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Appetite For Destruction

Canadians Have A Taste For P2P; Can A Solution Be Found?

BY GRAHAM HENDERSON

Given the insatiable appetite for music in Canada, where broadband penetration is among the highest anywhere, the development of a strong digital music marketplace would seem to be a given.

Yet this is far from today’s reality in Canada.

For the past six years, Canadians have developed another insatiable appetite for freely downloaded movies, books and music using Web-based file-sharing programs. Creators and those who invest in their careers have been left out in the cold.

Canadians with home Internet access are far more likely to have used a peer-to-peer network (23%) than a paid service (9%) to download a music or movie file. By comparison, 11% of European Internet users swap files on P2P networks and only 6% download regularly.

In Canada, digital music sales account for less than 1% of total recorded music revenue. Elsewhere, it accounts for 6%.

Like a frontier town, Canada’s digital market is a place with few rules. This state of affairs exists despite the fact that Canada signed the World Intellectual Property Organization Treaties, designed to protect creators and those who invest in them during the Internet age. Canada stands apart from most signatories in that it has failed to enact the WIPO rules (countries that have enacted the rules include 23 of 26 European Union members, the United States, Japan and Australia).

Canada has become a global pacemaker for movie, music and software piracy. The chances that a given piece of business software has been stolen is more than one in three, while in the United States and United Kingdom, the ratio is one in four.

During the past six years, Canada’s music industry has declined $366 million in retail sales. This drop dramatically influenced investment and adversely affected many artists’ careers.

Take Jilly Black, a critically acclaimed new voice on Canada’s music scene. Co-incident with the release of her debut album, putative fans rejected her tracks 2.8 million times over file-sharing sites within two weeks. Yet her CD barely sold 15,000 units.

Canadian sales figures for many emerging recording artists are appallingly low. Some artists are indifferent to this. For them, the sale of digital music files or CDs is unimportant—ancillary to live performance and merchandise sales. But for each one of these artists, there are thousands more creators (musicians, songwriters, inventors, software designers, authors, film producers and so on) who want to earn a living from the sale of their intellectual property.

The idea that recorded music can only be a promotional tool for live performances is very shortsighted. It means that artists will have no equity in their careers. The whole point of copyright law is to give them just that.

Fortunately, the WIPO rules provide that flexibility that respects both views. That means Canada can fulfill its treaty obligations without taking anyone’s right to give his or her property away for free. But the current scenario offers no choice: Honest citizens who want their private property protected and their wishes respected are out of luck.

For this, Canada is gaining unwanted worldwide attention. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, weighted by population, Canadians seem to be the most intensive users of P2P among OECD nations. The U.S. State Department has maintained Canada on the Special 301 List Watch list, a list of countries with egregious track records in protecting intellectual property rights. It is a source of national embarrassment that Canada finds itself on this list.

Canadians are ready for rules. According to recent research, more than 90% of Canadians agree that the work of musicians, artists, authors and others should be protected by copyright to ensure they get paid for copies of their work.

The experience outside Canada suggests that this approach works. In countries where there are rules, the digital market is booming.

Already, 3 million people have either reduced or stopped illegal file swapping in Europe. Today, legal buying is more popular than P2P in Europe’s two major digital markets, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Last year, Canada almost crossed the threshold into a new era. The Liberal government proposed new copyright legislation. But that bill died when the government fell. Canada’s new Conservative government has announced its intention to bring forward its own version of digital copyright. Rights holders large and small look forward to this.

In the absence of modern, market-oriented rules, Canadians will continue to treat other people’s property in a way that with the right balance, in a future in which Canadians respect the rights of others in the digital age is close at hand.

Graham Henderson is president of the Canadian Recording Industry Assn.

OPINION  EDITORIALS  COMMENTARY  LETTERS

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Scalper Shutdown

Tom Petty’s Camp Fights Fan Club Presale Ticket Fraud

Tom Petty has a message for scalpers buying tickets through his fan club and marking them up for the secondary market. Don’t come around here no more.

In what may be the most concerted effort yet by an artist to stop the practice, Petty’s team identified and blocked more than 1,400 tickets purchased at the tompetty.com presale that were to be resold.

The tactic was first applied with late-April presales for Petty/Pearl Jam in St. Paul, Minn., and then a few days later with Madison Square Garden in New York.

Minnesota Petty fans had complained that many tickets for the June 26-27 shows with Pearl Jam at St. Paul’s Excel Energy Center in Minnesota were sold to clubs members via a Web site presale quickly showed up on secondary market sites at prices several times face value. Tickets at most shows on the tour range from $30 to $89.

With the help of Ticketmaster, promoter Jam and site administrator Signatrees Network, Petty’s management killed 600 scalper’s tickets from the Minnesota show.

For a June 30 Petty concert (without Pearl Jam) at Madison Square Garden in New York, Petty’s team identified and blocked more than 800 tickets raised red flags. Secondary seller stubhub.com is listing a pair of tickets for $9,000, according to Petty’s management.

By purchasing tickets through the fan club, a privilege granted as part of the $30 membership fee, fans agree not to resell tickets or use automated “bot” software that repeatedly purchases tickets. Fans are informed that violating the rules can result in revoked tickets and being banned from the club—just as had not happened on this scale until now.

Fan club presales have become an important part of the overall ticket-selling dynamic, letting promoters and artists determine the relative “heat” of a show before going on sale to the general public. But for a profiteer, a $30 membership fee is a worthy investment when tickets can be sold for several times face value.

David Marcus, Ticketmaster VP for strategy and business development, says the fan club members brought the situation to light with frustrated postings on the tompetty.com message boards.

The Petty team reacted. For tickets in New York and St. Paul, tompetty.com posted the seat locations to avoid scalpers.

Marcus says, “It’s a risk for an artist to cancel a sold-out show and have to put it back on sale,” he says. “It speaks volumes for Tom Petty and his management and their sincere concern for their fans.”

Jerry Mickelson, co-president of Jam Productions, promoter of the Petty/Pearl Jam Minneapolis show, says Jam will now implement a similar practice. “If any hot show, jam is having the best seats picked up and put back on sale,” he says. “Just as a ticket to sell the tickets, the public.”

Petty’s folks know they haven’t entirely solved the problem. But as Petty manager Tony Dimitriadis said in a statement on Petty’s Web site, “This is definitely a step in the right direction and a major step on behalf of the good guys.”
WMG, EMI MERGER BY THE NUMBERS

The merger dance between Warner Music Group and EMI is once again hot and heavy. EMI opened the latest round in the seemingly endless, on-again, off-again merger talks earlier this month, bidding $4.23 billion in cash and stock for WMG. And while Warner Music’s board promptly rejected the offer, claiming the deal was not “in the best interest of our shareholders,” this story is anything but over.

EMI is believed to be in the process of recouping its bid for WMG, a company it has attempted to merge with three other times during the last six years. WMG could also be considering a counteroffer for EMI, though that seems to be a longer shot. Either way, analysts say it is only a matter of time before the music industry’s two remaining unconsolidated major labels try another trip to the altar. Billboard presents the merger by the numbers.

$30 The magic per-share number to watch for in an EMI bid for WMG. EMI’s initial bid came in at $28.50 per share, and the Warner board turned its nose at the valuation, as well as the mix of more stock than cash. EMI reportedly is prepping a new bid that skews closer to WMG’s implied asking price.

$200 million The amount analysts estimate the two companies could generate in cost savings if they merge. As the would-be acquirers, that could improve EMI’s earnings per share by 7%.

$2 billion EMI’s current debt load—a total that could limit the company’s ability to go deeper in the hole to raise cash for a WMG bid without refinancing. In addition, EMI is expected to roll out a major equity offering worth hundreds of millions to help finance the acquisition. If the two companies merge, look for the combined entity to offset debt and merger costs by unloading WMG’s Warner/Chappell publishing arm—for about $1 billion.

24.5% The combined U.S. market share of the merged entities, based on 2005 Nielsen SoundScan results. EMI chairman Eric Noble has long been in pursuit of a merger partner, and the WMG play is his best bet yet to super-size the British recorded-music giant. The new market share would put EMI and WMG on more equal footing with powerhouse Universal Music Group (31.7%) and Sony BMG Music Entertainment (25.6%).

11% The percentage of overall sales that digital music generated during WMG’s most recent fiscal quarter—the highest percentage of the majors. Chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. has rebuilt his reputation from his oft-criticized days at the helm of Seagram to reposition himself as one of the music industry’s most forward-thinking executives, thanks to his embrace of digital distribution opportunities. Last quarter’s digital number was up 157% from $35 million a year ago. Letting go when he and his management team are on a roll may be hard. But if he does, he could pocket around $300 million, based on current deal estimates.

$3.4 billion+ The estimated pre-tax profit, based on current WMG share price, of WMG private equity investors on the $1.25 billion investment they made around two years ago. Bronfman may have a hard time letting go, but Pali Capital analyst Rich Greenfield says WMG’s investors—including TH Lee and Bain Capital—won’t have any such problem, for the right offer. Greenfield and Merrill Lynch media analysts believe EMI is the likely acquirer in a tie-up with WMG. Greenfield says: “While we would expect WMG’s private equity investors to want a meaningful equity stake in the combined company [to participate in the longer-term growth of the music industry], we believe the lack of visibility surrounding the industry over the next few years, as well as the rough comps WMG is likely to face in 12 months (given the strength of their current/recent release schedule), will drive an acquisition of WMG by EMI.”

OBITUARY

McLennan’s Legacy: Off The Charts

The charts don’t lie. But in the case of Grant McLennan and the Go-Betweens, they don’t tell the whole truth either.

The legacy and reach of McLennan’s Australian folk-pop band the Go-Betweens is difficult to measure. Though never quite finding chart success, the group was a critical darling, landed a string of high-profile awards and carried a status that far surpassed their chart positions.

McLennan died earlier this month in his Brisbane, Australia, home of an apparent heart attack at 48. He and his longtime bandmate Robert Forster crafted a catalog of gems that included "Streets of Your Town," "Spring Rain" and "Cattle and Cane.

Despite all the comparisons to Australia’s Lennons and McCartney,” McLennan and Forster’s Go-Betweens never won prominence on a sales chart. Their first three albums achieved a meager combined two weeks on the chart in the United Kingdom.

"The Go-Betweens were an incredible influence on R.E.M.,” band frontman Michael Stipe says. “Grant was a great friend and tremendous musician, his sense of melody and playfulness with lyrics was unparalleled. His beneficent nature and his generosity and curiosity towards music and art will be greatly missed."

Other acts such as Belle and Sebastian, Teenage Fanclub, Sleater-Kinney and Coldplay also expressed their admiration for McLennan and the Go-Betweens. Norman Blake of Teenage Fanclub described McLennan as “a wonderful person, fantastic songwriter and one of my heroes.”

While attending the University of Balibana, he formed the Go-Betweens with fellow student Forster in 1977. The band relocated to Melbourne and later London, luring a following along the way.

The Go-Betweens follow in the tradition of the Ramones and the Velvet Underground, acts that never sold much in their heydays but left a creative legacy that can’t be measured in numbers.
THANKS...
to the over 1,800 people who made the ASCAP EXPO a huge success!

"WOW, words can not even begin to express how I'm feeling right now after attending the three-day ASCAP EXPO. Empowered, enlightened, uplifted, reassured, informed, inspired...THANK YOU ASCAP for organizing such an amazing event from start to finish!!!"

Denise Vasquez, Songwriter, Studio City, CA

"The ASCAP EXPO was a unique opportunity for writers and creators from all genres to mix and mingle. It's not everyday you see a rapper, a rocker and a cowboy having intense conversations about how they can work together to make music better."

John Rich of Big & Rich, Panelist

"The entire EXPO was an extraordinary experience! We saw my favorite group Heart, with Don Was. I attended unbelievably informative and intelligent panels, was in awe of Tom Petty's sincerity, and met others who share the same passion as I. I also made numerous industry contacts. I know the 'EXPO Experience' will carry me a long way."

Lori Werch, Lyricist, Chaska, MN

"The ASCAP EXPO 'take-aways?' For attendees: A feeling, perhaps for the first time, of being part of a community of creators ...a glimpse into the joys, frustrations and realities they will face as their careers develop ...and, an experience they will never forget. For me: The memory of the best conference - of any kind - I have ever attended."

Dean Kay, Songwriter, Publisher, Panelist

"Holy cow. What a day. This conference has, hands down, been the best I've ever been to. The quality of the panels was astounding!"

Lydia Hutchinson, Editor/Publisher, Performing Songwriter Magazine

See You Next Year.
LOS ANGELES—Amid the explosions, pink-haired attendees and technical jargon at this year’s Electronic Entertainment Expo, held here May 10-12, next-generation game consoles were the buzz of the show.

For the first time, Sony Computer Entertainment’s PlayStation 3, Microsoft’s Xbox 360 and Nintendo’s Wii (pronounced “we,” formerly the Revolution) were all available for public inspection at the same time.

