake you've made as a producer?
A: One of the biggest mistakes I've made as a producer is overestimating the audience's taste.

Q: What's the most rewarding part of producing?
A: The most rewarding part of producing is seeing the artist's vision come to life.

Q: What's your next project?
A: I'm currently working on a new album for T-Bone Burnett.

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TOBY KEITH is riding high, but that doesn’t stop him from taking chances on his new album.

BY PHYLLIS STARK

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD McLAREN
Toby Keith likes to shock people.

So says a longtime friend—and now co-producer—Lani White. She thinks shock value may be part of the reason Keith tapped her for his latest project. In fact, White teases that Keith hired her just so he could get on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" to plug his newest: the roughneck country star with the chick producer.

Shock value was almost certainly a factor in Keith's writing and recording "Runnin' Block" for the new CD. The album-closing ditty is about a guy who sleeps with an overweight woman (delicately referred to as a "jelly roll") in the song) solely so his friend can have a shot with her sister.

But when it came time to name the album, "White Trash With Money," it was Keith who shockingly credited his wife as the producer. "We're in love," Keith said. "It's just a matter of who's better able to handle the stress of production." Their third child, born April 1, was Keith's primary reason for taking on the project.

Keith's wife was horrified. Keith was amused. "I make a living being white trash," he admits. So one day he brought home the completed artwork for his new album—spotting the tile his wife was certain to hate—and plunked it down on the kitchen counter for her perusal.

She still hasn't forgiven him. Keith remains amused.

TOBY GETS 'EARTHY'

"White Trash With Money," due April 11, is the first album on Keith's own label, Show Dog Nashville, following his well-publicized split with DreamWorks Records last year. It also represents a parting from his longtime producer James Stroud, the one-time head of DreamWorks' Nashville division who is now co-chairman of Universal Music Group Nashville. (Show Dog has a distribution deal with Universal Music & Video Distribution.)

White, a songwriter/recording artist who is currently starring on Broadway in the musical "Ring of Fire," is the wife of Keith's longtime songwriting partner, Chuck Cannon.

After hearing her self-produced 2005 release, "Green Eyed Soul," which Keith calls "such an impressive record," and some production projects White had done with Billy Dean, Cannon and Keith's daughter, he decided to try out a few demos with her in her Nashville-area studio, the Holier.

Two days and six songs into it the pair was clicking so well that it became obvious White would continue to produce the entire album with Keith. "She's got her own little bag of tricks," Keith says of White's production style. "I came away completely impressed."

And White may or may not be pleased to hear Keith say, "I never one time looked at her as being a woman."

What she created, White says, was a sound that is "a little more raw, less slick and earthier" than Keith's previous work. "Obviously Toby didn't need [to do] anything different," White says. "He was doing just fine with a string of hit records. But if any artist is going to have the kind of longevity they want, there has to be some evolution."

For the project, White added an unexpected touch by tracking down noted Argentine string arranger Michael DelBarrio (Michael Jackson; Earth, Wind & Fire; Jeffrey Osborne). DelBarrio's work can be heard on the planned second single, "A Little Too Late," and two other songs.

White also put horns on some of the tracks, including first single "Get Drunk and Be Somebody." She even had session drummer Shannon Forrest play cardboard boxes on a few others.

She also encouraged Keith to stretch out a bit as a singer. "Toby typically comes in and sings the song three times," she says. But on this project there were songs where White urged Keith to try additional takes with different melodies. "He was really into it. I told him it's funner because I am a singer," White says.

Scott Lindy, director of country programming for Sirius Satellite Radio, says Keith's new album "will mark more evolution of sound and growth for Toby than any in the past. There is much of what Toby fans probably expect—good-time party songs. But there are also songs of social commentary."

As for Stroud, Keith says their split was about evolution, not any personal friction. "James made every record . . . that established my career. But sometimes when you work with someone for a long time you just run out of tricks."

Keith remains open to working with Stroud again, or having one of his Show Dog acts work with the noted producer in the future.

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Radio quickly embraced "Get Drunk and Be Somebody," which is at No. 8 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart this issue.

KSON San Diego PD John Marks calls it "the Toby with attitude that fans love so well."

Keith wrote the song—and most of the album—with his bandmate and frequent collaborator Scotty Emerick, who was the first artist Keith signed to Show Dog.

(Keith and Emerick like to joke that they might one day write a sequel to "Get Drunk and Be Somebody," with the follow-up focusing on waking up with a hangover, then getting drunk again in an effort to be somebody else.)

For several years Keith has enjoyed a well-earned place as one of country radio's top-tier artists.

"He brings attitude and swagger both in style and music" to the format, Marks says.

To get the word out about the album, Keith is enlisting fan club members to act as a street team. In a project dubbed "Operation New Recruit," Show Dog is awarding points to the members for getting others to join the club. In a video message on his Web site, Keith explains that the points can be redeemed for such prizes as merchandise and VIP flyaways to one of his shows.

MAKING THE TV ROUNDS

On TV, Keith will perform April 10 on the CMT Music Awards, April 11 on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno," April 12 on "The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson" and will tape an episode of "Ellen" April 17. He is also expected to make the rounds of the TV morning shows, and was recently featured in a profile on the Biography Channel.

Show Dog VP of sales Johnny Rose says Keith has been "an actively participating partner in planning his own release."

Rose, who previously worked with Keith at DreamWorks, says that for Keith's last four albums 50% or more of the sales came in the first eight to 12 weeks after release. Therefore, Rose says, "We're jamming as much as we can into the first few weeks . . . we're committed to a full setup for the first 90 days.

"We'll always try to reach every fan we can," Rose adds, citing planned programs or features with Yahoo, CMT, GAC, MSN, iTunes and Rhapsody, and at sporting events, including arena football, baseball and hockey games. There will also be movie theater ads on 14,000 screens in April and May plus five weeks of TV and radio advertising. The label built customized micro Web sites for key retailers showcasing the album. And a dance club promotion will ramp up close to street date.

Keith's most recent album, "Honkytonk University," released in June 2005 by DreamWorks Nashville, has sold 1.5 million copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Thirteen years into his career, and with 10 platinum or multiplatinum albums and 15 No. 1 singles to his credit, Keith has little left to prove. But just trying telling him that.

He has thrown himself earnestly into the role of record-label executive, signing Emerick, Rebecca Lynn Howard, Lindsey Haun, Flynnville Train and a duo comprising former Little Texas member Tim Rushlow and his cousin, Donny Harris. (Sarah Johns, one of the first artists Keith signed and one of the opening acts on his Big Throwdown II tour, is no longer on the label.)

Haun is Keith's co-star in his upcoming feature film debut, "Broken Bridges," in which she plays his daughter. She also fronts what Keith calls a "trash band" in Los Angeles.

As for Rushlow, Keith says he told him, "I'm not going to sign you unless you bring me something that makes me forget

about Little Texas. I didn't think he could do it, [but] he brought me 10 things that were great."

Outside of his label venture, Keith is in business with Harrah's on a successful chain of restaurants named for one of his songs, I Love This Bar & Grill. Three have opened and are doing well, and more are planned for this year.

In "Broken Bridges," due for release by Paramount later this year, Keith plays a major character he describes as "an old country songwriter that drank himself into a career coma."

Keith calls his first movie-making experience a "complete joy." He says he knew he would be "comfortable in front of the camera," thanks to the many videos and TV commercials he has filmed. But he adds, "I surprised myself that I did as well as I did."

He plans to do one or two films per year, including an upcoming one he wrote based on his hit song and video, "Beer for My Horses," which he describes as being about a "fish-out-of-water cop." Show Dog will release the soundtracks to all of his Paramount films, including "Broken Bridges."

Keith recently wrapped the first leg of Big Throwdown II, and will hit the road again in August for about 50 more shows.

But whatever else he is into, making hit records will always be Keith's top priority, much to the delight of his record programers.

"If country music is a reflection of the American spirit, Toby is certainly the face of that sentiment," Lindy says. "Here's a guy that sings songs that sound country [and] pushes the content, whether it's comedic or serious, without a thought as to who cares. He means every word he sings."

-
mid a less than rosy business environment, Europe’s indie labels are finding new ways to survive and thrive. Increasingly, indie-label successes are forged through a network of market-by-market distribution deals rather than global licenses. In some cases, indies are using one of several new European structures that have been launched to service their marketing and distribution needs. It all adds up to more control and greater reach for the indie labels.

“There’s been some great success stories in recent times,” enthuses Michel Lambot, chairman of European indies’ trade body Impala and co-CEO of Brussels-based independent label group PIAS.

Several of those success stories tell of artists whose albums were simultaneously released across Europe through a combination of indie and, in some cases, major distributors. Notable examples from the past year include Franz Ferdinand (on Domino), Katie Melua (Dramatico), the Prodigy (XL) and Simply Red (simply-red.com). All these albums reached the Top 10 of Billboard’s European Top 100 chart.

Such strategy is a break from the typical pattern of releasing indie projects on a territory-by-territory basis, often only after success in the act’s home market. Through simultaneous global releases, indies have a chance to make as big a marketing splash as majors do with their high-profile projects.

One of the first indie artists to map out a Pan-European plan was Simply Red frontman Mick Hucknall. In 2000, he parted ways with Warner Music after 15 years with the company and set up his own label, simplyred.com. For his 2003 album “Home,” he looked for the best setup of local distributors—indies and majors—in the different territories. Hucknall built on the experience with his 2005 album “Simplified,” which was among last year’s best sellers across Europe.

Simply Red may be an established act, but such newcomers as Melua and Franz Ferdinand experienced similar successes across Europe. Lambot’s own PIAS is among the companies to which Domino licensed Franz Ferdinand’s album “You Could Have It So Much Better.” PIAS handled the release in France and Spain.

Other distributors that handled “So Much Better” include Rough Trade in Germany, Playground in Denmark and Finland, and Edel in Austria. In its U.K. home market, Domino has a distribution agreement with Vital.

The album was released in the United States on Epic and debuted at No. 8 on The Billboard 200. According to Domino, it has sold more than 1 million units in the United Kingdom and another 1 million globally. More recently, Domino used the same network for the Arctic Monkeys’ debut, “Whatever People Say I Am, That’s What I’m Not.” The album reached No. 5 on Billboard’s European Top 100 list in mid-March, charting in 13 different territories.

Similarly, Dramatico linked with Pinnacle for U.K. distribution of British singer Melua’s albums and has used the likes of Naïve in France, Rough Trade Distribution in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, and Bonnier Amigo in Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

Dramatico founder Mike Batt says his international strategy for Melua has always been to pick individual distributors for each territory instead of seeking a global license.

Previously, Dramatico had an arrangement with a major, EMI, but Batt was not pleased with the results. “I realized just how difficult it is to get real cooperation from the heads of the companies in all the territories,” he says. Batt decided to change his approach when he released Melua’s debut, “Call Off the Search,” in 2003.

“I was looking for distributors who had the time, the manpower and the interest to operate on my project,” Batt says. The plan proved to be a winner. Building on that experience, Melua’s current album, “Piece by Piece,” has shifted more than 1 million units in Europe outside the United Kingdom, with France, Germany and the Netherlands as her three main territories.

Batt acknowledges that global licensing deals with majors can
sometimes work, but feels he has better “drive, control and focus” through his network. And while building and working on a day-to-day basis with different distributors in each territory can be time-consuming, he sees an upside in total control over a project’s life span.

“If we are driving it ourselves, we have only ourselves to blame if it fails or pick the rewards when it is successful,” Batt says. “It is also about relationships. We are a tiny company, so we tend to choose people who are enthusiastic about our repertoire. And we also put a microscopic attention into details.”

The strategy can also offer more flexibility than a single global licensing or distribution deal. As Batt puts it, “If it does not work in one territory, we can change quickly without having to go through a whole diplomatic process.”

In the U.S. market, Melua’s “Piece by Piece” will be released June 6 under a sales and distribution deal with Universal Records, with Dramatico’s own marketing team in place. In London, Dramatico has a staff of six, including Batt, and uses freelancers.

“I cannot say that what works for us would work for others,” Batt says. “I took risks in launching Dramatico and in signing Katie, but I think part of our success was we had a very determined approach to marketing. A major is probably safer—but the risk is that they might simply forget about us, or [a managing director] changes and suddenly you get forgotten.”

Hoping to replicate such success stories, several companies in recent months have launched new services with the aim of providing indie labels with national or pan-European platforms to exploit their repertoire.

In November 2005, Sony BMG unveiled plans to establish Red Ink—or Red Independent Network—a Europe-wide division with a mission to break indie acts. It followed the September launch of Cooperative Music, an independent labels licensing network under the wings of Richard Branson’s V2 music operation.

At the beginning of 2006, British indie distributor Vital Distribution, alongside parent company PIAS U.K., set up Integral, a stand-alone support service for U.K. indie labels. The London-based service has the potential to expand in the rest of Europe through the PIAS network of companies in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Spain and Germany.

Integral’s inaugural project was Swedish artist José González, through a deal with his U.K. independent label Peacefrog. González’s album, “Veneer,” cracked the U.K. top 10 earlier this year.

Nick Hartley, CEO of PIAS U.K., says Integral’s goal is to help nurture a new generation of indie labels in hopes they will join such established ones as Beggars Banquet or Domino.

“There’s not enough strong, big independents in the marketplace,” Hartley says.

Red Ink has taken over some of the clients from Sony Independent Network Europe (SINE), the now-defunct licensed-repertoire unit of U.K.-based Sony Music Europe. Among those labels is Skint, home to Fatboy Slim. Red Ink also works with Visible Noise, the label of U.K. alternative act Lostprophets, whose sophomore album, “Start Something,” was released in the United States through Columbia two years ago and has sold 687,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. A new Lostprophets album is due in June, and will also be handled by Columbia in the U.S. market.

Red Ink is also close to finalizing label deals with three other British companies, according to Red Ink U.K. GM Angie Somerside. “Our system is very flexible,” she says. “Labels can continue to be independent in the U.K. and retain control, but we can help them internationally.”

Cooperative Music’s initial clients included London-based Wichita Recordings, Berlin-based City Slang and London-based Bella Union, the label owned by Robin Guthrie and Simon Raymonde from Cocteau Twins.

Alison Wenham, chairman/CEO of British indie labels association AIM, says the new structures are a response to market conditions. “Behind the interest in physical distribution, there is a very simple fact—as sales volumes decline, companies look elsewhere for volume and to cover their fixed costs. But this is not necessarily a bad thing for indies,” she says.

In fact, the Pan-European distribution concept is not entirely new. “We’ve been doing that for a couple of years,” says Martin Goldschmidt, chief executive of London-based label Cooking Vinyl, who set up Essential Music & Marketing with former Vital Distribution managing director Mike Chadwick.

Essential’s goal is to assist companies in selling their repertoire across Europe. “There’s a big demand if you do it right,” Goldschmidt says.

He adds that such a service can appeal to U.S. labels not interested in investing in a European structure or European labels in search of expanded distribution. Essential clients include Silverline Records, the Los Angeles-based DVD-Audio label of S.I Entertainment Group.

Goldschmidt notes that Essential does not pay “big advances,” which, he says, may differentiate it from Red Ink and Cooperative Music. None of those operations would disclose the terms they offer to indies.

A former employee of a major company who asked to remain unidentified adds that majors may still have a checkbook policy, but the amounts are not as great as they were five to seven years ago when the big labels were ready to pay a premium to attract the cream of indies. “Big advances are becoming harder to justify,” the source says.

Mark Chung, former director of SINE and now managing director of Berlin-based publishing company Freibank Musikverlagen, suggests that the competition for labels between major and indie marketing and distribution operations is now less driven by financial terms than by the service offered.

“Compared to five years ago, majors have lost their advantage, which was to provide a global network capable of developing acts on a global basis,” he says. “Because they had to cut down on manpower, they no longer have the resources to exploit repertoire the way they used to. Meanwhile, indies have acquired a better know-how about how to develop international marketing strategies.”

Chung adds, “It is very positive for the industry that we are seeing more and more of these [Pan-European] successes from indies. Of course, you need acts for which there is a demand. But the structures are in place if you wish to develop acts on a European scale.”
As the Canadian music industry gathers April 2 for the 2006 Juno Awards in Halifax, Nova Scotia, the roster of nominees contains no shortage of international superstars. They include Diana Krall, Michael Bublé and Nickelback.

But beyond this Junos, music executives to the north are seeing significant international interest in numerous rising acts: the Arcade Fire, Broken Social Scene, Death From Above 1979, Feist, Stars, the Dears, Alexisonfire, Metric, the New Pornographers, Bedouin Soundclash and Hot Hot Heat, among others.

In short, when it comes to new acts, Canada is hot.

"Arguably, Canada leads the world with indie rock, but this is also an incredibly fertile time for Canadian music in general," says Michael McCarty, president of EMI Music Publishing Canada.

Jack Ross, booking agent with the Agency Group in Toronto, agrees. "My phone is ringing off the hook from Australian and Japanese promoters for Canadian bands," he says. "I'm also hearing from promoters in South Africa and Asia I have never heard from before."

Make no mistake: Global markets also continue to embrace such established Canadian acts as Shania Twain, Bryan Adams, Barneykaked Ladies, Buck 65 and Danko Jones, this year's Juno nominees and others.

Canadian rockers Our Lady Peace, Simple Plan, Finger Eleven, Three Days Grace, Silverstein and Default also are popular in the United States, as are singer/songwriters Bruce Cockburn, Sarah McLachlan, Kathleen Edwards, Sarah Harmer, Fred Eaglesmith and country singer Terri Clark.

British DJ/historian Bob Harris spotlighted Canada's vibrant music scene in a two-part series for BBC Radio 2 in October titled "The Maple Music Revolution."

"What struck me most after being in Toronto was the sense of community," Harris says. "The scene is much less competitive than in the U.K. Because [domestic] sales are fairly low, Canadian musicians know they are not going into music to have limos and swimming pools."

Canada's music industry has returned to a more grassroots level. Bands build an audience from touring and from Internet-driven marketing, particularly in the absence of mainstream retail and radio support.

"We have a new generation of Canadian labels and artists with a do-it-all work ethic," says Randy Lennox, president/CEO of Universal Music Canada. "Given the size of the country, everybody has to be a jack-of-all-trades."

The combination of Internet savvy and increased international experience has enabled Canadian-based labels to more quickly export or license their catalogs abroad.

Also, Canadian embassies and trade missions abroad are now providing significant support for showcasing artists and helping to make business connections, particularly in Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan.

As a result, several Toronto-based independent labels have emerged with solid global industry standing: Arts & Crafts (Broken Social Scene, Feist and Jason Collett), Last Gang (Metric and Death From Above 1979), MapleRecordings (Kathleen Edwards, Pilate, the Dears and Joel Plaskett) and Paperbag (Magenta Lane, Uncut and Deadly Snakes).

Meanwhile, the Canadian arms of the multinationals—Universal Music Group, Sony BMG, Warner Music Group and EMI—have all recently reshaped their own A&R to ensure they continue to play a pivotal role in developing new Canadian acts.

This includes building their own rosters with such alt-styled newcomers as K-os (EMI) and the Trews (Sony BMG); Billy Talent, Buck 65 and Tomi Swick (Warner); and Mobile, Hedley and Hawksley Workman (Universal), while boosting the development of independent labels through licensing and distribution agreements or co-ventures.

As these independent labels are grappling with the complexities and obstacles of operating at an international level, the majors are using their resources and intercompany structures to support them.

"If we can help further the indie community in Canada by either funding or calling around," Universal Music Canada senior VP of A&R Allan Reid says, "it's good for all of us."
Among the many Canadian acts with international potential emerging this year, several contenders are signed to independent labels, including Metric, K’naan, the Novaks, Controller.Controller, Wolf Parade, Magneta Lane, the Golden Dogs, Tokyo Police Club, Raising the Fawn and the Diableros.

Meanwhile, the major labels are represented by Keisha Chante (Sony BMG) and Tomi Swick (Warners), among others.

Here are some of the leading Canadian acts to watch during the year ahead.

### Bedouin Soundclash

The band established a following in Europe, appeared on last year’s Vans Warped tour and played a sold-out, 40-date tour in Canada in 2005. But Bedouin Soundclash, on Stomp Records in Canada and SideOneDummy in the United States, is still regarded in some quarters as an overnight success.

The Toronto-based, reggae-pop-punk trio met in 2001 at Queen’s University and hit it off because of a mutual love of ska/rock steady legend Prince Buster and British dub/electronic innovators Asian Dub Foundation.

The trio spent four years developing a grass-roots fan base and touring with such bands as the Slackers and the Skatalites.

The first songs Bedouin’s members wrote collectively, “Natural Light (Rude Bwoy)” and “Johnny Go to New York,” were featured on its 2002 Stomp Records debut, “Root Fire.” It was followed by 2004’s “Sounding a Mosaic,” produced by Bad Brains bassist Daryl Jenifer.

The band’s third Stomp Records album, “Street Gospels,” is on hold until the fall. Again, Jenifer will produce, and it will feature Beastie Boys collaborator Money Mark on keyboards.

### Sam Roberts

In a short time, Sam Roberts has become Canada’s most celebrated new rocker.

Roberts’ sophomore outing, “Chemical City,” which he co-produced with Mark Howard, is being released April 11 in Canada by Universal Music, followed by a U.S. release May 9 on Universal-affiliated Fontana.

Born in Pointe Claire, Quebec, the singer/songwriter first gained national attention with the 2002 release of his low-fi, six-song EP, “The Inhuman Condition.”

In Canada, the album’s single, “Ready to Go,” has since racked up sales of 57,000 units in Canada, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The EP’s anticipated success paved the way for a co-venture between Universal Music Canada and Universal Records U.S. to release Roberts’ 2003 debut album, “We Were Born in a Flame.”

It debuted at No. 2 on the Nielsen SoundScan album sales chart in Canada and has since scanned 145,000 units there. But the album failed to ignite in the United States.

Roberts, however, was the big winner at Canada’s 2004 Juno Awards. He was named artist of the year, while “We Were Born in a Flame” won honors for top album and top rock album.

### Mobile

Although Montreal’s vibrant music underground began to attract international media scrutiny in 2005, rock quintet Mobile decided to move to Toronto.

“The band had reached a certain critical level,” drummer Pierre-Marc Hamelin recalls. “We concluded we weren’t going any further in Montreal. It was a natural move, because we wanted to take a shot at making it instead of just quitting one day, frustrated and without really having tried or taken a risk.”

Mobile—originally called Moonraker—had already spent more than three years in a Montreal studio rehearsing and working on its repertoire before hitting the local clubs.

Within six months of the band’s arrival in Toronto, Mobile signed a deal with Universal Music for Canada and with Interscope Records for the United States and other international markets.

“Moonraker was a good live band, but didn’t nail me with their songs,” Universal Music Canada senior VP of A&R Allan Reid recalls. “When the band moved to Toronto, we sent them ‘Today Starts Tomorrow—I—a great song. Three months later, I went to the studio and heard three tracks: ‘Montreal Calling,’ ‘Out of My Head’ and ‘Dusting Down the Stars.’ All impressed me.”

Mobile’s debut album, “Today Starts Tomorrow,” was produced by Canadian Matt DeMatteo. It will be released in Canada, Europe and the United Kingdom in May, with a later release date set for the United States.

### Divine Brown

Canadian R&B/hip-hop has a champion today in soul chanteuse Divine Brown, who is also a formidable songwriter, producer and multi-instrumentalist.

In May 2005, Brown’s self-titled, soul-laced debut was released in her homeland by Toronto-based independent Blacksmith Entertainment and distributed by Universal Music.

Aided by significant multi-format airplay of its lead-off single, “Old Skool Love,” the album has moved 40,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Brown recently toured Canada opening for Bryan Adams and will perform at this year’s Juno Awards.

Previously, she had spent almost a decade gigging on Canada’s R&B circuit and opening shows for the likes of the Temptations, George Benson and Maceo Parker.

Brown also worked in live theater performing in the off-Broadway hit “Mama, I Wanna Sing!” and Toronto productions of “Rent” and “Ain’t Misbehavin.”

In 2003, Toronto-based manager Chris Smith, who also handles Nelly Furtado, Fefe Dobson and K-os, contacted Brown about recording for his new Blacksmith imprint. According to Smith, a deal is pending to release her album in 10 territories this year, including the United States.

### Massari

Ottawa-based Massari is yet another Canadian independent-label urban artist...
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George Wassouf as influences.

In 2002, Capital Prophet Records released Massari’s debut album, “Spitfire,” which garnered significant airplay in Ottawa. Its success there led to the label linking up with Fontana North (then called Maple Nation Wide) for distribution.

“It has been a remarkable story,” says radio promoter Adrian Strong of DMD Entertainment in Mississauga, Ontario. “Particularly for an independent pop artist in Canada. The album has been licensed in 45 countries, including with Universal Music Germany, which has directly signed him.”

The Trews

Playing in-your-face, meat-and-potatoes rock, the Trews have performed more than 500 shows since releasing their debut album, “House of Ill Fame,” in 2003, through Burnstead Productions, with distribution by Sony BMG Music Canada.

In addition to headlining four Canadian tours, the band has shared stages with the Rolling Stones, Robert Plant, Three Days Grace, the Offspring and Nickelback.

The Trews’ debut album has sold 45,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. It contains four tracks—“Not Ready to Go,” “Tired of Waiting,” “Every Inambiguity” and “Fleeting Trust”—that have been embraced by Canadian rock radio.

The band’s sophomore album, “Den of Thieves,” produced by Jack Douglas (Aerosmith, John Lennon), was released in Canada last August.

The album debuted at No. 6 on the SoundScan album chart and has sold 40,000 units to date, largely because of the strength of its leadoff single, “So She’s Leaving.”

“Den of Thieves” will be released April 18 in the United States through RED Distribution. The band kicked off a U.S. tour March 15 in Austin that will continue through June.

“This is a band with real songs that works its ass off,” the Trews’ Toronto-based manager Larry Wanagas says. “We may not find fans on Sunset Boulevard, but we surely will in Minneapolis and Lincoln, Neb.”

Roxanne Potvin

A 23-year-old singer/songwriter from Gatineau, Quebec, Roxanne Potvin has been turning heads in Canada’s roots community with the March 7 release of her sophomore album, “The Way It Feels,” on Toronto-based Alert Records.

Produced by Canadian guitarist Colin Linden, the album features an evocative blend of R&B, blues and traditional country.

It also features stellar backup from roots veterans John Hiatt and Daniel Lanois on vocals; Bruce Cockburn on guitar; Richard Bell on keyboards; and Memphis Horns members Wayne Jackson on trumpet/trombone and Tom McGinley on sax.

“These are people Colin has worked with,” Potvin says. “But I’ll take credit for picking John Hiatt. When I’m writing the album, he was always in the back of my mind. When he played Massey Hall in Toronto last year, I was recording, so we asked him to drop by to do some vocals. When he started singing, I was sitting on the couch in the studio thinking, ‘That’s John Hiatt. He’s so unbelievable.’”

In 2003, Potvin caught the ear of Tom Berry, owner of Alert Records, with her debut solo album, “Careless Loving,” self-released on her own Careless Records.

“What attracted me was her voice and significant songwriting skills,” Berry recalls. “Also, that she had self-financed, -produced and -recorded her own record, put a band together, and was touring it in Ontario and Quebec.”
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Given Bryan Adams’ known dislike of ceremony, the announcement that he had agreed to accept a Canadian Music Hall of Fame Award at this year’s Juno Awards came as a surprise to many.

The Junos will be presented April 2 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

“I had turned this down four times in a row,” Adams sheepishly admits. “I’m not terribly keen about accepting awards. I’m happy just making music and touring.”

Adams is Canada’s most successful international pop star—period. He is known in countries where other rock acts have seldom, if ever, performed. His career has spanned almost three decades, 14 albums and worldwide sales in excess of 60 million records, according to Adams’ management.

Despite declining U.S. sales in recent years, he has maintained his international sales base, particularly in such markets as the Pacific Rim and the United Kingdom. He has also won 10 Grammy Awards.

In 2005, Adams celebrated his career with the two-CD, 36-track retrospective collection “Anthology,” released in the United States on A&M/Chromatics.

Adams has reached the pinnacle of his profession because of discipline and monumental ambition.

As a teenager he was certain he would be a pop star—imaging himself at concerts in the role of such headliners as David Bowie, Elton John and Marc Bolan—and never considered another career.


At 44, Adams shows no sign of slowing down. Since 1998, he has toured 10 days per month, often performing in locales rarely visited by his peers, including Vietnam. So far this year, he has performed in Pakistan, India, South Africa, Jordan and Egypt.

“Bryan is Canada’s musical ambassador to the world,” Universal Music Canada president/CEO Randy Lennox says.

Adams lived abroad as a child and long-time manager Bruce Allen adds, “Bryan is fascinated by foreign lands. I don’t think he approaches (touring) to sell records. He believes there is a market for music as a concert experience.”

Adams says: “My songs have gone on to have a life of their own far beyond what I ever expected. They have transcended borders into places where you wouldn’t think people listen to Western music. They do and are excited when I visit.”

It was Adams’ fourth A&M album, 1985’s “Reckless”—which contained such hits as “Somebody,” “Heaven,” “Summer of ‘69,” “One Night Love Affair” and a duet with Tina Turner, “It’s Only Love”—that provided the springboard for his international career.

“Reckless” sold 7 million units worldwide and reached No. 1 in the United States and Canada.

But Adams’ next album, 1987’s “Into the Fire,” faltered commercially. As a result, the singer took a lengthy hiatus before returning with “Waking Up the Neighbours” in 1992.

By that time his recording of the single “(Everything I Do) I Do It for You” from the Robin Hood soundtrack on Morgan Creek Records was soaring up the charts.

“(Everything I Do) I Do It for You” sold 7 million units worldwide and reached No. 1 in 16 countries, including seven consecutive weeks atop The Billboard Hot 100. It topped the British pop charts for 16 consecutive weeks, shattering a 36-year-old record held by Slim Whitman’s “Rose Marie.”