The near-realistic graphics that these new consoles enable are expected to result in games with more developed storylines resembling today’s feature films. For the music business, that means increased licensing opportunities for soundtracks.

“The bar has been raised,” says Carianne Brown, director of motion picture and TV licensing for Universal Music Publishing. “Music is not as tangible as other things to affect game sales, but the games are better now so the music should be better, both for licensed tracks and for scoring.”

What’s more, each new console features Internet connections that allow gamers not only to play against each other online, but also purchase and download new content from additional levels to updated soundtracks.

This convergence represents the next stage of gaming opportunity for the music industry.

Consider this: Electronic Arts worldwide executive of music and audio Steve Schirn claims that 24% of those who played the latest “Madden NFL” game either bought or otherwise downloaded a song they discovered on the game’s soundtrack, which included original music from Fall Out Boy, Foo Fighters and Godsmack, among others. For the car racing game “Need for Speed,” that figure rose to 34%.

“The lines between film, videogames and music are getting blurred, and in 10 years will be gone altogether,” Schirn says.

The first games that allow users to purchase music via the console are expected next year, on a game-by-game basis. For record labels, this should mean an explosion in potential points of sale. “We’re hoping to evolve the soundtrack concept with the advent of new consoles, says says Gary White, senior VP of strategy and product development for Warner Music Group. “It’s a way to acquire new music all the time.”

In 2000, Intel tapped Blue Man Group for a handful of TV spots. It was the group’s first brand partnership, Wink notes. “For us, the deal breaker was having us identified in the spots.”

Blue Man Group Records GM Seth Freed says the Intel campaign opened the minds of the three Blue Man to other brand opportunities. “For years, they were apprehensive about exploiting their image and music,” he says. “But they saw that with the right partnership the benefits are many.”

Wink credits the Intel spots with increased sales of the act’s two CDs (1999’s “Audio” on Virgin and 2003’s “The Complex” on LaFace), a sold-out tour and the need to move Blue Man Group’s daily Las Vegas show, since 2000, into a larger room.

The Intel ads also “sent a good message to Hollywood,” Wink adds. In 2004, Blue Man Group scored its first TV show, “The Jury.” The following year, the trio collaborated with John Powell on the film score for “Robots.” These days, the group is composing music for an action-adventure game, due next year, for Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.

“The scale is larger than ever,” Wink says. “We’re involved in brand building, but they’re helping to build our identity. The whole point of getting yourself out there is so the right people can find you.”
Illegal downloading of Hollywood movies has not yet hit the mainstream in the same way Napster blindsided the music business. And the world's biggest film studios—hoping to learn from the mistakes of the recording industry—hope to keep it that way.

Warner Bros. Home Entertainment Group has become the first arm of a major movie studio to license content to BitTorrent, the favored tool of tech-savvy video file swappers. The move follows a late-November deal between the Motion Picture Assn. of America (MPAA) and BitTorrent, in which the latter agreed to rid its search engine of links to pirated content.

BitTorrent co-founder/president Ashwin Navin says the company is in talks with the RIAA and reps for the major labels about content licenses, but declined to offer a time line or a likelihood of success. However, sources close to these negotiations say that three of the four major labels, as well as such major independent label aggregators as the Orchard and the Independent Online Distribution Alliance, are relatively close to licensing deals with the service. The major labels, at least, are holding off for the RIAA deal, which sources say is close.

The RIAA is in a better position to negotiate with BitTorrent, given the ever-growing volume of digital music sales and retailers. MPAA members are still aggressively looking for ways to generate serious digital revenue. Warner Bros. will begin selling more than 200 new releases and catalog titles—including "Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire," "The Matrix" and "Corpse Bride"—through bittorrent.com later this summer. Pricing is yet to be announced, but sources close to the deal say it will be in line with other, recent first forays into selling films digitally.

Last month, Movielink and CinemaNow became the first services to offer full-length digital downloads of films, day and date with their DVD release—generally charging a premium for the digital format, while offering greater digital rights management restrictions and, in some cases, fewer bonus features. MPAA members are under intense pressure from physical retailers not to make pricing or promotional concessions to the digital space. But this "give less, charge more" digital approach has yet to set the consumer world on fire.

BitTorrent is betting that the Warner Bros. deal is just the beginning, in terms of big studio participation and the business models that may emerge. The San Francisco-based company, hard at work developing an interface that is easy to use for mass consumers, ultimately wants to pull in a variety of film, TV and music partners for its new commercial service. No doubt, Torrent executives have visions of using their speedy distribution technology to sell massive, bundled files—the entire video catalog of a band, for example, or a movie along with its soundtrack.

The recording industry has been down this road with the peer-to-peer community. Everyone from Napster to Mesh has signed deals with the RIAA, similar to BitTorrent's pact with the MPAA, agreeing to filter unauthorized content and protect copyrighted material. But post deals, those services little resembled their former selves and garnered tepid consumer response. What's more, plenty of pirated material still slips through, offered right alongside authorized files.

This is almost certain to be the case with BitTorrent, as well. BitTorrent users most often find files by using Torrent search pages, the most popular of which, according to the company, is bittorrent.com. There is a long list of other search pages, as well—think of them as clandestine, largely copyright-infringing Googles that only deliver Torrent results.

On the day of the Warner announcement, bittorrent.com was still linked to a host of unauthorized movies for free download. Warner Bros. and BitTorrent executives say they are implementing filtering solutions to weed out links to illegal files, a process to be completed this summer. But these solutions will only apply to bittorrent.com. For other search sites, BitTorrent and its partners will have to rely on manipulating search results so that legal, DRM-protected files are offered first—but still along with unprotected, unlicensed content.

"It's a risk worth taking," says Darcy Antonellis, executive VP of distribution technology and operations for Warner Bros. Technical Operations. "We can't afford to wait for a perfect solution or wait for an overarching strategy to fall from the sky."
Andy Awards Attract Atlantic
Label Plays Major Part In Annual Ad Industry Shindig

The 2006 International Andy Awards, which honor those in the world of advertising, were recently handed out at Guastavino’s in New York. The event, presented by the Advertising Club, was of course overflowing with agency creatives, producers and directors.

But music industry players were on hand, too, particularly top brass from Atlantic Records, the primary sponsor of the awards ceremony. (Yahoo! and Time Inc. were corporate sponsors.)

“For us, this is a meeting of the creative minds,” says Atlantic VP of strategic marketing Camille Hackney, who represented the company at the Andys, along with label chairman Craig Kallman, president Julie Greenwald, founding chairman Ahmet Ertegun, senior VP of marketing and artist development Livia Tortella and artist Toby Lightman.

Bad Boy Worldwide Entertainment chief Sean “Diddy” Combs also stopped by.

Though this is the first year Atlantic is the primary sponsor of the 42nd annual Andys, Hackney notes that “it’s the third year the label has been involved.”

“Today, you must seriously look at every possible marketing tool—all the possible avenues to get the music heard,” Hackney says. She stresses the importance of looking at those deeper partnerships, those bigger campaigns that go beyond the 10-second TV spot.

To that end, Hackney and other label execs know that forming relationships and connections with those in the advertising community is crucial. Like nearly every other label, Atlantic knows the realities of today’s business of music. In 2006, schmoozing with and befriending agency creatives is a way of life for record labels, artist managers, agents and music publishers.

As the primary sponsor, in addition to hobnobbing with the agencies, Atlantic “owned” the video screens (think music videos and artist interviews) in the VIP area. And during the awards ceremony, Lightman treated the agency creatives and producers to a short set. “But it’s not like a sales call from Atlantic,” says Gina Grillo, executive director of the Advertising Club and the International Andy Awards. “Everyone is at the awards to honor the work and the winners.” Of course, if an Atlantic artist just happens to make it onto a creative’s radar screen, all the better.

According to Kallman, Atlantic is doing its part to keep its artists in the minds of creatives at agencies. And while he and Hackney won’t give specifics, it appears that something is brewing between Lightman and a brand.

Hackney, by the way, will be very present during the 47th annual Clio Awards & Festival, taking place May 13-16 in Miami’s South Beach. She will be among the participants on the Fusion of Music and Advertising panel (as will 1), which will explore creatives involved in band/brand marriages. See you there.

FASHION FORWARD: Taking a cue from music-oriented fashion styles from Lucky Brand Jeans and Worn Free, Universal Music Publishing Group is licensing song lyrics to Lyric Jeans for use on jeans, corsets, belts and purses (billboard.biz, May 2).

“We see this as an extension to [artist] merchandise and an extra revenue stream for clients.” says UMPG senior director for marketing and communications Heather Brown. Royalties are paid on each article of clothing sold.

Lyric’s UMPG-certified clothes, which debut this fall, will be carried in department and specialty stores and mass merchants.

UMPG is also licensing lyrics to several other clothing companies that manufacture men’s and women’s hoodies and T-shirts. These fashions are making their way to stores now and feature lyrics from catalog and contemporary songs.

EMI-WMG MERGER: WILL IT HAPPEN?

Warner Music Group has sparked a flurry of speculation after its board of directors rejected an EMI Music Group offer to acquire the company. Just for fun, Legal Matters asked some industry lawyers for their predictions. Will there be a marriage between the two companies and, if so, will they keep all of the publishing assets?

“Having been to the altar before in 2000, and each company having been in the other’s underwear drawer, it’s hard to gauge whether Warner’s recall is based solely on price or on other things it may have found in the course of due diligence—either in the books, paper or even the culture,” one New York lawyer says. “Warner did a lot of cost-cutting and layoffs, so there may not be much more fat to trim in order to obtain the perceived efficiencies of a merger, in Warner’s estimation.”

A few years ago, the European Commission rejected a bid for WMG and EMI to merge as anti-competitive, the lawyer notes. Still, Sony BMG sailed through an initial EC inquiry. “That is both a plus and minus-plus because it shows it was possible at one time to get something like this through, if you shed distribution and publishing, but minus because now it would be three majors, which likely will make approval that much harder. Remember, the EC, that incredibly efficient government entity, is still reviewing the Sony-BMG merger some two years after the fact.”

Nearly everyone asked believes that EMI will acquire WMG rather than vice versa, and that a merged entity would have to sell EMI Music Publishing or Warner/Chappell Music because merging the two largest publishers would never pass antiitrust scrutiny. W/C, the smaller of the two, would be the one to go.

Gary Stiffelman in Los Angeles predicts that EMI will acquire WMG, and WMG chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. will cash out huge, along with his partners. “Former W/C chairman/CEO Les Bider and Elevations Partners will buy W/C,” Stiffelman suggests, and Bronfman and associates will then buy the BMI interest in Sony BMG because Bronfman will be high on doing this again.” With the timing perfect and Bronfman’s image as a money-maker, it won’t be hard for them to raise the needed capital.

Matt Middleton in New York says that WMG accepting the EMI offer now would mean WMG investors doubting their original investment in less than four years. “Then it’s a no-brainer. Edgar and Lyor [Cohen, chairman/CEO of U.S. Recorded Music for WMG] will take their profits and open up a music store on BurnLounge.com at the music mogul level. They will make more millions until they find another media company to purchase.” And, Middleton adds, Universal Music Group will give its publishing head David Renzer a gift (W/C). Another New York lawyer predicts that WMG will let EMI make another offer to set the bar on valuation. Then WMG will make its bid to acquire EMI.

“Why walk away now with a mere $1.5 billion [WMG investor Bain Capital’s take-home check if the current EMI offer were accepted] when you can turn your team loose on the struggling EMI and possibly more double your return in another few years?” In this lawyer’s vision, EMI Music Publishing’s Marty Bandler and Bider will lead the two main buyer groups for W/C, with Bider getting the company.

Legal Matters predicts that the WMG equity partners will acquire EMI. They will spin off W/C, which Bandler will land.

One attorney notes that a merged company could “park those [publishing] assets somewhere else in companies owned by the parents—like Sony and Bertelsmann did with Sony/ATV and BMG Music Publishing—and reap the financial gains, but it complicates things. It cannot be a complete buyout that way, so you are back to a Sony BMG model of a stand-alone merged record entity or you are left to selling stuff that makes a lot of money.”
Tool’s ‘10,000 Days’ Packs Extra Punch

I just love the packaging for Tool’s new album, “10,000 Days.” Based on past experience, I will probably love the music too, but haven’t heard the album loud yet, i.e., I played it in the office.

If you haven’t seen the artwork for the Volcano/Zomba album yet, you should go out of your way to check it out. The elaborate packaging comes with, in the band’s words, a “stereoscopic lens” embedded in the packaging. The lens folds over so that fans can interact with the album artwork over and over again, looking through the lenses at the richly designed booklet, which, including the inner sleeves of the package, totals 32 pages.

In this case, that means fans can use the lens to study some 16 pages of artwork that integrate all kinds of psychedelic and 3-D images without the need to drop mescaline. The music and the artwork promise hours of fun. But getting the package together must have been a project and a half.