“Waking Up the Neighbours” subsequently sold 10 million copies worldwide. “I had an inkling ‘Everything I Do’ was going to do well because it entered the charts really high,” Adams recalls.

The successes of “Waking Up the Neighbours” and the hits compilation “So Far So Good” in 1993 led to Adams’ enormous popularity worldwide, even though his fame would soon wane in America.

While “18 Til I Die” was meant to regain Adams’ audience in the United States, it reached only No. 31 on The Billboard 200. Subsequent albums did not do as well.

While Adams clearly is not happy about his diminished popularity in America, he is not all that bothered either. “I had a great ride there,” he says. “I’m very happy being quite active on a global level.”
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For the past two years, agents, managers and artists have found that the Canadian touring market has been remarkably consistent, even as the U.S. business has remained flat or kept declining.

William Morris Agency VP David Levine calls the Canadian touring market "incredibly hot right now, for all genres. We have acts from Ben Lee and the Starting Line to Snoop Dogg, Billy Idol, Nine Inch Nails and Megadeth all selling out buildings."

The world's largest promoter, Live Nation, counts Canada as fertile concert ground. "Live Nation has been doing great in Canada," says Shane Bourbonsais, president of Live Nation Canada. "We sold close to a million concert tickets last year on $70 million in gross sales."

House of Blues in Vancouver has seen similar success, promoting 900 concerts in 2005. "This year we hope to break 1,000," HOB's Riley O'Connor says.

Big cities in Canada are performing like big cities should. The Air Canada Centre, a 20,000-capacity arena in Toronto, is coming off a record year, notes Bob Hunter, senior VP/GM across many genres."

So what has contributed to Canada's success as a concert market?

"Great Canadian economy, strong Canadian dollar," Bourbonsais says.

Others agree. "One of the factors is the lack in the currency exchange rate," WMA's Levine says. "The Canadian ticket prices don't have to be driven higher to make enough U.S. dollars to make a tour solvent."

Farkas would add strong native acts like Bryan Adams and Simple Plan touring the country, as well as "a willingness of American and European acts to play more dates in Canada."

The Internet has made promoting shows more efficient and productive in Canada, Levine says. "The Internet has made music a global commodity without the need for traditional marketing dollars to be spent—which in most cases were never spent" in the past, he says. "Fans have a new access to music and technology and are using it to discover music that they may not have had in the past."

But there are challenges inherent in the Canadian concert market maintaining its heat, of the venue. Last year the venue ranked fourth among all arenas, according to Billboard Boxscore, with $34 million in grosses from 69 entertainment events.

Similarly, the Bell Centre in Montreal remains one of the top-grossing arenas in North America, and its concert promotion arm, Gillette Entertainment Group, produced more than 400 shows in 2006, the best so far for GEG, says GEG president Nick Farkas.

On the opposite side of the country, the new Save-On Foods Memorial Centre in Victoria, British Columbia, has also parlayed a hot concert market into a banner first year. Rod Stewart opened up the $36 million, 7,000-seat arena last March 26.

"The first year has gone exceedingly well," says Dave Dakers, GM of the venue. "Most events have sold out."

The size of the Toronto market, with 6 million people within an hour’s drive, is obviously a huge plus, and Victoria is the largest market in Western Canada. But it is not just the major metropolitan areas like Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver that are cranking out the box-office numbers.

"We are also finding that the markets that were traditionally ignored in the past are hungry for the concert experience," Levine says. "We are starting to feed more of those markets and seeing success on many levels and some of them not easily overcome.

"The biggest challenge is still the distance between major markets," Levine says. "It makes it hard to gross enough to pay the guarantees needed to keep most bands in the black."

Another major challenge is the winter weather, "which forces us to add extra time to travel," Levine says. "A cross-Canadian tour is a potentially longer process, which adds to touring costs."

Hunter says the ACC is seeing a "slower than normal summer" on the books. "But the late spring/early summer is strong, and the fall is already starting to look like it’s going to be OK," he adds.

The Canadian market has dealt with high-profile concerns in recent years, including an increase in border security after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001; the travel restrictions in Toronto related to SARS in 2003; and to the report of a case of mad cow disease in Alberta in late 2004.

"A lot of those issues have gone away," Hunter adds. "We're trying to make it as easy as possible for these artists. And, again, when you're in a major market you can cover up a lot of your sins."

According to Live Nation’s Bourbonsais, "We will lose steam if ticket prices escalate. Maintaining their present level is very important to keeping this great run alive."

‘Markets that were traditionally ignored in the past are hungry for the concert experience. We are starting to feed more of those markets.’
—David Levine, William Morris Agency
Like other facets of the music industry, Christian/gospel music has seen its share of challenges in recent years. Nevertheless, key executives remain optimistic about the genre's future, citing booming business on the digital front and an influx of new talent they believe will be the next wave.

These issues and more will be tackled April 1-5 in Nashville at this year's Gospel Music Assn. Week, which culminates with the GMA Music Awards (also known as the Dove Awards).

For nearly the past decade, Christian and gospel music sales rose while other sectors of the industry struggled. "We've seen about a 50% overall growth since 1995," GMA president John Styll says.

However, in the past few years, hard times seem to have caught up with religious music. Styll says there was steady growth until 2003, "then we kind of flattened out and started to fall off along with the rest of the music business."

He is optimistic, though, that the Christian/gospel sector is on the verge of another upswing. "From a Christian music standpoint, 2006 is actually looking better than [years] past," he says. "So I'm feeling pretty positive about things so far this year, but we've got a lot of months left."

Provident label Group president/CEO Terry Hemmings shares that optimism. "Overall the trend is positive," he says. Hemmings acknowledges that overall CD sales have been down, but digital sales are up. "It's not gloom and doom. There are some some weak spots in the market," Hemmings admits. "Those weak spots [are] physical catalog sales and the middle-tier artist category where those artists have had a couple of records that have been soft and it's really difficult to get them back on a positive trajectory. But our ability to have big hit records still exists. From our standpoint, Casting Crowns and Third Day exemplify that."

Indeed, Casting Crowns have been one of the industry's biggest success stories the past few years. The group's Beach Street/Reunion Records debut was certified platinum, and its sophomore effort, "Lifeforce," has sold 603,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Meanwhile, Grammy Award-winning Georgia rock act Third Day continues to be one of the industry's top acts after more than a decade together, having become a staple on Christian radio with numerous hits, including its recent chart-topper "Gry Out to Jesus." The band is touring this spring.

Though newcomers are boosting the genre's health, most admit it is hard to break acts in today's climate. "It always gets harder every year," INO Records president Jeff Moseley says. "Whenever anybody feels like we've figured out how to break a new artist, the market changes and we have to learn new ways."

Moseley says INO is employing a lot of the standard strategies when breaking new artists. "Obviously radio is still a primary driver for us," he says. "Publicity is a primary driver for us, and then touring and word-of-mouth."

Despite these efforts, Styll believes the Christian/gospel industry needs to break more new acts.

"I actually don't think we've done a very good job of breaking acts, because the only real standout new act in the last couple of years has been Casting Crowns," he says. "We need to have a couple of Casting Crowns every year, and we just haven't."

Word Label Group senior VP of marketing Rod Riley says signing successful indie acts that already have developed a fan base helps in breaking an act nationwide. "A lot of new artists have had an independent career," he says. "When we sign them we are trying to come in and tell their story in a compelling way that brings more people in."

During the past few years, EMI Gospel has been successful at breaking new artists like Smokie Norful. Kierra "Kiki" Sheard and Micah Stampley, who have become three of gospel's hottest new talents.

EMI Gospel VP/GM Larry Blackwell notes that "each has their own unique drivers" that helped propel them into the spotlight. "Smokie had a career song on this album—'I Need You Now' will be forever linked with Smokie," he says. "Micah Stampley had the favor of Bishop I.D. Jakes, who put him on a couple TV appearances and put him on MegaFest, Jakes' Christian music festival."

He adds that Sheard's breakthrough was aided by her family's legacy. Her grandmother is gospel pioneer Dr. Mattie Moss Clark, and her mother is Karen Clark Sheard of the legendary Clark Sisters.

There are numerous styles of music under the Christian/gospel umbrella, but in the past few years, praise and worship music has been the dominant force. This is evidenced by the fact that the artist with the most nominations going into this year's GMA Music Awards is worship continued on >>p36
Tough Times from >>355

leader Chris Tomlin.
This “indicates to me that this kind of music is connecting to consumers because consumers want to connect to God,” Styll says. “Contemporary music is perhaps not trying so hard to be cool or hip or pass itself off as pure pop music, but really coming around to helping people connect to God.”

From a commercial sense, is the worship music trend still booming? “Worship is never going to go away, because that’s what we do every Sunday morning,” Hemmings says. “It’s always going to evolve. You can’t just do the same thing over and over again.”

In fact, many see the worship movement having been buoyed by an influx of strong new songs. CCLI is an organization that monitors the songs being sung in churches around the country, and those songs have been changing. “If you look at CCLI’s top 50 for the last five years it used to be a pretty static group of songs,” Riley says. “It would take a long time for a song to finally get into the top 50 and accepted by churches nationwide. Then they would stay there for years and years. Now you look and it’s a very dynamic list of songs that are changing quickly, things are able to rise up really fast.”

In addition to churches embracing modern worship songs, Riley cites Christian radio as a factor in the genre’s growth.

“When I look at the songs that are taking hold in the church right now, a lot of them have had radio success,” he says. “That’s relatively new within the last three to five years. [Programmers] are listening to their consumers, and the consumers are saying, ‘We want vertical music to be a part of what we are listening to on the radio.’”

Riley says he believes “worship music needs to be a part of who we are as an industry.” At Word the company has committed to that belief by relaunching the historic Myrrh label and signing worship band Pocket Full of Rocks.

As strong as the praise and worship style of music is, there are some who feel the gospel side of the industry is growing just as well. The music got a shot in the arm from the film “The Gospel,” which hit theaters last fall, and by such high-profile vehicles as BET’s annual Salute to Gospel.

“The gospel community has been growing for the last 20 years, and then SoundScan came along in the early 90’s to help validate it,” Blackwell says, “but we still sell a ton of records in stores that don’t have SoundScan. I don’t think the true picture is out there.”

Blackwell admits that the gospel business was flat last year, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. “With the music business overall being down, a lot of people say flat is the new good,” he says.

That said, is it possible for 2006 to be a banner year in all facets of the Christian/gospel business?

“What this business climate behooves us to do is be extremely intentional about the products we release, how we release them and make sure we are going to the marketplace with a product that we feel is going to resonate,” Moseley says. “I don’t think there is a way to just stick your toe into a market these days; you have to commit 100%.”

Each year the cream of the crop of new artists are acknowledged at the Gospel Music Assn.’s GMA Music Awards, also known as the Dove Awards, which will be held April 5 in Nashville. This year’s nominees for the coveted prize of new artist of the year are a diverse group that highlight the myriad styles that make up today’s Christian music landscape. Below are the nominees.

KRYSYL MEYERS

At first—the when most were worrying about what to wear to the prom, Krystal Meyers was recording her Essentials Record debut with an “anti-conformity” stance that encourages teens to stand up for what they believe in.

She began writing songs at age 10 and learned to play guitar at 13. The album’s lead single, “The Way to Begin,” immediately appealed to fans and critics alike. “I am a 17-year-old girl who loves God and who stands up for ‘anti-conformity,’” says Meyers, who has been touring as part of the ShoutFest lineup with Skillet, Seventh Day Slumber, Disciple and others.

GEORGE HUFF

The “American Idol” phenomenon has produced some of the country’s best-loved new artists, including George Huff. After exiting the third season of the show, Huff opted to follow his heart into Christian music and signed with Word Records.

“God just gave me this talent,” Huff says. “I did my first solo in church when I was 5, and by age 6 I was receiving invitations to sing in churches of almost every denomination on a regular basis.”

His Word debut, “Miracles,” spawned the hit “Brighter Day,” which became an unofficial anthem in his hometown of New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Huff is up for two more GMA Music Awards: urban recorded song of the year for “Brighter Day” and urban album of the year for “Miracles.”

STELLAR KART

In addition to earning a nod in the best new artist category this year, Stellar Kart’s acclaimed 2005 debut, “All Gas No Brake,” was nominated for rock album of the year.

Hailing from Phoenix, the band has earned an enthusiastic legion of fans since its Word Records debut last year, and its single “Spending Time” became one of 2005’s most-played rock songs on Christian radio. Stellar Kart’s appeal to young consumers is natural, given the fact that members Adam Agee, Jordan Messenger, Cody Pellerin and Brian Calcaara are all between 20 and 24 years old and got their start leading worship for a youth group.

MAT KNEARNE

Mat Kearney gained national attention with the October 2004 release of “Bullet,” his debut album on Inpop Records. His single “Undeniable” broke through and earned him an enthusiastic fan base and the appreciation of seasoned critics. It also caught the attention of Aware Records founder and president Gregg Lawrence, who signed Kearney to a mainstream deal. Kearney’s April 18 release, “Nothing Left to Lose,” will continue to be worked to the Christian market via Inpop but will be marketed to the mainstream through Aware/Columbia.

Kearney hit the road this spring with MuteMath, and the title track from his forthcoming album is currently No. 17 on Billboard Radio Monitor’s Triple-A chart.

THE AFTERS

The Afters, who have been described as Smashing Pumpkins meets Coldplay, were the first act signed to Simple Records, a new label founded by MercyMe frontman Bart Millard and songwriter/producer Pete Kilepy. (Simple is marketed and distributed to the Christian community through INO Records, but the band was picked up by Epic for a shot at the mainstream.)

The band’s debut set, “I Wish We All Could Win,” spawned the hit “Beautiful Love,” which is featured in the upcoming Lindsay Lohan film “Just My Luck” and has been selected as the theme song for the new MTV series “Oh and Ocean.”

The group is nominated for two more GMA Music Awards: rock/contemporary album for “I Wish We All Could Win” and rock/contemporary recorded song of the year for “Beautiful Love.”

—Deborah Evans Price
COUNTRY GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE HITS

NASHVILLE—Is it a bad time to be a new female country artist?

It depends upon whom you ask.

Many label heads would likely answer yes, but many programmers hold a different view.

"Hell no," WQDR Raleigh, N.C., PD Lisa McKay says. "Look at Carrie Underwood's meteoric rise. The right song in the right mass-appeal package will win."

At issue is the fact that women voiced just 19 of the 60 songs on the Hot Country Songs chart for the week ending March 5. Take out the chart's three male/female duets and the mixed-gender group Little Big Town, and only 14 of the 60 songs primarily feature a woman's voice.

During Nashville's recent Country Radio Seminar, KZLA Los Angeles OM R.J. Curtis pointed to the relative dearth of female artists in the format and asked where they all had gone. While noting that such things are cyclical, he said that with the exception of Sugarland, Miranda Lambert, Underwood and some established stars, there are relatively few female acts right now.