Bob Anderson, senior VP of national sales for Zomba Label Group, acknowledges that it was a “difficult, intricate process that involved putting together parts that were obtained from different parts of the world. It was time-consuming and hand-packed.”

But in the end it was worth it. Anderson says “Packaging is a big part of marketing.” he says. “This package really raises the bar.”

And how are fans reacting?
First-week sales broke the $50,000 plane, landing the band its second debut appearance atop The Billboard 200. “If you show unique packaging to the consumer, it can really be a benefit,” Anderson says.

Sources suggest that Sony BMG Music Entertainment Sales shipped about 900,000 units and has since received another 450,000 in returns as of May 9 (see story, page 27). Even with that, there were some spot and potential weekend outages in the marketplace, but Sony BMG was quickly filling holes by drop-shipping product to stores.

“I have to give Sony BMG [Entertainment Sales] props on filling the pipeline,” Anderson says.

Retail backs up Anderson’s observation. “I was really impressed with how quickly Sony BMG ramped up production for an album that did way beyond what anybody thought it would do,” says Brett Wickard, president of Portland, Maine-based Bull Moose. “We had a huge hit we thought we would be out of for the weekend, but we got replenishment on time.”

Word is the package cost $3, but Anderson’s lips are sealed on that topic.

Tool guitarist Adam Jones says, “If it was $3 per CD, we wouldn’t be making any money. I don’t remember the final budget, but it wasn’t that much . . . We just had to be sensible about it—instead of using cloth, we had to use this, instead of using this glue, we used [that] glue . . .”

If the $3 cost is correct, Tool is giving its fans a real bargain, considering the package carries an $18.98 list, which means an $11.87 bootleg price.

The band’s management could have asked for the higher limited edition/special artwork pricing. But then again, maybe not, since the packaging will be used for perpetuity. It will be interesting to see how the packaging holds up through the years.

Naturally, the band and its management rode herd over the artwork, and if you want to see who created it, one page of the booklet is devoted to the credits. In fact, the magnifying-glass effect of the lens provided me with the ability to not only see who created it, but also to finally read liner notes, something that I haven’t been able to do since 12-inch vinyl albums disappeared.

I know I am getting old, but even if CDs came out in the 1970s, I doubt I would have been capable of reading the miniature print used in the vast majority of liner notes nowadays. Maybe all CDs should come with stereoscopic lenses, so we can all start identifying album songs again by names instead of track numbers.

TAKING A BREATHE: On his departure from Virgin Entertainment Group North America, chief marketing officer Dave Alder says that after 20 years with the chain he simply wanted some time off.

“I was going to do it last summer, but the time wasn’t right considering we were in the midst of creating a new merchandising platform for the store,” Alder says. Alder hopes to take some down time and return to the industry in the not-too-distant future.

Additional reporting by Wes Orshoski.
GLOBAL NEWSLINE

FRENCH MARKET SLIDES

The French recorded music industry slumped in first-quarter 2006, according to labels body SNEP. The trade value of shipments in the French market dropped 8.8% to €219 million ($276 million), with volume down 22.1% to 28.3 million units. Physical shipments accounted for €208 million ($262 million), a value, down 12% from first-quarter 2005. Digital sales grew 300% in value year-on-year over the same period to exceed €11 million ($14 million). SNEP did not break out unit figures.

Sony BMG France chairman/CEO and SNEP VP Christophe Lameignère pointed to the effect of massive street demonstrations by students throughout France during the quarter as a possible explanation for the slump.

SPANISH AWARDS DRAW VIEWERS

Despite a graveyard time slot on public channel TVE1, the broadcast of Spain’s 10th Premios de la Música gala attracted an average 57,000 viewers, representing a 9.3% share. The fee went out between 12:30 a.m. and 3:15 a.m. on May 7. Last year’s gala, broadcast between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. on minority public channel LA2, averaged 322,000 viewers—a 3% share in its slot. EMI Spain pop/rock duo Ameal was the big winner at the May 5 Madrid event. It collected three awards, including best album for “Pajaros en la Cabeza.”

DRO/Warner Music artist Diana Navarro won two of six awards she was nominated for, as best new artist and for best artistic production with her debut album “No Te Olvides De Mi.”

Other double winners included Sony BMG acts Pasión Vega and El Canto Del Locoací and EGRM/Nuevos Medios’ Cuban artist X Alfonso. The 33-category Premios de la Música is organized by authors society SGAE and artists association AIE through their joint Academy of Music Arts and Sciences. Awards are voted on by Academy members.

WOODWARD RISES IN U.K.

Shaun Woodward has been named the United Kingdom’s new minister for the creative industries and tourism at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The post has prime dealings with the country’s music business.

Woodward was previously minister for media and tourism. He replaces James Purnell, who has been appointed minister of state for pensions at the Department for Work and Pensions. The cabinet shuffle took place May 5, the day after a disappointing performance by the ruling Labour Party in local government elections for England and Wales.

Woodward’s remit includes the broadcast, music and film sectors.

SONY BMG GETS AUSSIE ALBERT

Sony BMG Australia has struck an exclusive licensing deal to issue Albert Productions’ catalog and new releases in Australia and New Zealand.

Sydney-based Albert Productions is the recording division of 120-year-old music publisher J Albert & Son. The label’s catalog includes AC/DC, The Easybeats, Rose Tattoo, the Angels and John Paul Young. Since 2003, AC/DC and its catalog has been signed to Epic/Sony BMG outside Australasia. The new deal, effective July, means Sony BMG will distribute all AC/DC catalog globally.

The new agreement covers catalog, digital content and future releases from the Albert Productions roster. Current signings Dallas Crane, Breed 77 and the Answer are slated to release albums this year.

Albert’s recordings were previously distributed in Australia by Festival Mushroom Records, which was acquired by Warner Music Australia in November 2005.

SGAE Scales Back

Authors And Publishers’ Society Cuts Presence At Cubadisco

MADRID—Spanish will be the common language at the 10th Cubadisco music trade fair May 20-28 in Havana, but a key Spanish accent will be missing.

Spanish authors and publishers’ society SGAE, which had been one of the event’s main supporters, has significantly downsized its involvement in this year’s event.

Paco Galindo, director general of SGAE’s promotional arm Fundacion Autor, says the body is cutting back its traditional role of promoting Spanish and Latin music at international trade fairs, including MIDEM in Cannes and PopKomm in Berlin.

“SGAE has decided to move to a new phase where labels, publishers and distributors themselves—and state bod-

ies—should take leading roles,” Galindo says. “The key from now on will be to share resources [with them].”

Executives fear SGAE’s decision will affect the international presence of the Havana event.

“Cubadisco will work without SGAE—it has its own dynamic,” says Seju Monzón, founder of Madrid-based label Latin Soul, whose Cuban acts include Wena Onda, David Blanco and Despues Te Explico. Monzón has attended Cubadisco since 1998.

“The main problem now will be a lack of international artists,” he continues. “Cubadisco works as a big local event—the danger is that it will become just that.”

Madrid-based Antonio Pérez Solís, director of music publishers APA and Nuevo Cauce, also attends Cubadisco annually. “With few exceptions,” he notes, “Spanish artists played in Cuba thanks to Fundacion Autor funding. It is not viable for artists to go all that way and earn Cuban pesos.”

However, Solís believes SGAE’s reduced commitment will not irreparably harm the event. “It can fly on automatic pilot if it has to,” Solís publishes Cuban artist X Alfonso.

Galindo declines to give details of past expenditures on Cubadisco, but claims SGAE spent €200,000 ($254,000) to attend last year’s PopKomm. SGAE took the lead in setting up the first two Cubadisco fairs in 1997 and 1998, although its role was subsequently assumed by a committee operating under the aegis of the Culture Ministry’s Cuban Institute of Music. SGAE’s new policy was first evident when it cut back on live performances at MIDEM in January, although Galindo says some 70 Spanish music companies still operated from the SGAE stand. He insists the body will continue to take stands at trade fairs, adding, “We are not abandoning any of them.”

While a scaled-down SGAE presence at major cross-industry events like MIDEM and PopKomm might not attract attention, the impact upon the smaller, more genre-specific Cubadisco will be more noticeable.

SGAE’s annual concert at Havana’s 5,000-capacity Karl Marx Theatre on the final weekend of Cubadisco has always been one of the event’s highlights. SGAE has brought in such leading Spanish acts as La Oreja de Van Gogh, Jarabe de Palo and Rosario to play the event.

However, this year’s presence is limited to a stand manned by local staff. Galindo

WILLIAM AND ALICE WINDMEYER

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Italian Biz Optimistic About PM-Elect Prodi

MILAN—Italy's music industry executives hope the advent of a new administration will bring help for their beleaguered business.

Following April's election, a center-left coalition headed by Romano Prodi is set to replace the center-right coalition of Italy's controversial Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Ministerial responsibility for the music industry remains unclear, as Parliament must elect Italy's new president before Prodi can name his cabinet. That process began May 8 and could take more than two weeks.

When the time comes, Enzo Mazza, president of labels body FIMI, says he has a full slate of proposals to present to the new administration. He adds that, during informal discussions, "the Prodi coalition's representatives have already shown interest in those measures."

FIMI's proposals include tax incentives for labels investing in new artists, government funding to encourage catalog digitalization and creating an office within the Cultural Heritage ministry to promote Italian music abroad.

According to IFPI figures published March 31, the Italian market chalked up $669 million at retail in 2005, up 2.5% from $652.5 million in 2004. Long term, however, it is declining: In 2001, retail value was $732.9 million.

Physical piracy also remains a major problem. IFPI estimates counterfeit CDs account for between 25% and 50% of all sales.

In addition to sharing FIMI's goals, independent labels body PMI wants broadcasting quotas for Italian music and to have financial incentives available to film and video producers extended to music companies.

"In preliminary discussions with members of the Prodi coalition, we got the impression that we're dealing with credible interlocutors," PMI president Mario Limongelli says. "They seem to appreciate [that] music should be treated as a cultural product."

PMI also wants the Value Added Tax on recorded music reduced from 20% to 15% and seeks tougher government anti-piracy action. Both have long been part of the Italian music industry's agenda.

On piracy, Mazza claims Italy has "excellent" copyright legislation, "but the problem is enforcement."

The Berlusconi government, he concedes, "did some good things" during its five-year term, citing its adoption of European Union directives on copyright, commerce and enforcement.

However, he feels "its biggest error was passing the 'Ex-Circleri Law,' which effectively scuttled Italy's war on piracy. We hope the new administration will repeal this legislation."

The Prodi coalition's representatives have already shown interest."

—ENZO MAZZA, FIMI

The RIAA tactic of suing individuals who illegally download music would be followed in Canada. "That's a direction I want to make sure we understand, as a community, we don't go toward," he says. "[Peer-to-peer] file sharing has become a vital part of the business. Now let's find ways to monetize it."

Unlike the RIAA, the Canadian Recording Industry Assn. has not yet sued members of the public for possessing illegally downloaded music. One reason is that such P2P file sharing is not as clear-cut a copyright violation in Canada as it is in the United States.

CMCC's view cuts little ice with some others, including noted Vancouver-based songwriter Jim Vallance. The coalition, Vallance says, "seems to view online music trading as a 'loss leader' to promote concert attendance. What about songwriters who aren't performers, who still count on legal music sales for income?"

Other CMCC detractors note that the organization's founders primarily come from the roster of Vancouver-based Netwerk Management. The company's CEO, Terry McBride, is a strong critic of U.S. lawsuits against downloaders. Among the Netwerk-affiliated acts are McLachlan, Barenaked Ladies and Lavigne.

Others add that many of Canada's big name artists are not represented, and CMCC's initial membership includes no French-language artists.

"This is a constituency that needs to be heard from, but [CMCC does] not represent the voices of all artists," Canadian Independent Record Production Assn. executive director Cori Ferguson says. CRIPA represents Canada's English-language independent music sector. "They represent a voice of like-minded artists."

Not surprisingly, CRIPA president Graham Henderson concurs, calling CMCC "a group of artists speaking on behalf of themselves about a particular vision they have."

In the April 26 letter to Oda and Bernier, CMCC called the major labels in Canada "vocal in their desire for changes to copyright laws that would facilitate lawsuits against our fans and increase their control over the enjoyment of music."

CRIA is "a conglomerate of four companies [EMI, Universal, Sony BMG and Warner], none of which are Canadian, dictating or suggesting Canadian cultural policy," Page says. "That's an outrage."

CMCC's policy document acknowledges that "record companies and publishers are not our enemies," but also claims an "inherent conflict of interest" between labels and publishers has led to problems in the way Canadian artists have been represented, particularly over copyright reform.

MARK WORDEN
The Indies

TODD MARTENS tmartens@billboard.com

Beatnik Turtle Coaches On Coming Out Of Your Shell

Every few months an act breaks out of indie rock obscurity by intentionally sharing its music for free on peer-to-peer networks and blogs. But Chicago's Beatnik Turtle is dishing out another kind of freebie to the online community: advice.