Several record label heads agreed with Curtis. Universal Music Group Nashville co-chairman Luke Lewis says his company is now "afraid" to sign female acts and "tensed up about it. ... There's a big, bloody pile of female artists from last year that didn't work," he says. "We're hearing from radio that maybe they have enough (Billboard, March 11)."

Outgoing KKKC Lafayette, La., PD Renee Revett cites Shelly Fairchlld, Jessi Alexander and Catherine Britt as examples of artists on that heap.

Sony Music Nashville president John Grady added at CRS, "I just got my teeth kicked in on a Gretchen Wilson record, so maybe just the era of women artists is over." He was referring to Wilson's ballad "I Don't Feel Like Loving You Today," which peaked at No. 22 on Hot Country Songs in December.

FIRST-SINGLE ROADKILL

That is not to say women cannot succeed in the current environment. Underwood quickly became a country star after winning "American Idol" last year. And hitmaking group (now duo) Sugarland features charismatic vocalist Jennifer Nettles.

NETTLES continued on p. 38
nifer Nettles as its focal point. “If a new female stands out from the crowd, if it’s a smash hit, you bet we’ve got room on the playlist,” WWQM Madison, WIS, music director Mel McKenzie says. “A hit song is a hit song even if it’s sung by Elmo,” who, by the way, is male. But for every Underwood and Nettles, there are many females who have not been imme-
surably impacted by country radio. In addition to the artists cited earlier, Susan Haynes, Shannon Brown and Danielle Peck all failed to signifi-
cantly connect with their first fans.

Peck is already back on the chart with a promising new track. Brown has a new single out as well. And radio programmers say they are excited about new female artists Megan Mullins, Ashley Monroe and Bomshel. Meanwhile, estab-
lished stars like Sara Evans, LeAnn Rimes, Faith Hill, Sheryl Crow, Jo Dee Messina, Jamie O’Neal, Lee Ann Womack and Martina McBride con-
tinue to have hits.

But some programmers, like KNIX Phoenix music director Gwen Foster, say, “There aren’t any slam-dunks when it comes to females,” no matter how well-established they are.

COOKIE-CUTTER ACTS

Many programmers say the problem is that many of the new female artists are indistin-
guishable, something Wilson and Sugarland overcame with their unique sounds.

Ed Hill, PD of KUBL and KKAT-FM Salt Lake City, says, “I am a fan of the new music Row to ‘find women with vision, soul, power. They are out there. Forget the pinup girls in the tight jeans.’” Indeed, KZLA APD/music director Tonya Campos says expecting female artists to be phenomenally talented and gorgeous to boot may be unrealistic.

“T here is too much pressure on females not only to be talented, be a great songwriter, able to sing in front of a crowd who is, as Steve Goss says, ‘be- able to put everything aside and travel’ (but they had) better look great doing it, too,” Campos says. “With that many restrictions, you have al-
ready cut the options down by more than half.”

GENDER BALANCE

KPLX (the Wolf) Dallas APD Smokey Rivers notes that the format’s gender debate is hardly new. “This format has never been a safe haven for female artists,” he says. “They usually only make up 10%-20% of a station’s weekly playlist.” But many programmers say listeners do not notice or care about gender balance.

“People hear hits; they don’t hear that we didn’t play a fe-
male in the last half-hour,” KZXX Lincoln, Neb., OM Brian Jennings says.

Many programmers feel that the current dire situation for fe-
male was exacerbated by the quality output coming from male artists.

“The music is so great right now,” WKLB Boston APD/music director Ginny Rogers says.

KZSW Wichita, Kan., APD/ music director Tracey Garrett says, “The quality of new female artists is wonderful and very en-
couraging, but the songs they are releasing don’t have the punch to make it.”

Other programmers are scratching their heads over why females are finding the going so tough at radio.

“It does seem to me that female records do seem to have a much more difficult time gain-
ning traction and lasting through the long haul,” says Chris Huf, APD/music director of KSCS and KTYS Dallas. “We’ve had recent records from more tenured females like Martina, Faith and Sara that are stand-
ing the long-term test, but even the biggest records from the biggest female breakthrough of the last few years—(like) Gretchen Wilson—have had problems with staying power.”

TOUGH CROWD

KNIX’s Foster thinks female lis-
teners—herself included—are harder on their own gender.

“Women are more critical of women,” she says. “A female artist has to not only have tal-
tent, but she can’t appeal too much to men and exclude women, and she can’t come across solely as a male basher.”

Then there is the age-old question of whether female listeners prefer to hear male artists on the radio. Even programmers who believe it is true have a hard time explaining why.

“Ask any listener who their top three favorites are,” McKenzie says. “Chances are they won’t say one female. Why? Who knows.”

Reveet says she has seen ev-
idence that women—who make up the bulk of the country radio audience—have some resistance to songs by women. In the early ‘90s, country ratings were at all-time high in most markets,” she says. “It’s amaz-
ing to note that as the percent-
age of female artists increased on our playlists, the ratings slipped down exponentially.”

Consultant Pam Shane of Houston-based Shane Media Services says, “Since this is a [love song- and story song-dominated genre], women want to hear men say the things their
guy’s can’t or won’t.”

It is possible, programmers say, that labels need to just give these acts a little more time to develop. “They need to decide to

YOUNG READY TO ROCK

SXSW Reveals Legend’s Plans, New Stars Ready To Break Out

Billboard is known for covering the music business, but occa-
sionally we really get to see its soul. Neil Young provided South by Southwest attendees such insight during an inspirational keynote conversation March 16 in Austin.

The one constant is not to let yourself get distracted when a tune is trying to find you, he said of the songwriter’s calling. “Once you have an idea, nothing else matters. Your responsibility to the muse is to follow it … shirk your (other) plans … There’s nothing more important.”

About: The label will release “We Were Here,” the album he sold out on iTunes, in May.

Jose Gonzalez, whose March 16 set we thoroughly enjoyed even though we could only oc-
casionally see the top of his head, has signed with Future Note Records in the United States. Mute will reissue the Swedish singer/songwriter’s “Veneer” April 4. The set previously came out on Hidden Agenda.

Sure to get signed any day are Australian trio the Flairz, who displayed a fun blend of post-punk/new wave during their 10/1/2006 show at The Church in Austin. They play SXSW Wednesday.

NEIL YOUNG shared songwriting advice— and the fact that he is ready to make another rock album—at his SXSW keynote.

Young stressed that clearing the way for a song should never be confused with labeling: “I’m proud of my work when the (song) comes really fast, and I don’t edit it. It’s the purest form of creativity … you just have to be there.” And, he pointed out, you cannot worry about the result while you are creating. “When you’re terrified,” he said, “you know you’re on the right track.

As for what is next musically, he hinted that after the relatively sedate “Prairie Wind,” he may be ready to rock. “I’m waking up with this massive, distorted hideous noise (in my head), and it makes me feel like I’m going home,” Young said.

SXSW DOINGS: After Los Angeles singer/songwriter Joshua Radin released his album exclusively on iTunes for a month, the majors came calling. Right before SXSW, Radin, who performed March 17 at the BMI/ Billboard brunch, signed a big-ticket deal with Columbia that many folks at the con-
ference were buzzing about. The label will release “We Were Here,” the album he sold out on iTunes, in May.

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casionally see the top of his head, has signed with Mute Records in the United States. Mute will reissue the Swedish singer/songwriter’s “Veneer” April 4. The set previously came out on Hidden Agenda.

Sure to get signed any day are Australian trio the Flairz, who displayed a fun blend of post-punk/new wave during their March 17 show (Billboard, March 17). They cannot vote or drink. Hell, they cannot even drive. But they can play. Here’s the kicker: The oldest member, drummer Scarlett Stevens, is only 17. She is joined by guitar-
ists and cousins Dios and John Mariani, both 12. Sure, their lyrics need a little work (sample: “It’s a speechbox/It makes a lot of noise” repeated 20 times), but that will come with age. Steven’s dad, Philip Stevens, who also manages the John Butler Trio, tells us that he is talking to a few labels, but nothing is confirmed. Sources say at least two majors are sniff-
ing around.

WILD WORLD INDEED: Word during SXSW was that Yusuf Islam, also known as Cat Stevens, has finished his first pop album since the late ‘70s and is close to picking a label. Our source tells us the field has narrowed to three record companies, and that the album will proba-
ibly come out in the ‘all. Islam wrote all songs for the project, which was produced by Rick Nowell. “It’s awesome,” our source tells us. “But of it could have come straight from [1971’s] ’Teaser & the Firecat’. ’ No word yet on whether the album will come out under Cat Stevens or Yusuf Islam.

QUICK TAKES: Singer/songwriter Susan Candel, whose Columbia Records debut, “The Subway Sessions,” comes out May 23, played her first public all-acoustic gig outside SXSW. The artist has played in New York subways for the past few years, and her album, produced by Jay Levine, was recorded in the subways.

During the March 18 A&R panel, label execs fessed up to the artists they let slip through their fingers. Telescopic’s Mark Williams saw the White Stripes at the Troubadour and thought, “It wasn’t the right hand at the right time. I, obviously, was stu-
pid as hell.” Zomba Label Group’s Jeff Fenster says, “I had Nirvana. They agreed to sign with me. Then Gary Gersh came along. [Manager] Danny Gold-
bled wheeled in [Sonik Youth’s] Thurston Moore. He said, ‘Gary’s all right with another act.’”

But Fenster got it right with another act: Sony’s Michael Ca-
plan admitted he pushed on Brit-
ney Spears while he was at Epic. “She came in and warped. ‘I Will Always Love You.’ … I couldn’t wait for her to get out of my of-
ﬁce,” he says.

In SXSW’s perhaps most hon-
est but cringe-worthy moment, Fenster viewed a young Spears quite differently. Her package contained a one-song demo on cassette and professional photos, including a whole-goose-shot of her in a cropped top, sitting on a picnic blanket with a puppy. “She was the American girl you just wanted to deﬁle,” he said. Thus, a star is born.

OUR FAVORITES: In no particular order, here are some of the acts that really made SXSW worthwhile: David Ford, Jont, Steel Train, Snow Patrol, the Magic Numbers, Jose Gon-
zalez, Susan Candel, People in Planes, IV Thieves, the Flairz and World Party.
Time Life’s Latin Leap

Company Puts Marketing Muscle Behind ‘Sirenas’ Collection

“Señora Tentación” (Ms. Temptation), “De Puro Ardor” (Burning Desire), “Mírame, Abrázame, Besame” (Look at Me, Hold Me, Kiss Me).

These are some of the titillating titles on “El Canto de las Sirenas” (The Sirens Song), a series of 10 albums highlighting some of the best-known Latin songs about love, lust and revenge, performed by Latin female torch singers from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Produced by Time Life, the collection represents an unprecedented leap by the company into the Latin market. Although Time Life has released Latin compilations before, this is its first U.S.-directed project and also the first to include a retail and direct response component of a significant magnitude.

For the past month, “Sirenas” as a 10-CD set has been promoted via a 30-minute infomercial hosted by singer Daniela Rome, who appears on the collection.

The TV exposure—with spots running nation-wide on Spanish-language networks and cable—will continue through the release of a retail-only best-of CD that streets April 4 and features 14 tracks from the collection (priced at $12.98). Then, a second set of one- and two-minute spots will also begin to air. As is typical with Time Life projects, the spots can run for as long as two years at a rate of 100 per week.

“What’s so key is all this television exposure sets up the retail release very well,” says Michael Mitchell, Time Life president of new product development for music and video.

The 10-CD set’s price—$120—is a hefty amount for the average Latin consumer. Although Mitchell would not disclose initial sales, he says the response has been positive. The two-minute spot will offer consumers the alternative of purchasing one volume per month.

On average, Latins are not as likely to have credit cards as non-Latin consumers, a problem in direct response campaigns. But Mitchell says Latins are increasingly using credit cards and paying via other methods. “We feel it’s a growing and viable market for Time Life,” he says.

“Sirenas” comes to Time Life after several other successful sets, including “La Verdadera Colección del Bolero,” produced through Time Life’s Mexican arm. This time, however, the parent company wanted to produce its own offering. It went to veteran Latin industry executive Maribell Schumacher (currently president of Tu Casa Entertainment), who suggested the “Sirenas” concept, an idea she had wanted to do for years.

“These are the women who to a great extent have shaped our attitude about so many things,” Schumacher says, referring to such artists as Lola Flores, Libertad Lamarque, Rocío Jurado, Lola Beltrán and Tania Libertad.

Because the scope of singers and the time span covered on “El Canto” are so vast, the CDs are organized by themes, each taking the name of a song as its title.

The top criteria for inclusion, Schumacher says, was that the track be recognizable throughout the Latin world. “That this was a song that carried across the Latin borders,” she says, “My No. 2 criteria was content. If the song was great, it carried.”

Time Life expects to follow “Sirenas” with other Latin-themed releases. Ideas being discussed include collections of ranchera, reggaetón and Latin rock.

“We’re looking at a concerted effort to step out into the Latin marketplace,” Mitchell says.
Etta James is two years shy of her 70th birthday—the woman looks better than ever. After struggling with a weight problem for most of her life, James underwent gastric bypass surgery and dropped nearly 200 pounds.

To put it mildly, James is ecstatic about her new lease on life. In fact, she cannot wait to begin touring in support of her March 14 release “All the Way” (RCA Victor). “When you look pretty good—when you get a figure for a change—you want to get on the stage and actually move and perform,” she says, laughing. “A little kid down the street said, ‘Oh, Miss Etta James got a face-lift!’ I was like, that’s all right, that’s so cool. But you know what? I had to look at myself after he said that. I go to college to become lawyers and doctors.”

So, I went in and created a lush record. But I can’t possibly leave the blues behind. It’s inside me. It’s part of my soul.

Q: What were you looking for in the songs you selected?
A: Well, first, I hand selected all the songs just as I’ve always done. I’ve got to be able to look at a song and understand it. Like [1978’s] “Sugar on the Floor,” for example. That was a song that I didn’t quite understand at first. I remember thinking, “What is sugar on the floor?” Later, I figured out what it meant to me. And that’s how I recorded it. It was the same with these songs on the new album.

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Q: Where do you see this album fitting in today’s scene?
A: Well, a lot of young people haven’t heard these songs before. I’m hoping it will fit in with the college kids. The ones that go to the House of Blues. The ones that don’t smoke in the dance halls. The ones that pay attention to what’s going on in music. You know, when I listen to that Kanye West song ("Addiction") that samples my own "My Funny Valentine," I think the kids are ready for an album like the one I’ve made. Of course, it’s not just for kids.

Q: You have been making music for more than 50 years. Is there anything that still surprises you about the music industry?
A: Yeah, I’m still not getting royalty checks. But it costs so much to make a record. You get the advance and the publicity and the publicity. But that’s it.

Q: What was your reaction to the recent news of a blues album by 14-year-old Etta James?
A: Don’t get too arrogant or too sure of yourself. Also, don’t just look for the glory and the bright lights. Never forget that this is a business. And get someone to manage you who actually cares about you as a person.

Q: What is your advice to young artists coming up today?
A: Don’t get too arrogant or too sure of yourself. Also, don’t just look for the glory and the bright lights. Never forget that this is a business. And get someone to manage you who actually cares about you as a person.
Oscar Win Raises Zola’s Profile

Artist’s Music Prominently Featured In Best Foreign Language Film Winner ‘Tsotsi’

The Academy Award-winning success of South African film “Tsotsi” is giving the music of kwaito superstar, TV presenter and actor Zola international exposure.

“Tsotsi” won the best foreign language film Oscar March 5. Zola (whose real name is Bonginkosi Dlamini) is signed to South African independent label Ghetto Ruff and has a supporting role in the movie. The title track of his 2001 debut album, “Umdlwembe,” is the film’s central musical theme.

Ghetto Ruff released the “Tsotsi” soundtrack in South Africa as a double-disc in February and claims 15,000 shipments to date. Paris-based Milan Records released a single-disc version in the United States Feb. 14 and internationally March 13. Both versions feature tracks from Zola’s four Ghetto Ruff albums plus material by other acts from the label.

“We see the soundtrack as a way of introducing Zola to the international music industry,” Ghetto Ruff CEO Lance Stehr says. Aside from the Milan release, Stehr says, “We expect that in the next three months, his albums will be available outside South Africa for the first time.”

HOTSTEPPER RETURNS:


Kamoze’s “Here Comes the Hotstepper” (Columbia) topped The Billboard Hot 100 in 1994. However, neither his same-titled 1995 Columbia album nor the follow-up, East/West/Electrica’s “Lyrical Gangsta,” made a dent on the album charts. “Crossover success is not always as good as people think,” Kamoze says. He has not released an album since, but Kamoze’s influence has been felt. Lyrics from “Lyrical Gangsta” track “Hotter This Year” were featured on Beyoncé’s “Baby Boy.” Damian Marley sampled Kamoze’s “World a Reggae” on the title track to “Welcome to Jamrock.”

“I’m making [my music] available . . . again as I wanted it to sound,” Kamoze says, “[using] real musicians, not synthesizers and drum machines.” —Kwaku

TIMELY ARRIVAL: U.K.-based pop/rock band Delays lived up to its name with the protracted gestation of sophomore set “You See Colours.” Recording stalled when the band’s only copy of the demo disc containing 100 new songs went missing last year. Delays singer/writer Greg Gilbert then had to rely on his bandmates to rebuild the best songs.

That group effort put the album back on track, and it finally hit U.K. shelves on Rough Trade March 6, nearly two years after its April 2004 predecessor, “Faded Seaside Glamour.” It entered the Official U.K. Charts Co. listing March 18 at No. 24. The album has already been licensed in Europe, Japan and Australia. Rough Trade product manager Kasia Mowlawi says discussions with U.S. labels are under way.

Rough Trade released “Faded Seaside Glamour” in the United States in May 2004, and a U.S. tour supporting Franz Ferdinand followed. —Steve Adams

Rhythm & Blues

GAIL MITCHELL gmitchell@billboard.com

U.K. Acts Set Sights On U.S. Shores

Securing a firm foothold on the music charts is a challenge for many promising R&B/hip-hop artists. But it can be even more daunting when an artist is a British import.

Think about it. For every Soul II Soul and Floetry there is a Craig David or Ms. Dynamite.

One U.K. import preparing to tread U.S. waters is singer/songwriter Corinne Bailey Rae. Her self-titled album recently debuted at No. 1 in the United Kingdom. Prior to her stateside debut June 6 on Capitol Records, she is generating buzz thanks to gigs in New York, Los Angeles and Austin’s South by Southwest Music and Media Conference. Her track “Like a Star” was featured on “Grey’s Anatomy” and VH1 Soul’s “Sub Soul” has added the video.

But before June 6 rolls around, another worthy British import is hoping the third time is the charm.

Duo Hill St. Soul will release its second album for Shanachie Entertainment, “SOULified,” on April 18. It is the follow-up to the 2004 U.S. debut “Copasetik & Cool,” also on Shanachie. Label GM Randall Glass calls the new record “the most mainstream R&B project we’ve had.” U.K.-based indie Gut Records released “Soul Organic” in 2000.

The Gut project garnered singer/songwriter Hilary Mwelwa and writer/producer partner Victor Redwood Sawyer their first taste of U.S. recognition with a cover of Aretha Franklin’s 1973 hit “Until You Come Back to Me.” BET picked up the video while the song received considerable airplay on U.S. jazz stations.

“Copasetik & Cool” elicited glowing reviews ranging from the Associated Press to People. In keeping with the duo’s penchant for seamlessly melding a U.K. underground vibe with a hip-hop and jazz-laced R&B ‘70s flair, the album lineup included the inspirational original track “I’ve Got Me” as well as an engaging update of the Isley Brothers’ “For the Love of You.”

Still, widespread recognition remained elusive. Enter “SOULified.” There are no covers this time. Just 12 original tracks that drive home the duo’s we-get-next promise.

The Zambian-born singer is now based in London with Sawyer, who founded U.K. hip-hop group Blak Twang. “This time . . . I wanted to do a more personal album.”

Mwelwa spent the last three years writing the album, which features such repeat-worthy tracks as “Hey Boy,” “It’s OK,” “Can We Spend Some Time” and a duet with Dewie (“Baby Come Over”). Unlike before, Hill St. Soul’s album will drop here first. That addresses one of the major problems Mwelwa says British acts encounter: not spending enough time in the States.

A second problem, the singer adds, is a little trickier to solve. “The States are the home of R&B, so you have to be on par with what’s going on over there.”

In this writer’s opinion, the duo has the second problem covered. And the label is booking shows to build awareness. “Our aim is to come there and work,” Mwelwa says. “Then we’ll bring it home.”

For the Record

In the March 18 issue of Billboard, a photo of the Persuaders that ran with the Rhythm & Blues column depicted the wrong version of the group. Pictured here is the version of the Persuaders that recorded “Made to Be Loved,” the new album referred to in the column.
At long last, the French film "Tous les Matins du Monde" is being released on DVD. Starring Gerard Depardieu and directed by Alain Corneau, this tale is set in 17th-century Paris. In the original release in 1991, the soundtrack, featuring the marvelous viola da gamba player and conductor Jordi Savall (already released in 2002 as a two-disc set on Savall's own Alia Vox label), sold more than 1 million copies worldwide, becoming a must-have disc. The film and its soundtrack arrived at a moment when the early music movement was truly blossoming beyond being a niche within a niche specialty, while performers like Savall were already opening up the treasures of this artistic era to new audiences. "Tous les Matins" seemed to be a catalyst for and a symbol of this musical renaissance. The digitally restored and remastered movie was issued by Koch Lorber March 7 and includes the 65-minute documentary "Jordi Savall: In Search of Perfect Sound."

MINNESOTA'S ONLINE FREEBIES: Working in conjunction with Minnesota Public Radio, the Minnesota Orchestra has announced that it will make select broadcasts available free to listeners online streaming for up to one year. At www.mnorchestra.org, listeners can find nine two-hour programs from the 2005 season hosted by Brian Newhouse, including performances of Kalevi Aho's Symphony No. 7 "Insect Symphony", the Verdi Requiem and Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 1, 3, 6, 8 and 9, along with guest appearances by such artists as violinist Leila Josefowicz and pianists Emanuel Ax and Yefim Bronfman. While Minnesota is not the first orchestra to offer broadcasts online, the length of time they will be available at no cost is groundbreaking.

LLOTS SHOSTAKOVICH: 2006 marks Dmitri Shostakovich's centenary birth year, and the flood of recordings continues unabated. Recent arrivals include competing versions of the composer's Violin Concerto No. 1. The first to turn up was an exhilarating reading from British violinist Daniel Hope and the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Shostakovich's son Maxim. The release includes the Second Violin Concerto and the Romance from The Gadfly (Warner Classics, Feb. 28). The second, a smoother and glossier interpretation from violinist Sarah Chang, the Berlin Philharmonic and conductor Simon Rattle, pairs the piece with Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto (EMI Classics, March 7).

Two more unusual releases have also recently hit shelves. Shostakovich's 1964 symphonic poem, The Execution of Stepan Razin, featuring bass horn Charles Robert Austin, the Seattle Symphony Chorale and the Seattle Symphony led by Gerard Schwarz (Naxos, March 21) and "Shostakovich's Circle" (Analekta, Feb. 21), featuring the composer's own Chamber Symphony in F Major, performed by L'Orchestre de la Province de Montréal, conductor Yuli Turovsky and pianist Sergei Salov. .

Higher Ground

CRABB'S 'BLUR THE LINES'

The Crabb Family has always been on the cutting edge of Southern gospel music. Its progressive sound earned it fans in the contemporary Christian community, while its country flair has made it a staple of Grand Ole Opry fa-vorite. The title of the group's March 28 release, "Blur the Lines," perfectly epitomizes the genre-bending, boundary-defying music that has made these siblings one of the most exciting new acts in any music field.

"We sing in a lot of different places," Jason Crabb says. The act is supporting Rob Zombie for six weeks this spring, then will regal Ozzfest in summer as the opening act for the main stage. .

CRABB'S 'BLUR THE LINES' FACT FILE

Label: Century Media Records
Management: Yvette Uhlmann: Direct Management
Booking: The Agency Group (Europe)
Publishing: Magic Arts (ASCAP)
Last/best-selling album: "Comalies" (2002), 234,000

www.americanradiohistory.com

CRABBS 'BLUR THE LINES'

Deborah Evans Price Dprice@billboard.com

The Crabb Family has always been on the cutting edge of Southern gospel music. Its progressive sound earned it fans in the contemporary Christian community, while its country flair has made it a staple of Grand Ole Opry favorites. The title of the group's March 28 release, "Blur the Lines," perfectly epitomizes the genre-bending, boundary-defying music that has made these siblings one of the most exciting new acts in any music field.

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Almost any artist with the right financing can release albums all his life, but only a handful can remain relevant at radio—something most acts consider to be the golden ticket.

Six years after surprising the industry by landing the No. 1 country radio hit "Buy Me a Rose," Kenny Rogers is at it again.

With a fresh recording contract from Capitol Records Nashville in hand, Rogers returns with new single "I Can't Unlove You." The track is No. 29 on the country chart, with spins at 102 of the 123 country stations used for Billboard chart tabulation. The song is the lead track from Rogers' new album, "Water & Bridges," released March 21.

Rogers says he has learned over and over from his experiences with radio that "if you do a great song, they will play it, and if you don't, you will stand in line with everyone else and be compared. I'm fine with that as long as I know the rules."

"Radio was great to me back in the '80s, so I don't think they owe me anything," he continues. "I'm just hoping to give them something they can't say 'no' to."

Prior to Capitol, Rogers most recently recorded for his own label, Dreamcatcher Records. And while he had some successes there, he says the label never had the financing to compete with the majors in the promotion arena. "We were throwing out records we thought were top fives, [but] it cost too much... we weren't really accomplishing anything.

"There comes a point in the career where you need radio more than it needs you," he says.

"It's not payola, it's just the cost of doing business to get a record to where it needs to go, and we just didn't have the funds."

So when Capitol Records Nashville president/CEO Mike Duncan made him an offer, something Rogers says was "no question a gamble for them," Rogers viewed it as "a great opportunity to experiment at a high level."

(Capitol has long owned most of Rogers' catalog, and Rogers expects to one day lease the masters of his Dreamcatcher works to Capitol if its new album, "Water & Bridges," releases.)

The new album was the three-time Grammy Award winner's first pairing with country's hottest producer, Dann Huff. Among its highpoints is a duet with Rogers' longtime friend, Don Henley, on the track "Calling Me."

For Huff, working with Rogers first involved a bit of getting over his own awe. "He was part of the whole soundtrack of my entire growing up life," Huff says, still sounding like a big star struck.

Dungan and Rogers first got acquainted a few years ago when the label exec asked the artist to help promote a greatest-hits compilation Capitol was releasing.

"In the process we fell in love with Kenny, the man," Dungan says. "I came away thinking, 'This is a man who knows who he is, but is a little restless in terms of making a statement.'"

So Dungan remembers telling Rogers he wanted him to make a "different kind of record, [not] an '80s-best Kenny Rogers record."

And Dungan knew Huff was just the guy to produce it. After pairing the two, Dungan says the label staff "just let them operate in a vacuum. We fed songs into them and just let them do their thing."

Rogers says Huff produced him "a little more edgy than anyone I'd ever worked with before."

The sound they achieved, Dungan says, is "Kenny's voice totally dry. There was no processing... a staple of some of Rogers' slicker earlier works. On "Water & Bridges," Dungan says, "it's just like Kenny is sitting right in front of you."

Huff says he and Rogers as a team represented "a whole mix of perspectives." But musically, Huff says, "he is as open as anyone I've ever met."

Dungan and Huff wanted to ensure Rogers tackled some social commentary songs on this CD, which he does on such tracks as "The Last Ten Years (Superman)" and "My Petition."

Huff says, "Kenny is damn near legendary, and he's earned the right to say some things." While Dungan says, "We don't have any spectacles bells and whistles" to get the word out about the album, he says the plan is simply to "capitalize on the brand that is Kenny Rogers and maximize the value of his legend" without dwelling on past successes. "It's about today," Dungan says of the project.