Beatnik Turtle, a longtime working band with a slight novelty streak (think They Might Be Giants. Barenaked Ladies), launched its "Indie Band Survival Guide" about two months ago. Spearheaded by lead vocalist Jason Feehan and horn/flute player Randy Chertkow, the project has been a couple of years in the making.

A few days after launching the guide at beatnikturtle.com, Stanford law professor and frequent Wired magazine contributor Lawrence Lessig name-checked the site on his blog. It was a career highlight for Chertkow, who cites Lessig's "Free Culture," a book that looks at the intersection of new technologies and old copyright laws, as a prime influence on the band's Web guide.

The members of Beatnik Turtle have split the guide into about a dozen chapters, looking at everything from major-label contracts (they're against them) to file sharing (they're for it) and physical distribution (their expectations are low). Perhaps what's most notable about the guide, however, is that it strives to offer practical advice based on the experiences of an everyday band—most members of the eight-person group have a day job and a family.

"This guide has always been bubbling under the surface," Feehan says. "There's no sense for someone to reinvent the wheel. You can learn from our mistakes."

Chertkow says he purchased dozens of how-to guides while writing for the Web site but didn't find many that he believed related to his band. He also says he never thought about writing a book and pitching it to publishers, but if the blog community demands a paper version, he'll heed the call.

"I bought a whole stack of books for research, and none of what's on our site was in one place, especially from the point of view of a band that isn't necessarily looking to find a big label," he says. "A lot of them are targeted at making your big break. From our point of view, we wanted to share what we learned, and we don't think we can charge for that. This is a living document.

To that end, the band will add new observations regularly. All chapters are annotated and linked to other sources, and the act is also working on an interview section. It recently completed a Q&A with Bob Koester, who runs Chicago's Jazz Record Mart.

Chertkow says he hasn't received many e-mails about the guide, but he says he knows it's being read. He searches for it, and is happy to see some Beatnik Turtle work getting shared online.

"Rather than talking to us, people are just blogging about it," Chertkow says.

SALE SALES: How tough are times for indie retailers? Chicago's Reckless Records found a storewide sale, in which every product that has arrived at the store in the past six months was tagged for 50% off, didn't generate a significant increase in foot traffic.

Despite this, head buyer Brett Grossman says that overall things are going well at Reckless, and that weather conditions may have contributed to the low turnout. He adds that the sale was far from "extreme" for the store, which at one time regularly staged 50% off sales to blow out inventory.

I like the 50% [sale]," Grossman says, "but the purpose of this sale was more of an advertisement rather than trying to achieve a loss of inventory.

ETC: RED Distribution in New York has re-signed Los Angeles-based Immortal Records. Sources say the deal keeps the label at RED for another three years. Immortal's roster includes rock/emo acts Scary Kids and Waking Ashland.

Look, let's be honest. The Beatles had the name first. There is a lot of positive emotional resonance that came with that name, so Steve Jobs owns them one already. How about he does the right thing and donates some piece of the action to charities designated by Paul, Ringo, Yoko and Olivia? Apple Corps doesn't want to keep jobs out of the music business, they just want some respect. And maybe a little gratitude.

The Underground Garage world-premiered the new Joan Jett & the Blackhearts album "Sinner" this week. Its release is scheduled for June 6 to coincide with her headlining Vans Warped tour gig. The album is one of Joanie's best and includes 11 tracks she wrote or co-wrote, one song written by the Replacements' Paul Westerberg and a fabulous cover of Sweet's "AC/DC." See you next week.

For more of this column, go to billboard.com.
Hagar Puts Cabo On Tour, Shots Included

When Sammy Hagar is fired up, he tends to talk kind of fast. Exhibit A: "Cabo-esque looking, a bunch of tents, with poles and all that, and we're filling all these little booths up with fun stuff, like taco stands, margarita stands, and some outdoor grills with people grilling chickens and carne asada and making tacos out of 'em, and salsa, wandering mariachi bands, sand all over the place, we're putting up volleyball court walls, it's all about bathing suits, bikinis, volleyball, mariachi bands, sand grilling chickens..."

Hagar's band Simulation will play first, then Hagar will hit the stage with his former Van Halen bandmate Michael Anthony in an outfit they call the Other Half. "Michael kicks off his classic Van Halen bass solo on steroids, then [the band] and I come out and do an hour of classic Van Halen. We're just trying to have some fun with it.

The band rips through around 10 Van Halen standards. "Eddie [Van Halen] and I wrote every one of those songs together," Hagar continues. "If those guys don't wanna come out and do it or make it difficult to do, whichever way you want to look at it, the fans deserve to hear 'em, I deserve to sing the songs I wrote, so I feel good with Mike doing it that way. Otherwise I'd never do an hour of Van Halen in my show."

"Then we do a big grand finale with anybody in town that wants to come up and jam with us. I'm going to invite a lot of different people, kinda make it an open mic kind of situation, then we bust the pinata. If people can still walk, we'll come back with an encore."

He and Anthony are joined on stage by guitarists Vic Johnson, drummer Bro Lauser and background singers.

To Hagar, this summer's run is "just a new way of doing a tour and a concert, instead of just doing the same show you did the night before, packing up and leaving. It ain't that kind of show. It's an all-day event and it's user-friendly.

"If you've never been to Cabo, this will really put the hook in you. If you've been to Cabo, you're gonna sit there drinking shots and go, 'Man, it sounds and smells like I'm in Cabo.' It's just got a vibe we're trying to re-create.

Sounds like fun. Hagar will wrap up his tour with a performance, Cabo Wabo Village and all, at the Rock'n the Rally Festival Aug. 10 in Sturgis, S.D. Hagar gave 650 tickets to the Sturgis performance to winners on his "Are We Having Fun Yet?" cruise to Cabo.

San Lucas, Mexico, in the early '90s. Hagar is still talking breathlessly. "It starts at 3 o'clock with karaoke stages and body builders, like you're just going down to the beach in Cabo to see what's going on. So I'm just bringing that whole feel and look and sound and smell even to this village. People can start parking at 3:30, doors open, you go inside and continue to party inside the venue, I come on at 7:30 or 8:00, depending what the curfew is because we do a three-hour show."

Hagar's band the Waboritas will play first, then Hagar will hit the stage with his former Van Halen bandmate Michael Anthony in an outfit they call the Other Half. "Michael kicks off his classic Van Halen bass solo on steroids, then [the band] and I come out and do an hour of classic Van Halen. We're just trying to have some fun with it.

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Mobile Music Looks Beyond Ringtones

The trend of personalizing one's mobile phone with music has proved quite lucrative for the world's record labels. Ringtones, once dismissed as nothing more than a passing fad, have become a $3 billion worldwide market. But it's a market that is nearing maturation, with growth rates expected to fall to about 20% this year after doubling in 2005.

As a result, labels are now preparing different types of music clips they hope consumers will buy to personalize other mobile phone features. "There's a lot of potential to provide great music personalization beyond the ringtone," says one major-label source, who asked not to be identified, citing sensitivities of ongoing negotiations with wireless operators.

Within a matter of weeks, several wireless operators are expected to introduce musical "alert tones"—a snippet of a song lasting between two and five seconds, that users can assign to play when they receive incoming text messages or voice mail, similar to a ringtone.

Sony BMG offers a series of spoken-word alert tones from such artists as Anthony Hamilton and Cassidy, available on all major wireless carriers. Company sources say they will expand the selection to clips of actual songs as well once U.S. wireless operators request them. Sources say Universal Music Group has converted "hundreds" of tracks into alert tones, including Nivana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," 50 Cent's "Candy Shop" and "Da Club" and Gwen Stefani's "Hollaback Girl." UMG also is creating original, made-for-mobile alert tones by "key artists." Warner Music Group executive VP of digital strategy and business development Alex Zuhlilaga pointed to alert tones as the label's next mobile music push during a speech in Germany. EMI Music Group has voiced interest as well.

With 9.8 billion text messages sent per month, according to CTIA, it is plain to see why labels and carriers are interested in monetizing that function. "There's a wide portfolio of products and services that broaden our relationships with the labels," says Nancy Beaton, Sprint GM of wireless music and personalization.

The question is, will subscribers want to buy them? The market for music-related phone personalization options is getting a bit saturated—ringtones, video ringtones, wallpaper images, ringback tones, alert tones.

And it doesn't stop there. A company called Endtones seeks to replace the beeping that occurs when a call has been dropped, concluded or otherwise disconnected with a musical alert. Another, Phone-Bites, has a service called Razz that enables phone users to insert audio clips into active conversations, outgoing messages and voice mail.

However, it may be too much of a good thing. "The personalization thing would appear to be played out," says Seamus McAtee, executive VP/senior analyst at mobile monitoring firm M-Metrics. "There are lots of ways music can be used to make a statement or add context, but it can go from the sublime to the ridiculous. You can't just add a jingle to everything you want to do with a phone. There are limits." Ringback tones in particular have shown a love of promise but have yet to deliver. When first introduced by SK Telecom in South Korea in 2002, ringback tones attracted 6 million subscribers in just nine months.

In the United States, growth has proved much slower. Boost Mobile, Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon Wireless all have offered ringback tones for more than a year, but collectively have attracted only 3.6 million subscribers as of March, according to M-Metrics.

While that's a 350% growth rate over the 1 million reported in March 2005, it's still a drop in the bucket compared to ringtones, which in the same month were downloaded more than 19 million times.

Yet McAtee projects the United States could see more than 10 million ringback tone subscribers by the end of the year once other carriers enter the market. That move is expected this summer.

"Ringback tones are going to take off," he says. "They are the big sleeper right now, but you'll see a tipping point with these things where they'll start doubling every month."

Record labels also hope ringbacks and ringtones will prove a crossover hit beyond mobile phones. Ringback tones use technology embedded in the phone network, not the handset. This means traditional landline phone carriers can offer the service as well.

Meanwhile, Internet telephone service provider Skype hopes the ringtone phenomenon will prove as popular on its service as it did for mobile. The company has struck cross-overs unique ringtone licensing deals with EMI Music Publishing, Sony/ATV Music Publishing, Warner/Chappell Music and BMG (Billboard, May 6).

These efforts may seem a bit far-fetched. But so did ringtones at one point. Neither the music nor the wireless industries plan to second-guess the possibility of an equally lucrative fade catching hold in the future. "When we first saw ringtones in '98 it was just a gimmick," McAtee says. "But they've become a mainstay for the music business. So I don't want to underestimate anything. You just don't know."
Miraculous as it may seem, Marian Leighton, Bill Nowlin and Ken Irwin remain business partners 36 years after launching Rounder Records.

Nowlin and Irwin were roommates at Tufts University in Boston; Leighton bonded with the pair over their shared passion for rural American sounds. The label they started in 1970 now has a staff of 110 and annual revenue of more than $40 million. And while still true to its independent roots, Rounder has been distributed by Universal Music & Video Distribution since January 1999 (and PolyGram for about six months before that).

The label has diversified from its pure folk beginnings with a roster totaling 50 artists and imprints dedicated to alternative (Zoe), reggae (Heartbeat) and DVD (Zoe Vision). There is a joint venture for jazz, Marsalis Music, with Branford Marsalis; there’s even a book division. Rounder has enjoyed successes in a variety of genres, but none bigger than multiplatinum star Alain Krauss, who debuted on Rounder in 1987.

Key current releases include titles by James Hand, Clare Lynch and Irma Thomas. In the pipeline are albums from Slaid Cleaves, Bruce Cockburn, and new signings Vienna Teng and Bradley Walker. Jazz vocalist Madeleine Peyroux, whose 2004 breakthrough was a triumph for Rounder, is working on a new set for September release.

All three owners are still involved in Rounder matters, although the day-to-day is largely handled by president/CEO John Virant (who started at Rounder in 1992), COO Jeff Grady (who joined in 1999 from Ryko) and GM Paul Foley (who came aboard in 1998 from PolyGram). In the coming months, the operation will move from its funky office and warehouse complex in Cambridge, Mass., to modern quarters in nearby Burlington.

Billboard visited Rounder in its old digs and talked at length with Irwin, who remains involved in A&R activities, producing and mastering albums and assembling Rounder compilations.

Q: Have you kept a three-way partnership going for 36 years. What’s the secret?
A: A lot of it has to do with having the passion for the music and the artists. That’s the way we started out — it was just to put out the music we loved that no one else was issuing. It has changed somewhat, but we still do get a chance to put out a lot of the music that we are most passionate about.

Q: Rounder has diversified and expanded substantially. Does it ever feel like it’s getting too big?
A: I still feel that the size of the company hasn’t really affected what we’re able to do and what we want to release as much as what’s going on in retail, and those issues are largely outside of our control.