Rogers says of Capitol, "They have a vested interest, and they're going to do their best to make me successful."
Much of the material on the quirky "Show Your Bones" is more intimate and, at times, tentative. Building off the success of the unexpected modern rock hit "Maps," the band shows off its sensitive side with "Cheated Hearts" and the Chrisise Yndee-meets-Sonic Youth standout "Dudley." There are flashes of the old swagger on tracks like "Phenomena" (with its nod to Liquid Liquid's immortal "Cavern") and "Honeymoon." But the album's heart lies in organic rockers that build off acoustic instrumentation, the first single "Gold Lion" among them. The formula is not as immediately thrilling, but it ages well — BG

**LOST TIGRES DEL NORTE**

*Historias Que Contar* 
Producers: Los Tigres del Norte 
Release Date: April 4

Los Tigres del Norte are not only a top-notch group, but a great vehicle for storytelling. "Historias Que Contar," the group deviates from its tradition of mixing corridos (or stories) with romantic and dance fare, delivering instead a corrido-only album on an array of topics. There are cautionary tales, like "Le Compré la Muerte a Mi Hijo:" about a father who buys his son a fast car only to see him crash and die. "Locura," about a father-son reunion spurred by a radio DJ. This is unabashed populism, but Los Tigres, who epitomize popular culture, get away with it. There is also a hymn tinged with social satire. "Regalo Caro" (Expensive Gift) calls out brown-nosers and "El Vestido" is a hysteric tale of Vice. Rewarding careful listeners, this is arguably Los Tigres' best work in five years — LC

**CHRIS RICE**

*When Did You Fall (In Love With Me)* (3:35) 
Producers: Monroe Jones, Ken Lewis 
Writer: C. Rice 
Publisher: Clumsy Fly, ASCAP

Kevin Michael Smith, is mounting AC radio with a song the format can claim as its own. From the must-have "Amusing." — CT

**DIXIE CHICKS**

*Ready to Make Nice* (3:35) 
Producer: Rick Rubin 
Writers: Robin/ Maguire, Maines, Williams 
Publisher: not listed

Wide Open/Columbia (CD promo) 
Dixie Chicks' lead Natalie Maines has never been the type to duck her hat, but after an avalanche of combative censure of the trio at country radio following her 2003 criticism of President Bush, one might expect the Chicks' return to avoid ruffling feathers. Nothing does. "Ready to Make Nice" responds to Maines' hurt and disbelief over the uproar: "They say time heals everything, but I'm still waiting/Im as mad as hell, can't bring myself to do what it is you think I should." The melancholy anthem, produced by Rick Rubin, is beautifully layered, melodically crafty and refreshingly imageless. Song is simultaneously taking the song to adult top 40. AC and country. Across all platforms, this is among the major releases of 2006 — CT

**HIP-HOP**

*T.I.* 
King 
Producers: various 
Label: Grand Hustle/Atlantic 
Release Date: March 28

It happens to be the best of them: Artists get stuck in a rut and fail to evolve beyond their comfort zone. Such is the case on T.I.'s fourth album, "King," timed to coincide with the release of his feature film debut, "ATL." This is mostly an uptempo set that follows the "If It Aint Broke" formula. Here, T.I. shows he can still dominate a song given quality production (Just Blaze, DJ Toomp), but the album does little to build on what we have heard before. Many tracks ("King Back," "Told You So") resemblelead single "Whatever You Know," a brag-attention that reinforces his superiority. Sprinkled in are rap ballads ("Live in the Sky" featuring Jamie Fox) and scenario-driven cuts ("Why You Wanna"). Nobody is expecting a completely new and different sound from T.I., but for an artist of his caliber, a little creative growth does not seem like too much to ask. — CW

*E-40* 
My Ghetto Report Card 
Producers: various 
Writer: Sick Wid It/BME/Warner Bros. 
Release Date: March 14

Few MCs carry an entire genre on their back, but Northern California lyricist E-40 has been preparing for "My Ghetto Report Card" since his 1994 debut. The set is the mainstream introduction to the Bay Area's hypermovement, a blend of dancing, cars and ostentatious slang. Thankfully tracks like "Gouda" explain words like "scilla" and "yaper" (each means money) while 40 limberly jumps around beats with his trademark speed-rapping. Bay Area producer Rick Rock created five tracks, including the standout "You Are" featuring a loop from Digable Planets' "All Night Long." Lil Jon steps back from crank to helm eight tunes, including the crossover single "Tell Me When to Go." With a decade of experience, E-40 finally seems primed for recognition of his oft-poached, singling creations. — NC

**COUNTRY**

TIM McGRAW 
Greatest Hits Volume 2 
Producers: various 
Label: Curb 
Release Date: March 28

During the course of 12 years and nine albums, the breadth and depth of McGraw's material has grown significantly as demonstrated by the 16 cuts on this hits compilation. The album contains four new songs, all potential hits. The sweaty personal "My Little Girl" is culled from the upcoming film "My Friend Flicka," while the observant "Beautiful People" is a heartfelt antithesis of Marilyn Monroe's song of the same name. Better is the empathetic anthem "I've Got Friends That Don." But best of the new stuff is McGraw's well-rendered take on Ryan Adams' "When the Stars Go Blue," showcasing surprising range and the insights that have served him so well. Songs like the abortion-themed "Red Rag Top" and the Nelly collaboration "Over and Over" prove McGraw is not afraid to take risks, and, as ever, the risks are paying off. — RW

**PEOPLE IN PLANES**

*As Far as the Eye Can See* 
Producers: Sam Williams 
Label: Wind-up Records 
Release Date: March 28

Teen-themed rock outfit People in Planes whirls heavy riffs, hounding melodies and hypnotic grooves into classic-sounding tunes that are catchy, creative and, on occasion, sensational. Opener "Barefoot Gourmand" leads out with a jaggied blues riff, the single "If You Talk Too Much (My Head Will Explode)" is as fantastic as its title. Most of the 12 songs are multipart rock anthems with wildly atmospheric interludes. Even the power ballad "Falling by the Wayside" and the trip-hop-inspired "Rush" cleverly balance melodic guest and experimental flight. Soaking up Thom Yorke's paranoia and Chris Cornell's power into a voice that is uniquely his own, singer Garrett Jones could be the next big rock star. Rock fans hungry for more complex sounds, but unwilling to give up melody, should board this plane immediately — SP

**ATREYU**

A Death-Grip on Yesterday 
Producers: Atreyu, Josh Abraham 
Label: Victory 
Release Date: March 28

A Death-Grip on Yesterday" is like a colossal beast that has been rudely awakened from slumber, roaring indignantly at the disturbance. Its running time also mimics a temper tantrum: brief, but brutal. Some of the monster's inflation can be blamed on its ex-girlfriend. According to the throat-ripping screams of Alex Varkatzas and the more reasonable shouts of drummer Brandon Saller and bassist Matt McKinnon, this barly "fear and war," as referred to on the driving "My Fork in the Road," could have been better left as a drunken one-night stand (the epic "Ex's and Oh's"). Instead, during the course of the furious "Our Sick Story," she became a two-timer ("Are you thinking of me?/With your lips pressed tightly up against his head"). Elsewhere, Atreyu sustains the blistering pace on tracks like "We Stand Up," "Your Private War," and "Untitled Finale."

**JAZZ**

GERALD ALBRIGHT 
New Beginnings 
Producers: various 
Label: Peak Records 
Release Date: March 28

After a recent stint with GRP, in-demand sax man Albright recruits name brands like Chris Botti, Jeff Lorber and Patrice Rushen for this tasty continued on psp46

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Take on the much-maligned smooth jazz genre. Albright and Lorber get right to the heart of things on opening track “We Got the Groove” while subsequent original cuts like the title track, “I Need You” (with taking the keyboardist, Chuckki Booker) and the rollicking “Big Shoes” provide sound evidence that smooth jazz can still be a creative force. Albright’s version of the Whispers’ “R&B hit “And the Beat Goes On” does veer more toward the Muzak side of the meter. But he immediately commands attention with his mesmerizing version of “Georgia On My Mind,” an encore staple of his live shows (first recorded on his 1991 set “Live at Birdland West”). Albright does not just play the sax—he makes it talk. —GM

LAUD

NOELIA

40 Grados

Producers: various

Televista/EMI

Release Date: March 7

The rejuvenated foray into reggaeton, Puerto Rican singer Noelía returns to the spotlight with a youth-oriented, singles-filled pop album, indicating she wants to reclaim her original, more lighthearted audience. While there are plenty of ballads, this sound is devoid of sobs and big on rock edges, sometimes even reminiscent of Pat Benatar (on opener “Dinamita”). Elsewhere, tracks like “Enamorada de Ti” lead to the dancefloor with anthemic choruses. All of this marks a smart approach for a singer whose sweet voice has often sounded out of place in more old-fashioned pop. While the single is the safer “Como Duele” (a soap opera title track), much better is the beautiful and distinct “Sentimiento,” adorned with scratchy and quasi-rapping. —LC

WORLD

MARTA GÓMEZ

Entre Cada Palabra

Producers: Julio Santillán, David Chesky

Chesky

Release Date: March 28

Recorded live, sans overdubs, at St. Peter’s Church in New York by audiophile label Chesky, “Entre Cada Palabra” is a grace personified. Born in Colombia and schooled at Berklee College of Music, Gomez sings with a quiet, passionate radiance in an austere, largely acoustic instrumental setting of wafting flute lines, clapped rhythms, percussive and bright-stringed guitars. The story-song numbers are woven around which are Gomez originals and all sung in Spanish—are melodic gems informed by a range of South American folkloric music, with highlights including the flamenco-infused, flute-drenched “Mar Adentro, Despacio,” the Colombo-Israeli duet “Esta Linda la Mar” featuring the gorgeous interplay between Gomez’s voice and guest Anah A Cohen’s clarinet, and the reflective balladic rendering of the classic Mexican ranchera “Cielito Lindo.” —DO

CHARANGA CKAWEK

Chicano Zen

Producers: Michael Ramos Tejóka

Release Date: March 28

Michael Ramos, the inspired mind behind Charanga Cawekwak, is an Austin musician who clearly feels the pull of tradition as vividly as he experiences the robust music scene of that town. The tracks on “Chicano Zen” are in touch with conjuntos, garage rock, Tejano, lounge, cumbia and ranchera. He is also working with some major talent including David Garza, Lila Downs, Patty Griffin, Rubén Ramos and Ceilo Duarte. Sweet tunes include “La Miga Hormiga,” a song Ramos and Downs wrote and sing about an ant with great work ethic and “La Mimoso,” a Ramos original with an excellent hill factor that features Garza on guitar and vocal. Also make note of two special instrumentalists: “El Balaod de Su Casa con el Habano” and “Gloria.” —PV

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

TEDDY GEIGER

Underage Thinking

Producer: Billy Mann

Release Date: March 21

Singer/songwriter Teddy Geiger is often compared to John Mayer because of his intimate vocals and soulful pop songs. But the doe-eyed 17-year-old is already forging his own path (and has been featured playing a variation of himself on CBS’ short-lived TV show Love Monkey). For “You I Will” (Confidence), the lead single from Geiger’s debut album Underage Thinking is No. 31 on the Pop 100 this issue, and there are certainly more hits to come. With the help of producer Billy Mann (Pink, Jessica Simpson), the album is check-upping on good pop goodness, especially the tracks “These Walls,” “Night Air” and “Seven Days Without You.” —KK

COUNTRY

DANIELLE PECK

Findin’ a Good Man (3:09)

Producer: Jeremy Stover Writers: J. Stover, B.D. Maher

Publishers: various

Big Machine (CD promo)

Almost any female artist worth her record deal could benefit from a single that finds itself on an airplay hit list. But if there’s anyone that could appreciate the hard-edged expression of those sentiments, it is a tough song with great chops all around. —CT

DANCE

JIMMY JAMES

Fashionista (3:28)

Producer: Markus Moser

Publishers: various

Knotel, Knebel, Moser

Remixers: Frank Bailey, Marcelo Castelli, Nick Teranova

Made Records (CD single)

Once in a great while, a camp anthem Sullivan’s way outside of the gay club into the pop/culture world at large (à la RuPaul’s Supermodel)!”

“Fashionista,” by veteran New York performance artist Jimmy James, is so damn clever, it’s hard not to offer a howling squeal of approval before clicking replay—again and again. Particularly memorable is James’ “Vogue”–like rant: "Jean John, Calvin Klein, Donna Karan’s fashion line/Valentino, YSL... Ferragamo/sorbet of the lips/ Halston, Gucci, Fiorucci, don’t forget my Pucci..." Now that is some rhyming. The song’s proud subliminal Moser of the “Rapture” fame, is obviously homage to the high-fashion artist, but James ends up panning his own runway with originality and enough grit and quirk to remain as a catchy, bouncy dance diva worthy entry for mainstream approval. —CT
iTunes, Wal-Mart Aid 'High School Musical' Encore

On March 14, Disney Channel’s “High School Musical” became the first full-length movie to be sold via digital download when it went on sale at Apple’s iTunes Music Store for $9.99.

Only time will tell what historical implications that event could represent to the field of TV or digital distribution, but one of the immediate dividends appears to be the release trip to No. 1 for the “High School Musical” soundtrack on The Billboard 200.

The made-for-TV film did not appear on Disney Channel during the tracking week that ended March 19, its most recent play prior to that frame being March 10, so it appears the movie’s digital sales launch helped pave the album’s way to the top of the chart.

While most music videos and episodes of half-hour or hour-long TV shows sold on iTunes cost $1.99, the “High School Musical” movie download carries a $9.99 tag. Even with the higher price, it ranked third among videos sold by iTunes at press time.

Digital sales have been meaningful to the soundtrack, too, accounting for 8.6% of the 122,000 copies sold to date. However, as the album has become more readily stocked in stores, the share represented by downloads diminished, accounting for just 2% of the week’s total.

No doubt a $9.72 sale price at Wal-Mart contributed to the soundtrack’s 3% gain. Consequently, the mass-merchant segment realizes a 9% lift over prior-week sales (95,000 copies). Department stores own 66% of the current total, compared with 62% a week ago.

The soundtrack is one of the music industry’s biggest surprises from first quarter 2006, and its relentless growth only adds to its awe. Not only has the “Musical” album continued to reach higher sums in each week since it first led the big chart—a distinction very few chart-topping albums can claim—but it has literally grown every single week since it hit stores Jan. 10.

That streak should continue for at least one more week. Disney Channel is scheduled to repeat the movie two more times in the tracking period that ends March 26, activity that next issue’s charts will reflect.

TWICE THE PANIC: Not one, but two songs drive Panic! at the Disco, which this week parlay a 2% sales spike into a 41.29 leap on The Billboard 200.

Its “A Fever You Can’t Sweat Out” thus achieves not only its best rank to date, but also its biggest sales week: 29,000. Prior peaks were No. 39, in the Feb. 11 issue, and the 23,000 units that were registered by last issue’s chart.

For once, we see a robust chart jump that does not seem tied to discount pricing. Panic’s album was not featured in any of the price-driven channels during the tracking week, so it was not significantly discounted by any of the conventional music channels whose ads are tracked by Billboard’s charts department.

EYES SMILING: If you are wondering why Celtic Woman wins The Billboard 200’s Pacesetter trophy with a 9% spike, then I figure you were not among those seeking Irish-themed pubs on March 17.

St. Patrick’s Day delivers a fit each year to Irish music, best-seen on Top World Albums at billboard.biz. Irish fare owns 11 of the chart’s 15 slots, including the top three, as the list’s hit volume grows by almost 50%.

**Market Watch**

**A Weekly National Music Sales Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEKLY UNIT SALES</th>
<th>OVERALL UNIT SALES</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This Week</strong></td>
<td>10,461,000</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>10,530,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Last Week</strong></td>
<td>10,744,000</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>10,973,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>This Week Last Year</td>
<td>10,913,000</td>
<td>86,000</td>
<td>6,355,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Change</strong></td>
<td>-4.1%</td>
<td>-17.4%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
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**WEEKLY ALBUM SALES**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>35 million units</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>0.15625</td>
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<td>0.078125</td>
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<th>Digital Tracks Sales</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tr>
<td>$62.6 million</td>
<td>122.9 million</td>
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<th>SALES BY ALBUM FORMAT</th>
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<tr>
<td>CD</td>
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<td>Digital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassette</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>118,945,000</td>
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<td>146.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-56.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>-18.0%</td>
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**FORMAT**

- Pop
- Rock
- Alternative
- R&B
- Hip-Hop
- Classical
- Jazz
- Country
- Alternative
- Dance
- Opera
- Classical
- Gospel
- Christian
- World

**For week ending Mar. 19, 2005. Figures are rounded. Consistent from a national sample of retail stores and represent sales reports collected and provided by Nielsen Soundscan.**

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

Geoff Mayfield gmayfield@billboard.com

**Over the Counter**

**WALK OF FAME**

- "Kelly Clarkson's Walk Away" advances 37 to No. 40 Adult Top 40. She thus becomes the first artist/off place five top 10s from the same album at that format since the chart launched to yeoaguru in Billboard Radio Monitor.