Q: How important is annual revenue growth to Rounder?
A: What matters to me is that we are profitable and able to keep doing what we are doing and doing it well, rather than actual revenue. I’m sure there are some years that the gross isn’t as high, but the net might be better because we have such a wide variety of music. A lot depends on how much we spend, as with any other company of any kind.

Q: Has it affected the original vision of the company to be working with a major distributor?
A: Major distribution helps the artists who are really out there touring and (in situations) where we and the artists can create enough demand so the records will sell. For the most part, the records that have the potential to sell are selling better than they have in the past.

Q: When did you change for the first time?
A: We have different (independent) distribution for those titles. And that’s getting more and more difficult regardless of who the distributor is, given the continuing consolidation of retail. A number of retailers who used to stock almost everything that came out aren’t doing that anymore.

Q: What are your sales channels for Rounder?
A: Well, interestingly, bluegrass, which we’ve been doing for years, after ["O Brother, Where Art Thou?"] began to increase and do very well. Certainly triple-A has increased considerably over the last five or six years since the founding of the Zoe label. And I don’t know where you put Alain Krauss, but we love her!

Q: How has the Internet helped Rounder?
A: We’re feeling that, as with everybody, the Internet sales are quite making up for the loss of retailers. When you lose 1,000-1,500 retailers over a few years, it’s going to take awhile to sell enough on the Internet to make up for it. In some of our genres it’s a little bit slow. The bluegrass audience has a lot of people who are still very “country” — many of whom probably don’t shop at all on the Internet.

Q: What labels are trying to sell records on the Internet?
A: A lot of our artists are touring, and a lot of people prefer to buy from the artist at the shows, and that’s been a very positive thing for us, which hasn’t changed at all and in fact might have increased as retail has consolidated.

Q: How important is Madeleine Peyroux to Rounder?
A: We have been able to do and sell out aren’t doing that anymore.

Q: What is the significance of Rounder being distributed by Universal?
A: A lot has been done to make it worth it for either of us to put those records through Universal. We’ve had different (independent) distribution for those titles. And that’s getting more and more difficult regardless of who the distributor is, given the continuing consolidation of retail. A number of retailers who used to stock almost everything that came out aren’t doing that anymore.

Q: What’s the impact of Rounder being distributed by Universal?
A: We have been able to do and sell out aren’t doing that anymore.

Q: How important is Rounder’s distribution for your revenue growth?
A: What’s the impact of Rounder being distributed by Universal?
A: We have been able to do and sell out aren’t doing that anymore.

Q: Have you been able to maintain a consistent strategy that allows you to consistently doing well-selling niche albums?
A: Largely we have. We still are doing most of the kinds of records that we have in the past. We are probably being more careful in our selection, trying to do what most labels have been doing, which is trying to find an artist that is farther along in their career in terms of having management or at least booking.

Q: Rounder’s distribution is important to Rounder’s overall business?
A: Alain Krauss is important in terms of her sales, but I think more than that... she’s looked upon by the industry as not only a quality artist but as a quality person. That she stayed with us this long I think reflects very well on us. A lot of people — I’m talking about managers and artists — see that, and that’s been very helpful.

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Q: You’re recruited major-label talent for key executive roles at Rounder. How has that helped?
A: We have people who have worked with the staff at UMG and that also know all the accounts, and they know how that end of the business works. It’s an interesting combination here where we have people who have grown up within the company — that was the first job that they had and came here for the music — and then have other people who have worked at major labels and have much more of a business background coming in. We feel that we have a great combination of the passion and the business.
A warehouse worker walks into a small recording studio in Virginia and asks if anyone has ever heard of a guy named Big Jon. The room falls silent. "Big Jon Platt?" someone asks. The worker, whose song was recorded on a demo, says this Big Jon guy offered him something called a publishing deal. They accuse him of lying.

From small towns to major cities, practically everyone who wants to make it in hip-hop wants to "get with" Big Jon Platt, EMI Music Publishing's executive VP and head of urban music. Usher calls him an idol maker. Island Def Jam Music Group chairman Antonio "L.A." Reid tags him a hitmaker.

During the 11 years since the former Denver DJ hooked up with EMI to sign songwriters, Platt has changed the landscape of music publishing and redefined the publisher's role. But what is it exactly that makes talent like Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter, Usher, Kanye West and Pharrell Williams sing Platt's praises?

To answer that question, Billboard hung out with Platt one spring day as he went about his business in New York.

11:30 a.m.: A hired driver welcomes Platt and Billboard, opening the door to a black SUV at a Manhattan hotel where Los Angeles-based Platt is staying. Almost immediately, Platt's cell phone rings. After listening to the caller for a moment, he laughs, "Stay out of the magazines and send me some music!"

With a click of his thumb, Platt's on another call, rattling off names of top managers to a writer/artist who is looking for representation. Next call: Platt asks the caller whether the songwriter in question is just looking for a big check or wants a publishing deal in which EMI can use its resources to build a catalog, i.e., a full repertoire of a writer's songs that can generate revenue for years to come.

Revolutionary thinking, all before noon. Building a catalog in hip-hop music is something relatively new.

"There is a business attitude that hip-hop music in general isn't catalog music," Reid says. "When Big Jon started to sign writers like Jay-Z and Kanye West, I think many publishers had to stand up and take note that it was real songwriting. It wasn't just samples and 25 writers trying to split up a song. They were actually guys who could craft music from scratch and be majority writers, in some cases 100% [share] writers. Publishers really didn't pay attention to hip-hop before Big Jon."

As the SUV weaves through New York traffic, Platt handles another half dozen calls before beginning a lengthy conference call. He's negotiating with a songwriter's representatives who want another advance. Although Platt says no to the proposal, his tone never turns negative. He patiently explains another advance is not possible because the writer's first advance was based on the expectation that a greater number of songs would make it onto an album. Even though the album is selling, because songwriting expectations were not met, the writer's advance is not yet recouped. EMI has to recover the first advance before giving a second. Typically a publisher like Platt would have lawyers negotiate the deals, but Platt prefers to handle the basic terms himself.

Platt pulls out his BlackBerry, responding to text messages without missing a beat of the negotiations. He places the device on his legs and pulls out a second ringing cell phone. With a phone on each ear, he handles the calls with amazing ease.

Noon: Two guys jump into the SUV—Atlanta-based manager Bernard Parks Jr. and DJ Toomp, who produced/co-wrote T.I.'s hits like "What You Know," a No. 1 Hot Rap Song in April, and "U Don't Know Me." Platt has set up meetings to introduce Toomp around town.

"In writing, it's not just about physically doing the work," Usher says. "You've got to place it. Big Jon's got the right relationships. He takes pride in being able to put young entrepreneurs in this position to have bigger dreams."
12:15 p.m.: At EMI's offices, Toomp burns his beats to CDs to give the executives.

Platt checks in with EMI chairman Marty Bandier and meets with creative/A&R director Jessica Rivera to explain certain deal terms. He's paying it forward. Platt has been mentored during the years by Bandier and executive VP Jody Gerson. "I was happy to bring him into an inner circle and teach him whatever I knew about the music publishing business," Bandier says. "He just soaked it up like a sponge. In no time at all, he was out on his own making whatever deals we both thought were appropriate."  

12:45 p.m.: Arrive at Sony BMG Music. Anton Marchand, VP of A&R for Sony Urban, promptly sends text messages to Jay-Z and others in their network of friends, joking about Platt arriving with Billboard shadowing him. Marchand cranks up the sound system to hear Toomp's beats on huge speakers. As everyone listens, Marchand and Platt furiously punch their BlackBerrys, responding to the messages the joke spurred. Marchand slowly burns some of Toomp's beats to a CD for the label's artists to hear. Record executives say that they have come to depend on Platt to develop talent. "He doesn't just place a song and walk away, or introduce you to a writer and walk away," Reid says. "He'll go inside. I call it 'go into the hood.' He'll go into the hood and make sure you get a hit record. He's a really rare commodity."  

2:30 p.m.: Toomp is all smiles after meeting with Jay-Z. Legend has it that Jay-Z, upon hearing someone's beats, will stand next to an artist and start rapping. Toomp just experienced it himself. Platt signed Jay-Z to EMI nearly 10 years ago. "It took me a while to really talk to Big Jon," Jay-Z says. "We came from a place where we had friends already, although I trusted him as far as handling the publishing. When we bonded, I could see that he's a special guy. In a game where people are taking other people's publishing—how it can be viewed as a shady business—he gives you 100% confidence that the business is being handled correctly."

"Jay-Z likes Toomp's beats; he calls one of his best friends and sends Toomp to see her. 'You give it to her,' Platt says. 'If I give it to her, then I have the relationship with her. You've got to have the relationship with her. I already know her!'"  

"Beyoncé is gracious and welcoming as she stops her recording session after Jay-Z's phone call to hear Toomp's beats. Producer/writer Rich Harrison laughs and jokes with Platt in the studio, thanking him for the "gift basket"—a big royalty check. Platt signed Harrison after hearing one song—before any release. Platt expected the first album Harrison wrote would result in an artist selling 2 million copies, but it barely went gold. About a year later, Harrison was in the studio with Beyoncé, co-producing/co-writing "a little ditty called 'Crazy in Love,'" which hit No. 1 on The Billboard Hot 100 in 2003 and stayed on Billboard's charts for 41 weeks.

Platt "hears it early," Jay-Z says. "He travels in the circles, so he knows what's happenin' on the street a little earlier than some of the guys that are flyin' at 50,000 feet."  

Platt says he does not bet on records, he bets on writers. "The first person to ever cut me a real check was Big Jon Platt," Usher says. "There's many milestones in your life that you will remember, but the day that you get a real publishing check is the day that makes a real difference, and you begin to understand. He gave me an opportunity to be taken seriously as a song writer in this industry."  

In the studio, Toomp plays his first beat. Beyoncé whispers, "That's hot." She says it again for the second and third tracks. When the sixth beat hits, Harrison walks up to the board and cranks up the sound. After several more tracks, Harrison says, "Yo! Let us breathe for a minute! You're hittin' us over the head!" Everyone laughs, and the music stops. Toomp hands Beyoncé his CD. Their relationship has begun.

"Man, Big Jon, I don't know how you do it," Toomp says, walking out of the studio. "Every time I'm with you, you change my life." 

3:15 p.m.: Over plates of pasta, Platt advises Toomp. They talk about the state of the music industry, the range of publishing royalties in videogames (5%-15% of net revenue) and which Toomp beats should be available to what acts. After Toomp's success with T.I., many people have been pressing to use his beats. It has been challenging for him to figure out when to say no and how to handle that pressure. "Don't wake up with a no on your mind," Platt advises. "Listen to each opportunity that matters. It's their job to push on you because you've got the heat. If an artist doesn't bring a
spark to you; your job that day may be to say no. It’s no different than your job going into labels and trying to get on projects. When they say no, it’s not personal to them. You just didn’t come up with the goods that day. Don’t internalize it.

Other writers value Platt’s advice as well. “People usually don’t take the time out, educate you and try to take you to the next level,” Williams says. “But Big Jon does. This guy affects people’s lives in a very positive way. When I first got a chance to work with him, I realized I was in the big leagues. He’s the guy you want to run something by.”

Platt’s hands-on style is what separates him from other publishers. “Kanye is a perfect example,” Reid says. “When the record is done, Big Jon is in the office wanting to know, ‘What are your singles choices? What’s your marketing strategy? How far are you gonna go with this?’ If he has something to say about it, he’ll say it. And there are times we’ll factor those things into the plan.”

This kind of involvement typically falls within the role of a manager rather than a publisher. “Sometimes I have to tell a manager, ‘Just sit back and let me help you look good,’” Platt admits.

Managers do not seem to be put off by Platt’s style. “There’s a calmness about him that’s nonthreatening,” Reid says. “He’s gonna give great guidance, pure honesty. He’s not trying to leverage it to be the manager one day or take the client, so he’s not a threat in that sense.”

4 p.m.: Both cell phones start ringing. “Now my day really begins,” Platt says.

Producer/writer Rick Rock is on the line. Can Platt get Duro to mix a track featuring Snoop Dogg for hard-core rap collective Federation’s new record? Platt makes a call, then gets Rock back on the line. “[Duro] says you’ve always got an open door. He can fly out tomorrow,” Platt says. In less than five minutes, Platt arranges for the track to be transferred to Duro and sets up a mixing session.

Why is a publishing executive arranging a mixing session? “They’re all EMI writers,” Platt shrugs. Rock, Duro and Snoop.

“Big Jon wears an A&R hat, a publishing hat, a lawyer hat, an A&R admin hat, an accounting hat,” says West’s manager G Roberson, who calls Platt “the mediator.”

5:30 p.m.: With Toomp and Parks back at their hotel, Platt prepares for a meeting with soon-to-be-signed songwriter Kristal Oliver. He meets every songwriter he signs in person.

“I like a certain type of person and a certain type of songwriter,” he says. “Most of my writers don’t drink and don’t smoke. They’re about business. He doesn’t mean that this is a requirement to get signed, but he explains, ‘They want to learn, they want to be the best.’”

A group gathers in the EMI conference room and listens to recordings of Oliver’s songs. “We want to be a big part of your career to put it to the next level,” Platt tells her. “I push hard. All I ask is that you work as hard as we work for you.”

8:30 p.m.: Platt meets lawyers Matt Middleton and Nicole George for dinner. Amid the laughter, they talk about mutual friends, business matters and who’s hot on the streets.

Platt helps in numerous ways. Sometimes he receives music from attorneys, managers and his current songwriters. Other times, he hears songs during recording sessions. Whatever the source, he relies entirely on his gut instincts to sign a writer.

11 p.m.: Back at the hotel, Platt orders warm peanut-butter cookies and water and takes two more meetings—with an indie publisher and a songwriter’s lawyer.

1 a.m.: Platt is still working. Billboard calls it a day.

What advice does Platt give his songwriters? “If you really want to write songs, then write songs every day,” Platt explains. “It’s that simple.”

Harold Lilly, the former Virginia warehouse worker who is now a Grammy Award-winning songwriter, can attest to Platt’s magic. “Ever since I met Big Jon, I don’t believe in writer’s block,” Lilly says. “Doctors don’t have doctor’s block. Teachers don’t have teacher’s block. You just do it. Big Jon says, ‘You’ve got to write the bad songs to get to the good ones, and you’ve got to write the good songs to get to the great ones.’”

Since meeting Platt, Lilly has co-written the Grammy-winning Alicia Keys song “You Don’t Know My Name” (produced by West and Keys) and co-produced/co-wrote Jamie Fox’s single “Unpredictable,” among others.

“Big Jon is passionate about music and about changing the world,” Williams says. “When you’re looking at those great pivotal moments in music in the last 10 years, those are always Big Jon moments.”
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A few years ago it was more an exception than the rule, but now brand marketing has become a must-have component in the world of R&B/hip-hop artists. • Paralleling its chart and sales dominance, R&B/hip-hop has watched its business fortunes explode. Early forays into the endorsement arena with clothing and athletic shoe lines have given way to automobiles, perfumes, soft drinks, jewelry, videogames, cell phones, credit cards, restaurants, liquor, cosmetics and everything in between. The product tie-in list is seemingly endless. Rapper Snoop Dogg has even inspired a new line of pet products, as well as a brand of foot-long hot dogs. • In this inaugural Urban Quarterly, Billboard looks at 10 artists who have been particularly savvy with brand marketing.

50 CENT
After releasing his multi-platinum-selling “Get Rich or Die Tryin’” (Shady/Aftermath/Interscope) in 2003, 50 Cent expanded his cache to include a bevy of product endorsements and brand conduits.

He began his own label, G-Unit Records, housing Lloyd Banks, Tony Yayo, Young Buck, Olivia, MOP and Mohib Deep. Reebok also came knocking with a shoe deal titled the G-Unit Collection by RBK, and the rapper soon added G-Unit clothing in a partnership with Ecko Clothing. In 2004, he joined with Queens, N.Y.-based Glacéau Vitamin Water for a specialty drink called Formula 50.

Last year 50 introduced his own videogame, “50 Cent: Bulletproof,” as well as his Paramount Pictures feature film and G-Unit Books biography, “Get Rich or Die Tryin’.” 50 rounded out 2005 by releasing a luxury watch collaboration with hip-hop outfitter Jacob the Jeweler.

THE BLACK EYED PEAS
The multi-culti Black Eyed Peas know the power of brand marketing. Smart partnerships with a variety of national brands—including the NBA, Dr Pepper, Verizon and Best Buy—helped the quartet extend its reach beyond the hip-hop community.

Earlier this year, the group’s chart-topping single “My Humps” became the first 2 million-selling master ringtone. The track is one of many hits culled from the Peas’ 2005 album “Monkey Business” (A&M), which has sold nearly 4 million copies in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Of course, the Peas were also one of the first acts to have their music (“Hey Mama”) featured in a campaign for the Apple iPod. Also, the group—comprising will.i.am, apl.de.ap, Taboo and Fergie—was tapped to headline this year’s sixth annual Honda Civic tour. This deal encompassed a BEP-created custom Honda Civic Hybrid, proving that the group makes strategic impressions in a marketing world that exists outside of traditional radio and video outlets.

SEAN “DIDDY” COMBS
Bad Boy Worldwide Entertainment Group founder/CEO Sean “Diddy” Combs is a master at intertwining celebrity and branding. Since unveiling his Sean John clothing line in 1998, Combs has fearlessly and successfully merged the two worlds. These days, his multimillion-dollar empire encompasses entertainment, restaurants and fashion.

Earlier this year, Sean John Fragrances, a division of Estée Lauder, launched the men’s fragrance Unforgivable. Intentionally or not, the provocative images used in the print campaign proved too hot for some, with several retailers refusing to run the ads. A second image was lensed for these merchants. Naturally, such controversy paved the way to additional press and TV appearances. Two months after Unforgivable debuted, it had become the No. 1-selling men’s fragrance in department stores in the United States, according
to Sean Jean Fragrances.

An upcoming international launch and ancillary products (deodorant stick, after shave, body spray) will surely keep Unforgivable at the top. Ditto for Combs, who recently partnered with industry veteran Emilio Estefan Jr. to form Bad Boy Latino, which will launch this summer.

DESTINY'S CHILD

Look up the definition of brand marketing, and you are likely to see the name Destiny's Child. Before signing off as a trio last year, the group personified the strategic relationship that results between band and brand. McDonald's, Wal-Mart and Pepsi are just three of the key branding platforms the group stood on to help drive music and tour marketing while growing its audience. These days, though, they are no longer a trio, the ladies have not lost that branding touch.

Beyoncé, who stars in the film adaptation of Broadway’s “Dreamgirls,” still maintains multiyear deals with Tommy Hilfiger Toiletries/Estée Lauder (True Star perfume) and L’Oreal. Plus, her House of Dereon clothing line is set for a hard launch this fall/winter. Kelly Rowland continues her spokesperson role for Soft Sheen’s Dark & Lovely hair care products (a L’Oreal division), while Michelle Williams recently appeared in Gap’s “Favorites” ad campaign.

LUPE FIASCO

Chicagoan Lupe Fiasco is new to hip-hop’s marketing game, but Reebok global VP of lifestyle marketing Que Gaskins does not care.

Gaskins realized that Fiasco’s quirky personality and diverse interests—including skateboarding— appealed to Reebok’s core audience. Thusly, Reebok recruited him for its 2006 RBK campaign featuring established artists Lil’ Wayne, Daddy Yankee, Mike Jones and Nelly before he even released his album. Fiasco also shrewdly linked with the shuttles street wear Web site Hypebeast. The site harbored his blogs and the Internet-only release of the “Fahrenheit 1/15: Revenge of the Nerds” mix tapes. In addition, Fiasco began his own record label, First and Fifteenth Entertainment, which is distributed through Atlantic Records and published through BMG.

Meanwhile, his righteous Kung Fu company, which began as a shoe-customizing venture, has flowered into a multimedia design entity that works on everything from album covers to clothing. And rounding it all out is the First and Fifteenth weekly radio show—a “FNF Radio”-airing via the Illinois Institute of Technology.

BEYONCE'S True Star remains one of the artist’s key branding deals while the Black Eyed Peas recently unveiled a new partnership with Honda Civic.

RYAN TOBY OVERFLOWS WITH NEW PROJECTS

Songwriter Set To Bear His ‘Soul’ On Solo Debut

RYAN TOBY

Ryan Toby has not exactly been twiddling his thumbs since leaving short-lived trio City High. Many will recall the Wyclef Jean-founded group—featuring Toby, Robby Pardillo and Claudette Ortiz—minted platinum certification and a Grammy Award nomination with its 2001 self-titled album as well as a hit single (“What Would You Do?”). Toby had earlier earned his songwriter-stripping stripes with Will Smith’s “Big Willie Style” album (including the song “Miami”). Since City High disbanded, he has penned songs for Usher (“Caught Up”) and more recently Mary J. Blige, LL Cool J and Bobby Valentino. But that wasn’t enough.

So Toby and now-wife Ortiz established Overflow Entertainment to satisfy what he recalls as “the bug that began itching me.” The company’s first project, released through Mass Appeal Entertainment/Fontana/Universal Music Group Distribution is Toby’s solo debut, “Soul of a Songwriter.”

“Before I signed another contract, I wanted to see what I could do on my own,” the singer/songwriter says. Ortiz provides background vocals and is executive producer of some tracks.

His July 18 release is a solid fusion of R&B and hip-hop that also marks Toby’s teaming with longtime industry colleague Marcus “DL” Siskind. A songwriter/producer (Queen Latifah, Lauryn Hill), Siskind originally established Mass Appeal as a production company in the early ’90s. Following its transition into a label, Siskind signed a multiyear deal with Fontana in 2005.

The label’s first release was an album by G-Unit’s Young Buck. Recorded in the late ’90s, “T.I.P.” was issued last November.

Based in his hometown of Boston, Siskind works out of Blue Jay Recording—a studio he bought and renovated with partner Kevin Richardson of the Backstreet Boys. From this locale, Siskind is producing several other Mass Appeal projects. These include buzzed-about Boston underground rapper Dre Robinson, whose “This Is Me” hits stores July 18 as well. Labelmate Toby guests on Robinson’s first studio album along with rappers Jae Millz, Popoose and Remy Ma.

“The New England [hip-hop] scene is in need of some attention,” Siskind says. He has been working with Robinson for the last three years.

Also in 2006, Mass Appeal plans to issue albums by ’90s Latin/R&B singer Lisa Lisa (of Cult Jam fame), pop/R&B singer Debreca (who reworked 50 Cent’s “21 Questions” as “21 Questions Again”) and Cape Verdean singer Suzanne Lubrano.

“I want to establish an outlet that’s realistic in terms of sales and profits,” Siskind says, “while at the same time giving good artists a chance to succeed.”

ASCAP REDUX: People are still talking about the organization’s first annual “I Create Music” Expo in Los Angeles last month. Among the key sessions for urban music industry professionals was the “Rhythm & Soul: Stacking Paper” session. Moderated by ASCAP senior VP Jeanie Weems, the panel paired key songwriter/producers (including Johnna Austin and Nisan Stewart) with their publishers (including Chrysalis Music Group’s Valerie Patton and Universal’s Mami Edwards). The result was a lively—and realistic—discourse on the writing end of the music game.

Decrying an industry that’s become too name-driven and follow-the-leader, panelists urged the neophyte writers in the audience to be patient, respectful and persistent while maintaining passion for their craft instead of approaching it simply as a paycheck. The bottom line: just write good music.

With the recent success of such lyrically strong songs as Mariah Carey’s “We Belong Together,” John Legend’s “Ordinary People” and Ne-Yo’s “So Sick,” here’s hoping the panel’s advice is a portent of even better songs to come.
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JAY-Z

JAY-Z is no stranger to the lucrative business of branding. Solidifying himself as not only one of the best MCs and marketeers alive, he continually cross-promotes each project through his rhymes, often referencing his clothing line Rocawear, among other things. In 2005 alone, JAY-Z became president of Def Jam Records and gained control of Roc-a-Fella Records and Rocawear Clothing from his former partners Damon Dash and Kareem Burke. He began Roc-La Familia to house the label's international acts and tap into the reggaeton craze with artists like Noreaga.

JAY-Z was Reebok's flagship endorsement deal in 2003 with the S. Carter by RBK shoe line, followed by the S. Carter II in 2004. He also has the S. Carter high-end clothing line and a venture with Swiss watch company Audemars Piguet. Plus, he boasts 40/40 clubs in New York and Atlantic City, N.J., as well as a partial ownership of the New Jersey Nets basketball team.

LUDACRIS

Born Chris Bridges, rapper/actor Ludacris is ramping up his branding game. Following critically acclaimed roles in the Academy Award-winning films "Crash" and "Hustle & Flow," Ludacris is pushing consumers to step into some Puma Suedes shoes. Within the next few months, look for the debut of various Ludacris-branded Puma products. First up: the shoes. The rapper is designing a model that features the Atlanta skyline on the side and the logo of his Disturbing Tha Peace Records on the back.

He is concurrently pitching the virtues of Pontiac's Solstice roadster as his track "Two Miles an Hour" plays in the background. Having earned plaids for a recent guest appearance on TV show "Law & Order: SVU," Ludacris told Billboard in the March 18 issue that his branding philosophy centers on "being versatile and doing the unexpected. I never do anything for the check—I have enough money."

QUEEN LATIFAH

Rapper-turned-author-turned-actress Queen Latifah is a one-woman branding machine. Make no mistake, the woman's reach is vast. She has struck business deals with Pizza Hut and Cover Girl, after all. Last fall, in fact, Latifah announced that her partnership with Cover Girl was expanding to include her own line, the Queen Collection.