**UNLIMITED**

- "It's Always You" by Aaliyah scores her first No. 1 in Billboard and her best Nielsen Soundscan week at No. 1. "I'll Never Love Again" rings the bell on Top Gospel Albums with 18,000 sold. The album also represents her best rank on The Billboard 200 (No. 60).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Peak Position</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>JAMES BLUNT</td>
<td>Back To Bedlam</td>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>JAVIER COLLEZ</td>
<td>The Life Of A Young Boy</td>
<td>Universal</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>JAMES BOYCE</td>
<td>The Boy</td>
<td>Nothing</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint 2: Collision Course</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
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<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint 3</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
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<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint 4</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
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<td>JAY-Z</td>
<td>The Blueprint 5</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
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<td>The Blueprint 7</td>
<td>Roc-A-Fella</td>
<td>10</td>
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**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX**

- JAMES BLUNT
- JAVIER COLLEZ
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA

**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX (cont.)**

- JAY-SO
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
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- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA

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- JAY-Z
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- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
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**THE BILLBOARD 200 ARTIST INDEX (cont.)**

- JAY-Z
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- JAY-Z
- ROC-A-FELLA
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- ROC-A-FELLA
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<td>1. <strong>You're Beautiful</strong></td>
<td>James Blunt</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. <strong>You Me</strong></td>
<td>Beyoncé Feat. <strong>Check</strong></td>
<td>Jive/Zomba</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Dance, Dance</strong></td>
<td>Chamillionaire</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Lean Wit It, Rock Wit It</strong></td>
<td>Lil' Fizz</td>
<td>Def Jam</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. <strong>What Hurts the Most</strong></td>
<td>The All-American Rejects</td>
<td>Decaydance Fuel</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. <strong>The Way You Look Tonight</strong></td>
<td>Digital Winter</td>
<td>Derrty/Fontreal</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Perfect Situation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. <strong>Again and Again</strong></td>
<td>Anthony Hamilton</td>
<td>So Def</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. <strong>Numb</strong></td>
<td>Linkin Park</td>
<td>Warner Bros</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. <strong>World Without a Crown</strong></td>
<td>Nine Inch Nails</td>
<td>Interscope</td>
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<td>Roc Nation</td>
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Data for week of APRIL 1, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 51
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Label</th>
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<td>You're Beautiful</td>
<td>Jordin Sparks</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
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<td>Bad Day</td>
<td>Joss Stone</td>
<td>Atlantic</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>I'm N Luv (Upstairs)</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>JIVE/ZOMBA</td>
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<td>Everything We Touch</td>
<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
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<td>I'm Not Missing</td>
<td>Adam Lambert</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
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<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Pink</td>
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<td>My Humps</td>
<td>Brandy</td>
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<td>Romeo</td>
<td>Bow Wow</td>
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<td>Interscope</td>
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<td>We All In This Together</td>
<td>Ginuwine</td>
<td>Jive/zomba</td>
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<td>Irv Gotti</td>
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<td>Touch It</td>
<td>Bad Boy</td>
<td>Jive/zomba</td>
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<td>I Am Coming</td>
<td>Lil' Mo</td>
<td>Jive/zomba</td>
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<td>Inside Your Heaven/Account</td>
<td>Toccara</td>
<td>DreamWorks Records</td>
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<td>Lil' Mo</td>
<td>Jive/zomba</td>
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### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

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<td>The Home Stretch</td>
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<td>Jive</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td>Jive</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>In My Mind</td>
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<td>Tha Carter II</td>
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<td>Rappin' Telli Sanga</td>
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<td>Most Known Unknown</td>
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<td>Hustle &amp; Flow</td>
<td>Juelz Santana</td>
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<td>Africa Unite: The Singles Collection</td>
<td>Bob Marley &amp; The Wailers</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Rich Or Die Tryin'</td>
<td>Bob Marley &amp; The Wailers</td>
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<td>Charlie Wilson</td>
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<td>Get Lifted</td>
<td>John Legend</td>
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<td>I Gotta Make It</td>
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### Top Rap Albums

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<td>The Gospel</td>
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<td>Money Is Still A Major Issue</td>
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### Lil Jon Lifts E-40's Grades

Lil Jon's jive on "Tell Me When to Go" grants E-40 his first top 10 on the R&B/Hip-Hop chart. Lil Jon's magic on "Tell Me When to Go" grants E-40's first top 10 on the R&B/Hip-Hop chart (11-10) and first entry on The Billboard Hot 100 in 11 years. MTM pushed the album with "My Block: The Bazaar," featuring E-40 and other San Francisco artists. —Raphael George

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[go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data]
## R&B/HIP-HOP Airplay

### HOT R&B/HIP-HOP AIRPLAY

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<td>HOUSE OF MUSIC</td>
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### R&B/HIP-HOP Singles Sales

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### RHYTHMIC AIRPLAY

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<td>A&amp;M</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>J BLACK</td>
<td>DEE</td>
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<td>LOVE</td>
<td>illas</td>
<td>RUTHLESS</td>
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### ADULT R&B

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### HOT COUNTRY SONGS

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<td>Bon Jovi feat. Jennifer Nettles</td>
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<td>NOBODY BUT ME</td>
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<td>Brad Paisley feat. Dolly Parton</td>
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<td>RN / TAMBAH</td>
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### Don't miss another important COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE


Billboard Radio Monitor.com

**HOT COUNTRY SONGS:** 513 country stations are electronically monitored by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Airplay awarded to songs appearing in the top 20 on both the BDS Airplay and Audience charts for the last week with increases in both detections and audience. © 2006 Billboard Business Media, Inc. All rights reserved.

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ALL CHARTS: See Chart Legend for rules and explanations.

**PAISLEY’S ‘WORLD’ IN A GOOD PLACE**

Fresh off a No. 1 single with “When I Get Where I’m Going,” Brad Paisley logs a new career-high debut with “The World,” which grabs Hot Shot Debut applause at No. 37.

The track begins its run on Hot Country Songs with spins at 83 monitored stations (3.1 million audience impressions). The third single from Paisley’s “Time Well Wasted” tops his previous best starts, a pair of songs that both weighed in at No. 48. "Two People Fell in Love" (2001) and “Whiskey Lullaby” (2004). Paisley’s is the fourth track to bow inside the top 40 this year, preceded by Rascal Flatts’ "What Hurts the Most" (No. 33), Tim McGraw’s "When the Stars Go Blue" (No. 33) and Garth Brooks & Trisha Yearwood’s "Love Will Always Win" (No. 36).

By this time last year, the only track that posted such a lofty debut was Toby Keith’s "HonkyTonk University," which checked in at No. 30 in the Feb. 12, 2005, issue. — Wade Jessen
HOT LATIN SONGS

1. **Llame Pa' Verde**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   -province: Miami, FL
   - Highest Position: 1

2. **Rompe**
   - Artist: Daddy Yankee
   - Highest Position: 2

3. **Qué Vida La Mia**
   - Artist: J Alvarez
   - Highest Position: 3

4. **Te Contrasbando**
   - Artist: Fito Blanko
   - Highest Position: 4

5. **La Estación**
   - Artist: Olga Tañón
   - Highest Position: 5

6. **Viva El Amor**
   - Artist: Grupo Montes De Ouro
   - Highest Position: 6

7. **Por Que Te Quiero**
   - Artist: Nueve de Octubre
   - Highest Position: 7

8. **Te Quiero, Te Me Llorado**
   - Artist: ChocQuibTown
   - Highest Position: 8

9. **Y Al Yo**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 9

10. **Si Te Oigo**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 10

11. **Despacio**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 11

12. **Más Capaces Que**
    - Artist: Christian Castro
    - Highest Position: 12

13. **Comienza Tu Dolor**
    - Artist: Shiny Dapers
    - Highest Position: 13

14. **No Se Me Pueden Hacer**
    - Artist: Yandel
    - Highest Position: 14

15. **No Te Aparates De Mi**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 15

16. **Amor**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 16

17. **La Tierra**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 17

18. **Que Yo Hacer Con Mi Amor**
    - Artist: Cecilia Echeverry
    - Highest Position: 18

19. **Dime Que**
    - Artist: Nueve de Octubre
    - Highest Position: 19

20. **Soy Diferente**
    - Artist: Mónica
    - Highest Position: 20

21. **En Presencia Del Futuro**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 21

22. **Por Mi**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 22

23. **Dejame En Paz**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 23

24. **En El Amor**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 24

25. **Mi Tierra**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 25

26. **El Chichichihuate**
    - Artist: La Pluma Negra
    - Highest Position: 26

27. **Rebelión**
    - Artist: Nueve de Octubre
    - Highest Position: 27

28. **Ama**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 28

29. **Echame La Culpa**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 29

30. **EL MIO**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 30

Top Latin Albums

1. **Dejame En Paz**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 1

2. **En El Amor**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 2

3. **Mi Tierra**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 3

4. **El Chichichihuate**
   - Artist: La Pluma Negra
   - Highest Position: 4

5. **Rebelión**
   - Artist: Nueve de Octubre
   - Highest Position: 5

6. **Ama**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 6

7. **Echame La Culpa**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 7

8. **EL MIO**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 8

9. **Dejame En Paz**
   - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
   - Highest Position: 9

10. **En El Amor**
    - Artist: Wisin & Yandel
    - Highest Position: 10

Go to [www.billboard.biz](http://www.billboard.biz) for complete chart data
### LATIN AIRPLAY

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### LATIN ALBUMS

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Data for week of APRIL 1, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633 | Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data | 59
**JAPAN**

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<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 21, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(MegaCharts Japan)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNITED KINGDOM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 19, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(One Official UK Chart)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GERMANY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 21, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(MEGA CHARTS)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FRANCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 21, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(MEGACHARTS)</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AUSTRALIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 19, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(AUSTRALIAN HOT 100)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**CANADA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
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<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>April 1, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(COCHISCAN)</td>
<td>23</td>
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**ITALY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 20, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(_EDEFAULTENDERLO)</td>
<td>10</td>
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**SPAIN**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 22, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(PESCADO-MEDIO)</td>
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**THE NETHERLANDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 20, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(MEGA CHARTS)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**AUSTRIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 20, 2005</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**PORTUGAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>Albums</td>
<td></td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DENMARK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 20, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(OFFICIAL DENMARK)</td>
<td>18</td>
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**GREECE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td></td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(GREECE)</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NORWAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Singles</td>
<td>March 20, 2006</td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(NORIDITRAKTS)</td>
<td>19</td>
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</tbody>
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**AUSTRALIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Chart</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Hits of the World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Albums</td>
<td></td>
<td>Billboard</td>
<td>(AUSTRALIAN TOP 40)</td>
<td>1</td>
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**TOP JAZZ**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE &amp; SUBTITLE</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>MICHAEL BUBLE</strong></td>
<td><em>CHRISS BOTTI &amp; FRIENDS</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>MARTIN BUBLE</strong></td>
<td><em>CHRIS BOTTI &amp; FRIENDS</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>LEONARDO MONK</strong></td>
<td><em>CHRIS BOTTI &amp; FRIENDS</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>MARTIN BUBLE</strong></td>
<td><em>CHRIS BOTTI &amp; FRIENDS</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>LEONARDO MONK</strong></td>
<td><em>CHRIS BOTTI &amp; FRIENDS</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
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</table>

**TOP CLASSICAL CROSSOVER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE &amp; SUBTITLE</th>
<th>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>ANDRE RIEU</strong></td>
<td><em>LOVE STORY</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>ANDRE RIEU</strong></td>
<td><em>LOVE STORY</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>ANDRE RIEU</strong></td>
<td><em>LOVE STORY</em></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>ANDRE RIEU</strong></td>
<td><em>LOVE STORY</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>ANDRE RIEU</strong></td>
<td><em>LOVE STORY</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
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**RADIO AIRPLAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>TITLE &amp; SUBTITLE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>SADIE SCIRE</strong></td>
<td><em>HOLY MARY</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td><em>HOLY MARY</em></td>
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**SALES DATA DATED BY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ARTIST</th>
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<th>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>MICHAEL BUBLE</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><em>CHRIS BOTTI &amp; FRIENDS</em></td>
<td>DISTRIBUTING LABEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data for week of April 1, 2006 | For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

www.americanradiohistory.com
ALBUM CHARTS

Sales data compiled from a comprehensive pool of U.S. music merchants by Nielsen SoundScan. Sales data for R&B/Hip-Hop retail charts is compiled by Nielsen SoundScan from a national sample of core stores that specialize in those genres.

- Albums with the greatest sales gains this week
- Indicates albums entered top 100 of The Billboard 200
- Has been removed from Heatseekers chart.

- CD/Cassette prices are suggested list or equivalent prices, which are projected from wholesale prices. After prices indicate album only available on DualDisc. CD/Cassette prices include CD/DVD Combo available. * indicates vinyl LP is available. Pricing and vinyl LP availability are not included on all charts.

SINGLES CHARTS

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

- Current singles are on the Hot 100 and Hot 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the Hot 100 for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Sales 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 Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Singles & Tracks for more than 20 weeks and rank below 50. Songs are removed from the Pop 100 and Pop 100 Airplay charts simultaneously if they have been on the charts for more than 30 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 40. Titles are removed from Hot Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Adult R&B, and R&B Dance Airplay charts if they have been on the chart for more than 20 weeks and rank below 10 for Modern Rock and Latin (or if they have been on the chart for more than 2 weeks and below 10.

SINGLES SALES CHARTS

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

CONFIGURATION
- Single containing 2 songs or more.
- Digital Video Download available.
- Vinyl single available.
- CD Maxi-Single available.
- Single containing 2 songs or more.

HIT PREDICTOR

Hittweakers indicate title named Hitwweakers status in the specific format as mentioned on the chart. For the R&B/Pop category, the R&B/Hip-Hop category, and the R&B Airplay category, the R&B/Hip-Hop category, and the R&B Dance Airplay category, the R&B Hairplay category, and the R&B Dance Airplay category, the R&B Hairplay category, and the R&B Dance Airplay category.

DANCE CLUB PLAY

Compiled from a national sample of reports from club DJs.

DANCE BLOG CONTEST

- Features the greatest dancer improvement over the previous week.

ALBUM CHARTS

- Recording Industry Assn. of America (RIAA) certification for net shipment of 500,000 albums (Gold).
- RIAA certification for net shipment of 1 million units (Platinum).
- RIAA certification for net shipment of 10 million units (Diamond).

SINGLES CHARTS

- RIAA certification for 100,000 paid downloads (Gold).
- RIAA certification for 200,000 paid downloads (Platinum).

MUSIC VIDEO SALES CHARTS

- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 25,000 videos.
- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 videos.
- RIAA platinum certification for net shipment of 100,000 videos.

DVD SALES/VHS SALES/DVD RENTALS

- RIAA gold certification for net shipment of 50,000 units or 50,000 units at suggested retail price. RIAA platinum certification for net shipment of 100,000 units or $2 million in sales at suggested retail price. RIAA gold certification for a minimum sale of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of $9 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or at least 25,000 units and $1 million at suggested retail for non-theatrical titles.