In the fashion world, Latifah has also expanded her relationship with VF Intimates' Curvation line of intimate apparel. For this multimillion-dollar partnership, Latifah is a spokeswoman and creative consultant for the brand. Additionally, her image appears on Curvation packaging and point-of-sale signage. The icing on the cake? She receives royalties based on sales.

At the tail end of 2005, Latifah was one of five artists featured in Wal-Mart's Home for the Holidays campaign, which encompassed TV, print and online components, as well as in-store signage. For Latifah, such brand partnerships help build on the success of the other facets of her career, including music and film.

RIHANNA

Newcomer Rihanna made quite a splash last year with "Pon De Replay." The hip-shakin' jam peaked at No. 2 on The Billboard Hot 100 and reached the summit of the Hot Digital Songs tally. Meanwhile, the SRC/Def Jam artist's debut album, "Music of the Sun," debuted in the top 10 of The Billboard 200 and the Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums list.

Though Rihanna is new to the world of branded entertainment—her inaugural foray was her participation in the 2005 Secret Body Spray tour—she knows a powerful deal when she sees one (or two).

To help launch her sophomore album, "A Girl Like Me," the singer partnered with JCPenny and Nike. The shoe company used the album's lead single, the infectious "SOS," to help introduce its new women's dance-inspired clothing line and the interactive music video "Nike Rockstar Workout: Hip-Hop."

JCPenny, meanwhile, enlisted the artist to be the face of its new juniors line, Miss Bisou. Yes, Rihanna appears in the national ad campaign. But her music videos and singles are spotlighted in all JCPenny juniors departments, too.

In June, Puze beverages will launch a Rihanna promotion that includes touring, advertising and contest elements.

SNOOP DOGG

When it comes to branding, Snoop Dogg possesses dogged determination. There is the obligatory self-named clothing line, shoes (Pony line Doggy Biscuit) and cars (Chrysler, Cadillac). However, the rapper also packs plenty of image versatility. Partnerships with XM Satellite Radio, T-Mobile, E V microphones, Nokia, America Online and Vital Toys have transformed him from gang member to Madison Avenue darling. The rapper also recently launched his own line of foot-long hot dogs with Platinum Stars, while JAKS Pacific is developing a series of Snoop Dogg-inspired pet products. In addition, he and MTV are promoting the Hip-Hop Gaming League, the underground, online VIP videogame league Snoop co-founded.

"Most artists only last so long in the rap game," he told Billboard in July 2003. "I thought, 'if I had other hot commodities associated with me, there would be people still with me whether I had a hot record or not.'"

Reporting by Gail Mitchell in Los Angeles and Hillary Crosley and Michael Paletta in New York.

HILLARY CROSLEY hcrosley@billboard.com

There's something brewing down in Florida. Scott Storch's ubiquitous production side, a new screwed-up anemic sound is bubbling courtesy of Orlando, Fla.-based duo the Runners.

The team, Dru Brett and Jermaine Jackson, who met in preschool, got their industry buzz with Fat Joe's "All or Nothing" album cut "Does Anybody Know" and Lil' Wayne's "Tha Carter II" album joint "Money on My Mind." And while heads wondered why "Money" wasn't Wayne's syrupy second single, Miami MC Rick Ross popped into the mainstream with the Runners-produced hit "Hustlin,'" which is No. 26 on Billboard's Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart. Ross had worked the local scene for years, but incorporating hip-hop buzz word "hustlin'" in the title and screwing it up thrust him into the limelight. It also made the Runners hip-hop's newest commodity.

"We started in Orlando in 2003 and used radio to create a buzz," Jackson says. "If you're trying to blow, you have to take over your region first."

Connecting with WJHM (102 Jamz) Orlando mixer D-Strong, the two remixed Jay-Z's "Change Clothes" and "Dirt Off Your Shoulder." Strong played it during 102 Jamz's "9 O'Clock Bombs" feature and Disturbing Tha Peace affiliated DJ Nasty heard it. Nasty reached out to the duo, shopped the pair's beats and placed them on Fat Joe's "All or Nothing." Now the two are working with everyone from Young Buck to R&B singer Mario.

Don't expect the Runners to hide in anyone else's album filler. These guys are strictly looking for singles.

"There's a way to keep your sound in forever like Dr. Dre or Timbaland," Brett says. "We did 'Murda Murda' for Jetz Santana and 'Money on My Mind.' But 'Hustlin' - was better than any album cut we've ever done as far as what it's done for us. By keeping it consistent with singles, you're going to keep your sound new and fresh. That's what'll keep you in the game."

And with label plans on the far horizon, the Runners intend to lead this year's sound. The duo is co-managed by Brett, Nasty and Miami favorite DJ Khaled, and they'd like to branch out to pop. Britney Spears, they're waiting for your call.

Terror Squad member Khaled, however, is chauffeuring his own Florida rebirth, pinpointing Miami as hip-hop's next hot spot. And with Trina, Trick Daddy, Ross and producer Dre on the city's roster, he might not be wrong. Khaled's June Terror Squad/Koch Records compilation, "Listen'n ... The Album," includes posse track " Holla at Me" featuring Paul Wall, Lil' Wayne, Pittbull, Ross and Fat Joe. The song is No. 45 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs this issue.

"It's really unifying for hip-hop," Khaled says of his single. " ' Holla' has been researching well at radio, and 'Listen'n' is incredible. It's full of singles, and Miami's behind it."

With tracks from what seems like the entire hip-hop community (from Kanye West to Styles P), "Listen'n" could be radio's new best friend this summer.

THE RUNNERS, hip-hop's newest production duo have already scored hits with Fat Joe and Lil' Wayne.

Real Talk

DUO HITS GROUND RUNNING

The Runners Are Producing The Hottest New Singles
HARD WORK PAYS OFF FOR TOOL’S ‘DAYS’

The four members of Tool—anonymous band members behind vaguely androgynous frontman Maynard James Keenan—had a credo when they formed the band 16 years ago: “substance over style, art over image.”

“We wanted people to get into the music, instead of going, ‘Well, how long is their hair?’ and ‘Are they cute?’” guitarist Adam Jones says. “We just stood in the shadows and worked really hard.”

Without ever really leaving those shadows, Tool has quietly become one of the world’s most commercially—and uniquely—successful bands. And it has done so while repeatedly bucking industry convention. Tool often waits up to five years between albums. Its last three singles—including current hit “Vicarious”—have averaged more than seven minutes, forcing some radio programmers to create their own edits. And while the music business clamors to embrace digital formats, Tool has yet to reach an agreement with its label, Volcano/Zomba, for such distribution.

Yet Tool is more popular than ever. The band’s new album, “10,000 Days,” marks Tool’s second appearance at the apex of the Billboard 200, with 654,000 albums sold its first week, according to Nielsen SoundScan. This follows the sale of more than 8 million copies of its first three studio albums in the United States. In the United Kingdom, “10,000 Days” scored the group its highest bow with a No. 4 debut on the albums chart. The title debuted in the top 10 throughout Europe.

Tool fans span a cross-section from metalheads to emo kids, punks to goths, with its artsy, progressive hard-rock sound. And it seems the more the band follows its own vision, the more it underscores its cult-band cool—it’s just a cult of hundreds of thousands at this point.

Zomba shipped 900,000 copies in the United States, according to sources (see Retail Track, page 11), and the label delivered 480,000 albums outside the States, nearly double its initial shipment of Tool’s previous disc, 2001’s “Lateralus.”

Zomba Label Group president/CEO Barry Weiss calls the band a “throwback to the old days when Led Zeppelin came out with an album—everybody bought the album. It’s that simple.” Tool’s success, he says, is fueled by a double effect of true artist mystique and a less-is-more mentality.

“They don’t oversaturate their audience,” says Mike Stern, VP of programming for Emmis/CBS Chicago. “There’s not a record every 14 months and a tour every summer.”

The band has long tended to its mystique. Ballooning from the popularity of its early, pioneering videos—especially the stop-motion animation of “Prison Sex,” rising eerily above the masses of grunge and urban pop on MTV in 1993—Tool has carefully cultivated a dark image, through album and T-shirt artwork and onstage visuals.

“We’ve basically used art as a very strong propaganda tool to coincide with the music,” Jones says. In general, he says, the band “is just a really cool experimental project that we’re all in.”

The experimental approach certainly included the packaging for “10,000 Days.” The album is configured like a folding book, with one flap carrying stereoscopic lenses, and the other a booklet containing sets of paintings and photographs on each page. When swiped through the lenses, each set emerges as one 3-D image.

Retailers often browed on unusual packaging because of increased concerns regarding shipping and display. But call it one more example of Tool flying—high—in the face of industry convention. Fans love it, says Bryan Everitt, director of music operations for the 153-store Hastings Entertainment chain. “It’s great to see music lovers reading the liner notes and really enjoying holding the product in their hands again,” he says, noting that the album sets the Amarillo, Texas-based chain’s record for midnight sales with 5,000 copies sold on the album’s release date, May 2.

A proud Jones, who came up with the concept, says, “[Avant-garde] Robert Fripp was at our show the other day, and he said, ‘This is the best album art since the ’70’s’. … We’ve always trying to think of something to do that’s never been done before. We want people to get more than their money’s worth.”
Rebel With A Cause

Music Gives Vinnie Paul Abbott Reason To Look Ahead

Vinnie Paul Abbott looks over his shoulder when he enters the restaurant in Austin. Maybe he’s looking for his dead brother “Dimebag” Darrell Abbott, who was gunned down onstage by a crazed fan’s barrage of bullets during a Damageplan gig on Dec. 8, 2004, in Columbus, Ohio. Or maybe he thinks he sees his brother’s killer, even though he was shot dead by police at the scene.

He takes a breath, sits down, smiles and orders a drink. Abbott still has a difficult time entering crowded places—some shocks never go away. However, he’s turned his grieving process into a positive celebration of what he and his brother lived for—rock ‘n’ roll.

For Abbott, who played with Damageplan in metal/hard rock bands Pantera and Damageplan, rock is back. He has his new indie label, Big Vin Records, and its self-titled debut release from his band Rebel Meets Rebel is heating up at radio. And who knows, they might even sell a few records.

On numerous occasions in the years leading up to Dimebag’s death, the brothers—along with Pantera bassist Rex Brown (who together were known as the Cowboys From Hell, a reference to the title of Pantera’s 1990 debut album) and guitarist/vocalist/country outlaw legend David Allen Coe—recorded about a dozen songs under the band name, Rebel Meets Rebel.

Fondly looking back on those sessions, Abbott says he saw an opportunity to not only move on in his own life, but also keep Dimebag’s memory alive: “After spending time in a very dark place after my brother’s death, it came to me what to do,” Abbott says.

He took the Rebel Meets Rebel material to Damageplan’s label, Atlantic Records, which had first refusal rights. Abbott says it didn’t know what to do with it.

Not to be discouraged, Abbott started Big Vin Records and inked a distribution deal with Fontana “I always wanted to have my own label,” Abbott says. “My brother and I had a production company, and we had a couple of bands we wanted to get records deals for, but for one reason or another never could.”

Rebel Meets Rebel tracks “Nothin’ to Lose” (which has an accompanying video) and “Get Outta My Life” have been getting buzz at rock radio.

Cindy Miller, PD at WBZY Fort Wayne, Ind., is playing both songs. “We’re getting amazing phone calls,” she says. “Listeners are always calling to ask when the album is coming out and search for more information.”

In addition to the Rebel Meets Rebel album, Big Vin also released “Dimension.”

NEW ALBUM DATE
Sam Moore’s new solo album, “Sam Moore: Overnight Sensational,” will now be released Aug. 29. Originally due to street May 16, the Rhino Records project was delayed by Moore’s performances including recent shows at South by Southwest and the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. The Randy Jackson production features such guests as Eric Clapton, Vince Gill and Sting.

GOOD CHARAMEL TO KOCH
Good Caramel Records, run by Goo Goo Dolls bassist Robby Takac and industry veteran Gregg Bell, has signed an exclusive U.S. distribution deal with Koch Entertainment Distribution. The label, whose roster includes the Juliet Dagger and Last Conservative, was previously handled by Minneapolis-based Garfin Distribution. It has also added singer/Songwriter Katrina Carlson, through a deal with Bell’s Kataphonic Records, to its roster.

Good Caramel’s first release via Koch will be this summer’s compilation “Music Is Hope,” proceeds of which will benefit Buffalo, N.Y.-based Summit, a school for autistic children. The album will feature unreleased tracks from the Goo Goo Dolls and Ani DiFranco, among others.

By 2005, after only four years as a team, Gabriel & Dresden had remixed 13 tracks straight to the top of Billboard’s Hot Dance/Club Play chart. Their polished, trance-influenced style—known for its lush sounds and musical structure—had given everyone from Jewel (“Serve the Ego,” “Intuition”) to Britney Spears (“Me Against the Music”) a certain intangible mystery.