SOUNDTRACKS

- CD/DVD combo available. * indicates vinyl LP is available. Pricing and vinyl LP availability are not included on all charts.

TOP DIGITAL

Sales data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan.

HOT GOSPEL SONGS

- Features the greatest sales gains over the previous week.
Join Billboard at this must-attend event, attracting an international and domestic contingency to discuss the latest trends in dance/electronic music.

**Lucky 13!** Now in its 13th year, the Billboard Dance Music Summit is moving to VEGAS and will be part of a city-wide Dance Music Festival – Life by Night! Summit badgeholders will be admitted to the hottest exclusive parties in town! Stay tuned for more details...

**Reserve your slot now & play it in Vegas!**
- by 7/21 $199
- before 8/25 $249
- after 8/25 $299

**Highlights:**
- 4 nights of Exclusive Billboard parties at Vegas’ hottest clubs
- 3 days of informative discussions with industry gurus
- Networking events
- Billboard DJ Meet-a-Greet
- Free Subscription to Billboard magazine with paid registration

"The Billboard music conference is a seminal event in dance music. It is a fantastic place for our community to socialize and network. I have made and maintained many important friendships there. — BT, Binary Acoustics"

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- **Registrations** Kelly Peppers • 646.654.4643
- **Sponsorships** Karl Vontz • 415.738.0745
- **Hotel** Palms Casino Resort • 866.725.6773

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VNU Business Media publishes over 44 business publications, stages over 60 trade shows and 70 conferences and operates more than 150 business-to-business electronic products. We operate around the globe, covering some of the most powerful industries in the world in entertainment, marketing, media and travel. Some of our brands include Billboard, Adweek, The Hollywood Reporter, National Jockey and Architect.

We currently have rewarding career opportunities for experienced professionals to join Billboard.

**Account Manager, Online Advertising**

This New York based position will oversee all Billboard online accounts, ensure effective and efficient turn-around of RFP's to field sellers, proactively push Billboard online programs to sellers and interactive agencies, keep sales reps up-to-date on Billboard.com extensions (VOD, mobile, e-commerce) and applications.

The Account Manager will function as a "daily specialist" for the field force and make face-to-face calls (solo or jointly). Maintain and grow business relationships with top decision makers in interactive agencies through interactive meetings, phone and e-mail contact.

Develop ideas for special Billboard print issues and Billboard.com by identifying and developing business opportunities, events and programs that occur in and around "music-platformed" clients.

Generate weekly report on sales activities and prospects for the upcoming 90 days.

Create customized powerpoint presentations for key client meetings.

**Education/Experience/Skills:**

College graduate strongly preferred. At least two years solid advertising sales experience with online and integrated media sales required. Must have robust understanding of online advertising market. Strong knowledge of interactive sales (tools, RFP deliverables, strategy) a must.

Please email resume and cover letter indicating which position you are interested in and including salary requirements to: billboard@vnubusinessmedia.com. Please visit our website: www.vnubusinessmedia.com

**Event Sponsorship Sales Manager**

This New York based position will work with the Director of Sponsorship to generate new sales revenue for Billboard Events. We are seeking someone who is a strong sales person with proven success in making major sales presentations, developing agreements and executing sponsor deliverables, and cultivating relationships with high-level clients.

Qualified candidates must have 3 to 5 years of sales experience, preferably in the event or music industry. A college degree in a relevant area of study is required. Travel required within the U.S. Events are currently held in Miami, Atlanta, LA, and New York.

**Marketing & Brand Manager**

In this exciting New York based role you will be primarily responsible for managing the overall brand essence as it relates to Billboard and Billboard Radio Monitor. You will work with the Promotions/Manager on the creative development, production and implementation of all promotional collateral, including media kits, brochures, turf cards, house ads, our websites, direct mail packages, trade show flyers and other materials. In addition, you will work with the Creative Director Marketing and Brand Development on sales proposals and presentations, managing sponsor deliverables and collateral, and exploring new business opportunities.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 3-5 years of creative management experience in Newspaper/Magazine Publishing, or at a Creative Agency/Design Firm/Publicity Firm required. Knowledge of digital and e-media platforms preferred. Some exposure to the entertainment industry preferred but not required. A degree in a relevant area of study is necessary.

Please send resume and a cover letter indicating which position you are interested in and including salary requirements to: billboard@vnubusinessmedia.com.

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

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New York, Long Island,
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**Issue Date:** May 13
**Ad Close:** April 18
**Materials Deadline:** April 24

For advertising contact:
Arkady Fridman
af@billboardcm.com
646-654-4636

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9374 BEVERLY CREST DRIVE $9,450,000

BHPO. Stunning 5bd/5.5ba custom bit home w/ panoramic city & ocean views. Dramatic Infinite pool w/ spa. See www.beverlyvskristalestate.com
Valentino/Pelea 310.786.1833

PAUL WILLIAMS COLONIAL $3,450,000

Posin/Placia 323.671.2316

2192 BANYAN DRIVE $2,540,000

Brentwood. Iagant! 7bd/7ba+loft+3 car ggt! W/ sweeping vws. 4bd, fam-den. Expansive remodel w/ finest finished. Gmt kitchen, large yard
Michael Greenwald 310.481.4300

12317 ROCHEDALE LANE $2,349,000

Brentwood. Pft trees w/ vws. 3bd/4.5ba updated w/ style & polish. Gfkit, elegt mtst b/r, lush lns, den & kitch.
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SANTA YNEZ VALLEY GETAWAY $2,195,000

Sweeping vineyard & mtn views compliment the inmaculate ranch on 5.2 +/-. 3bd/2ba main home, 2bd manager’s quarters and more.
Lyne Moore 805.680.0275

3405 GLENALBYN DRIVE $1,186,000

M_BHPO. Contemporary w/ classic details. Mnt views. Updated &休み w/ new hrdw & mm. Large yard w/ fpl & deck.
Karen Lower 323.804.8043

1441 MONTGOMERY AVENUE $829,000

Gated, restored Spanish/medieval. With: 3bd/2ba, hwd flrs & over 1600sf, it’s the perfect blend of charm & elegance.
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569 WOOD AND ROAD $2,680,000

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Samantha Cooper 310.255.5411

18429 CLIFFTOP WAY $1,840,000

Pacific Palisades. Upgraded 4bd rm w/ mtn vws, brns rm, gt rm, bamboo flrs, prof landscap w/ outftr fire pl, deck, grass yd. Malibu Sch.
Kirshner/O'Brien 310.260.8230
| BIRTHS | BOY: Henry Thompson to Sharon and David Wykoff, Jan. 4 in Nashville. Father is an entertainment lawyer and a former contributor to Billboard. 

| DEATHS | Professor X. 49 of spinal meningitis, March 17 in New York. Born Lumumba Carson, the Brooklyn MC was best-known for his part in 1990s hip-hop group the X-Clan. X-Clan found an audience among Afrocentric hip-hop fans with its 1990 Polydor debut release, “To the East, Blackwards.” The group’s second and final album, “Xodus,” reached No. 1 on Billboard’s Top R&B Hip-Hop albums chart in 1992. Within the group, Carson’s character was that of a cosmic narrator. It was his signature to open X-Clan’s songs with the lines: “Vagabond/This is protected by the Red, the Black and the Green with a key, siisy!” 

| Industry Events | 

| April 3 | Juno Awards, Halifax (Nova Scotia) Metro Centre. junowards.ca. 


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**Mileposts**
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**Profile:**
- Boy: Tyler Lee to Talinda and Chester Bennington, March 16 in Los Angeles. Father is a vocalist for Linkin Park.

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**身亡**
- King Floyd, 61, of complications from a stroke and diabetes, March 6 in his native New Orleans. The singer/songwriter is best remembered for his 1970 hit “Groove Me,” which reached No. 1 on Billboard’s R&B singles chart and No. 6 on the Hot 100. The song, which he wrote, was initially released on Chessville and later picked up and promoted nationally by Atlantic Records. Following stints singing with the house band at the Shoo-Bar on Bourbon Street in New Orleans and serving in the Army, Floyd moved to the West Coast where he met Harold Battiste. A New Orleans compatriot, Battiste produced Floyd’s debut album, “A Man in Love.” When that project did not click with consumers, Floyd returned to New Orleans in 1969 and began working in the post office. A year after that he teamed with R&B arranger Wardell Quezerue and recorded “Groove Me.” Floyd garnered additional R&B chart success in the ’70s with the singles “Baby Let Me Kiss You” (No. 5), “Woman Don’t Go Astray” (No. 3) and “Body English” (No. 25), its last charting single, in 1976. He is survived by his wife Patricia; two daughters; a son; and six grandchildren.

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**Indie Events**
- April 3: Juno Awards, Halifax (Nova Scotia) Metro Centre. junowards.ca.
www.americanradiohistory.com
MAN AT WORK

No Doubt’s Tony Kanal will launch his own Kingsbury Studios label this spring with the debut album from reggae artist Elan. Due May 23, “Together As One” features the Covered’s version of “All Nighter” plus collaborations with Assassin, Tami Chynn, Sly & Robbie, Cutty Rank and Kanal himself, Track can reveal.

Kingsbury Studios is not exclusively distributed by any major, but in the case of Elan’s record, Kanal says, “It was a great match because they have a history of breaking one-of-a-kind, unique artists like him.”

A three-track single led by the Assassin collaboration “Girl” is out now; Elan will be on the road with UB40 this spring. As for Kanal, he says, “In between just starting the new No Doubt record and collaborating with Gwen for her next solo outing, I always have my ears and eyes open for new artists.”

BLOODY BAPTISM

Wasn’t it Franz Ferdinand guitarist Nick McCarthy on Manhattan’s Seventh Avenue one recent frigid night sucking the blood from his hand after cutting his finger on a broken bottle of Scotch? Yes, but the episode was not all that scandalous. McCarthy was parting in the March 20 unveiling of Fuse’s new interactive marquee in midtown Manhattan. He and his Scottish bandmates—singer Alex Kapranos, bassist Bob Hardy and percussionist Paul Thomson—were simply baptizing the music network’s new street-front studio and facade by smashing the bottle over the Fuse sign.

Not realizing he had sliced open one of his fingers in the process, McCarthy continued feverishly clutching the jagged bottle neck. (The man’s fingers may very well have been numb. Like ours.) This did not prevent McCarthy and crew from heading into the Fuse studio to deliver a six-song set to fans. The performance was being taped for Fuse’s “Comp’d” concert series; it premieres March 23.

BEN SHERMAN ROCKS AUSTIN

Fashion brand Ben Sherman was on hand for Filter magazine’s sold-out, March 18 South by Southwest Music and Media Conference afternoon bash at the Cedar Street Courtyard in Austin. In fact, the British fashion empire set up its own lounge within the venue—the better to attire those acts on hand to perform.

Carina Round, so enamored with the Shrimpton jeans she tries on, sported them under her dress for her live performance. Ditto for Subways frontman Billy Lunn, who strutted onstage wearing the lightweight, paneled Rude Boy jacket.

Meanwhile, Track could not help but notice the guys from Amusement Parks on Fire walking away with British Flag Waltz. Back in New York, the Ben Sherman gang is gearing up for a March 30 soiree to celebrate the opening of its first stand-alone U.S. store. The Raveonettes will perform at the invite-only party in the Soho store. Danny Masterson of That “70s Show will play Mr. DJ.

LILLYWHITE’S SUPERCHICK

Grammy Award-winning producer of the year Steve Lillywhite has signed his first act since joining Columbia last fall as senior VP of A&R. Lillywhite has picked up Superchick, a Christian, female-fronted rock band on the Inpop imprint. In May, Columbia will release the group’s Inpop set, “Beauty From Pain,” with a few additional tracks and some remixes. The Inpop version, which came out last spring, has sold 146,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The Superchick signing makes sense to Lillywhite: “I work with the biggest Christian band in the world (U2), so I don’t see any problem or stigma here.”

Lillywhite tells Track that he, like every other A&R exec in the United States, also tried to sign the Arcade Keys. But he, like U.K. media, has decided to stay on Domino for now.

LATIN EXITS

Colombian singer/songwriter Carlos Vives and longtime label EMI have parted ways. Sources close to the negotiations say EMI declined to renew Vives’ contract after failing to come to an agreement over financial terms. One of Latin music’s biggest stars, Vives’ last album failed to live up to sales expectations.

Another act that has split with its label is regional Mexican group Los Tucanes de Tijuana. The group, which was with Universal Music Latino for several years, is now in negotiations with Universal Music Group. Sources say...

SIMPSON WALK(S) WITH CHARLIE

It turns out her boots are made for walkin’—but only to another floor at 550 Madison Ave. Jessica Simpson has followed her Columbia pal, Charlie Walk, over to Epic, where he is now president:

“I love all my friends and supporters at Columbia, I will miss them as I start this new relationship,” the artist exclusively tells Track. “Charlie Walk was my first hero at Columbia. He believed in me before I really even got to meet the rest of the company. I couldn’t think of anyone I would trust more than Charlie to present my new music to the world. Epic is in a new place with a new leader. It just seems the right place for me as I begin my new journey.” Simpson is already at work on her next album, which is scheduled to arrive later this year. In the meantime, a R&B-oriented first single is “not far away at all,” according to a source.

Executive Turntable

EDITED BY SARAH HAN

RECORD COMPANIES: Rhino Entertainment in Los Angeles promotes Kelly Nemes to VP of marketing. He was senior director of marketing.

Roadrunner Records in New York names Dave Bouchard VP of pop promotion. He was director of West Coast promotion. Roadrunner also ups Bob Johnson to VP of product management. He was senior director of marketing.

Vanguard Records/Welk Music Group in Santa Monica, Calif., names Lucy Sabini senior director of media and artist relations. She was president at LucieMedia.

Big Machine Records in Nashville names Penny Lazo national director of sales and marketing. She was divisional country marketing manager at Universal Music & Video.

Downtown Records in New York names Doug Smiley director of marketing and project management. He held the same position at Studio Distribution.

PUBLISHING: BM in New York ups Diane J. Almodovar to VP of writer and publisher relations. She is based in Miami. Almodovar was assistant VP of Latin music.

Cherry Lane Music Publishing in New York elevates Peter Raleigh to director of administration. He was manager of administration.


RELATED FIELDS: The Recording Academy in Santa Monica, Calif., names David Grossman executive VP. He was senior VP of television music at Paramount Pictures Television Group.

Murrays Music president Roger Murrays in Nashville has been elected chairman of the Nashville Songwriters Foundation board of directors.

Flood, Birstead, McGrady & McCarthy in Nashville promotes Betty Sanders to VP/GM. She was director of human resources.

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We are looking for ambitious, creative and highly motivated individuals to fill sales positions. Sales savvy candidates will be in charge of dealing with domestic and foreign record and merchandise retailers, opening alternative and lifestyle accounts along with sales and marketing strategies for our music and merchandise. The ideal candidates will have at least two years experience in music/merchandise sales, strong computer, analytical, communication and people skills. We have a competitive incentive and commission based sales program (salary = base + commission).

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