And their original single “As the Rush Comes” with singer JES as Motorcycle hit the top of that chart too, and infiltrated radio, both dance and commercial.

But the two—Josh Gabriel, a trained composer and sonologist, and Dave Dresden, a lifelong DJ and former Promo Only A&R rep—were ready for something more.

“They’ve always been the guys in the fine print—produced by, co-written by—and other people ended up taking the glory,” Gabriel says. “We said, you know what, screw this. We’re doing the work, we might as well be benefiting from it, and we have a lot to say on our own.” So we said, ‘Let’s clear our plates—no more remixing—and see what happens.’”

A year later, the result is a self-titled debut album, released on their own Organized Noise, label. The 12-track set includes four songs each with vocalists Molly Bancroft—including first single “Tracking Treasure Down”—already a hit overseas—and Jar Burton, plus
three instrumentals.
The collection defies style: It's not an extension of the trance-y Motorcycle sound or a companion piece to the duo's remixography. It's cleaner, meaner and more song-oriented (only threethree break the seven-minute barrier), a tidetherefore more vital.
Bancroft, for example, i.e., a folk-rock singer who has touredindigo girls, an unusual choice for progressive dance music. But her undaunted, just-me-and-my-guitar delivery, combined with Gabriel & Dinsden's precise, springy beat, make for a new, uniquely American sound. Meanwhile, the tracks with burton, formerly of London-based electronic duo syntax, nod to the duo's affection for the cure and depeche mode, and recall deep dish's collaborations with similarly arty singer morel.
"dance music artist album shouldn't be an oxymoron," Gabriel says. "It seems like artists get unduly punished because the instruments they choose are kick drums and synthesizers. We feel like we're a band. We happened to live through acid house and take ecstasy a couple of times, so that's part of the influence. But we're a band, we make music, and dance music is part of the tools we use to express ourselves."

**SUMMER SIZZLE:** 'Tis the season to get nostalgic, apparently. Summer will see the release of best-of compilations from three of dance music's finest entities: party music specialist Fatboy Slim ('The Greatest Hits: Why Try Harder,' Astralwerks), elegant house composer Kaskade ('Here & Now,' Om) and New York club classic stable Twisted Records. ('Let's Get Twisted: The Ultimate Twisted Records Collection'). Each is better than your average retrospective comp, because each subject has enough grand slam material to warrant an individual release. Astralwerks will release a companion Fatboy Slim DVD featuring all his videos, including the now legendary, Grammy Award-winning Christopher Walken clip, "Weapon of Choice." 

This was a particularly humorous discussion since the deploring came right after kevin stapleford. VP of programming for modern rock XTRA (91X) San Diego, had just finished talking about how his station airs a weekly specialty show called "Hear It On MySpace," which features acts gleaned from the Web site. The moderator's question was twofold. Did they use MySpace, and did they believe MySpace's ride of popularity was over? The first three programmers denied using the site to source music and said they believed its day had been and gone. Stapleford was not so sure but joked about its own use... or not. "No, no! If they don't!" he told the audience with a grin.

Word floating around Mus-expo was that the number of music acts with pages on my-space.com has surpassed the 500,000 mark. We thought that could not be true. And, we were right. It turns out that MySpace has more than 1.8 million acts, signed and unsigned, according to a rep for the site. Now some of those may be Auny Tilley the tuba player, but the numbers are still staggering. Of course, given those figures, expecting to stand out on MySpace is like expecting one blade of grass to stand out in a field, but its very stature has made it mandatory to have a page on the site. "MySpace has provided the community with such a well-used vehicle that I'm now shocked when a band is not involved with the service," a major-

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Radio Tuning Out MySpace

Does radio have a case of MySpace envy? A cadre of radio programmers at the recent Mus-expo conference in Los Angeles were quick to sound the death knell for the hugely successful social networking site, now owned by News Corp. But the proclamations of doom may actually be the sounds of their egos in denial. Three of the four panels at the radio session denied needing MySpace to help find new music acts.

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"I have to say that MySpace is truly 'it' right now, mostly because everyone and everything is there," says one A&R exec, calling it "one-stop shopping." That hardly sounds like MySpace has passed its prime. More likely, it means that it has arrived at the point of critical mass—that point, whatever it be MTV 20 years ago or 'The Son-pranos' in season two, when those who consider themselves tastemakers (even if it's self-appointed) want to distance themselves from it and want to be able to claim they are already on the next thing.

Which is great, but they're missing the mark if they dismiss MySpace. Many of their listeners are taking MySpace very seriously and are finding out about acts that PIDs and label heads have never heard of—and, in all likelihood, will never add to their tight playlists.

And for those who are seeking alternatives to MySpace... some A&R execs are looking at youtube.com and tagworld.com as sites that could become increasingly significant to their business.

TIDBITS: Billboard hears that CBS has put a cap on licensing fees it will pay to place a track on a TV show at $45,000 (combined for synth and mechanical). We under-
Melbourne. Australia’s the Drones are in Europe to promote their award-winning second album, “Wait Long by the River and the Bodies of Your Enemies Will Float By.” The set was issued in Australia and New Zealand by In-Fidelity/Shock in April 2005; London-based ATP Recordings released it under license last October in the United States and Europe. In March, the album won the inaugural Big Pond Australian Music Prize (billboard.biz, March 8). The act’s Sydney-based manager Tim Hegarty says most of the $25,000 Australian ($18,500) AMP cash prize settled debts from a four-month 2005-06 European and U.S. tour. The AMP victory also brought national airplay, increased sales, sold-out shows and a publishing deal with Melbourne-based Mushroom Music, Hegarty adds. “It increased our profile immensely and opened us up to a much broader audience,” he says. The band returned to Europe May 6 for a six-week tour including U.K. and Spanish festival dates plus European slots opening for Dinosaur Jr., booked by Nottingham, England-based CNL. The Drones’ third album, “Gala Mill,” is due in August. —Christie Elizer


**HIT GENERATOR:** French house DJ Bob Sinclair’s “Love Generation” is still generating sales 11 months after its first release. The single has shipped more than 1 million units globally—including 200,000 in France—according to Paris-based label Yellow Productions, the label founded by Sinclair in 1994. “Love Generation” was first released in France in June 2005, distributed through Barclay/Universal. Yellow Productions product manager Mehdi Ouriaghli says the track has been licensed in 21 countries; licensees include the United Kingdom’s Defected Records and Tommy Boy in the United States. Vocals on “Love Generation” are by New York-based Gary Pine, who fronts Bob Marley’s former band the Wailers. The Sinclair/Pine song is published by Mighty Bop Sessions/Universal. “Love Generation” will become a classic,” predicts Ouriaghli, who notes that the track has been used internationally in a string of TV commercials. It has remained in the top 20 of Billboard’s Hot 100 European Singles chart since September 2005 and is a current top 10 hit in Australia. Sinclair’s new album “Western Dreams” was released April 12 through Universal/Barclay in France. —Amyric Pichelin

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**Latin Notas**

**LEILA COBO** lcobo@billboard.com

**SPANISH ‘SPANGLED’ NOT A SOLO ACT**

When I first heard about the impending recording and release of “The Star Spangled Banner” in Spanish, my first reaction was: This is a small, cute story. As the story and the roster of participating artists grew, I thought, “This is a beautiful statement, a brilliant marketing ploy, but still a small, cute story.”

Since then, I have heard the final version of this anthem—“Nuestro Himno”—and, like everybody else, have been barraged by TV reports, radio discussions and even presidential comment on the subject, leading to stories on the front pages of The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

The level of interest and extraordinary degree of attention afforded to it by the mainstream press highlights the huge divide that still exists between Latinos and non-Latinos in this country, specifically when it comes to music.

While the mainstream oohs and aahs over the Spanish anthem, Spanish-language radio has virtually ignored the track. For the week ending May 3, only four stations among those monitored by Nielsen BDS had played it. The one station that had it on heavy rotation, Los Angeles’ KXOL, has since taken it off the air.

Instead, Latin radio plays other kinds of hard-hitting immigration songs that mainstream radio hosts and reporters have clearly never heard.

Molotov’s “Frijolero” (Beaner), Ricardo Arjona’s “Mojado” (Wetback) and a slew of tracks by Los Tigres del Norte come to mind.

Of course, these songs are in Spanish, and that makes them virtually invisible to many. Furthermore, until recently, Mexican groups such as Los Tigres didn’t have top-notch American publicists working for them.

Even when they do, though, selling Spanish music coverage to national mainstream outlets is tough as any publicist will tell you. Unfortunately, the entertainment press continues to treat Latin music as an anomaly, to be covered once a year. Sadly, our yearly allocation of coverage seems to have been taken up by a national anthem whose convoluted lyrics (for those of you who do not speak Spanish, trust me when I say it’s even more complex than the original) none of us is likely to ever learn.

**THE DIGITAL DIVIDE:** And while on the subject of divides, there appears to be a nearly unbreakable one between record labels and young consumers.

At the “Teen Frenzy” panel that took place as part of the Billboard Latin Music Conference, 15 Miami teens, all hailing from different countries (including the United States), bluntly stated that none of them had ever purchased a digital track. However, they all downloaded on a daily basis from services like Kazaa and LimeWire. When I pointed out that such behavior was illegal, one logically countered: “If that is the case, why doesn’t either of these sites state that?”

The logical question is what would make them actually purchase that digital track instead of simply snatching it? It isn’t money. These kids said they are willing to spend the cash for an actual CD if they are passionate about the artist and the music.

But even though they agreed that an ideal price for a digital download is 50 cents, they would still be reluctant to spend it, given that the music is readily available for nothing. They have a point. Why should they be held to a higher standard? The one thing that would deter them is if this musical theft was indeed treated as theft instead of status quo. That, obviously, is the point the RIAA has tried to get across with its lawsuits. But these suits, few and far in between, have yet to strike a chord.

What if, we queried, you could get fined (as is the case if you drive drunk or without a license) or even arrested for stealing music?

“Oh, my God,” one 16-year-old said. “I wouldn’t want to get in trouble.”

**Ivy Queen is one of more than a dozen artists who recorded "Nuestro Himno"/"The Spanish version of "The Star Spangled Banner"**

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www.americanradiohistory.com
Not Just Daddy’s Genre
Other Artists Sustain Reggaetón’s Appeal Beyond Superstars

Less than a year ago, Rakim & Ken-Y were fighting for space on “El Draft,” UBO’s compilation of up-and-coming reggaetón acts. Today, the pair’s debut album, “Masterpiece: Nuestra Obra Maestra” (Pina/Universal Music Latino), has been certified RIAA Latin gold for shipments of 100,000 copies, only two months after its release.

Despite some industry skepticism that the genre is driven solely by major-label marketing muscle, Rakim & Ken-Y are one of four new acts entered Billboard’s Top Latin Albums chart in the top 10 during the last six months.

“Reggaetón’s growth has been on the Latin rhythmic format, monitored stations, with occasional breakout reggaetón tracks. For the first time in Puerto Rico, according to the most recent Arbitron ratings, a reggaetón station is No. 1.

The major labels are also getting into reggaetón in a big way. For a genre that first rose to prominence on the backs of artists marketing themselves, it is worth noting that most new reggaetón acts are in some way affiliated with major labels, either as direct signings or via joint ventures or licensing deals.

Last year, for example, Universal Music Group launched Machete Music. That label’s biggest success story so far is Wisin & Yandel, who made history earlier this year by placing four tracks simultaneously in the top 10 of Billboard’s Hot Latin Songs chart—an accomplishment helped along by major-label marketing muscle.

That kind of push makes a difference, says Fido, one half of Alexis & Fido, whose album “The1 Pulito,” on Sony BMG, debuted at No. 4 in December. “The fact that people in Los Angeles, for example, know that we exist, is thanks to the work of our label and their distribution.”

Tito “El Bambino” (formerly of Héctor & Tito), signed directly with a major, EMI Televisa, precisely because the label had no major reggaetón experience. “They were a new label with different ideas and I had a new concept,” says Tito, whose album contains 20 tracks and includes plenty of pop and R&B.

EMI Televisa execs say that from the onset, they wanted to work Tito just as they would a pop act.

“From the way he looks to the music he makes, he was the most obvious to make a cross over into pop music,” EMI Televisa senior VP of creative Adrian Posse says.

Rakim & Ken-Y are also being marketed to the pop world.

Beyond the musical credibility they have as a reggaetón act, they have a certain look,” says Walter Kolm, senior VP of marketing for Universal Music Latino.

As a result, the duo’s first video is not the typical reggaetón video full of practically naked girls, but instead, has a storyline and more clean-cut images.

In order to generate a stronger bond between the duo and its fans, Kolm says, the label has taken the pair to smaller and bigger cities, developed the fan club and online presence—especially on MySpace—and is discussing a high school tour.

This marriage of the standard pop promotion at which major labels excel, and the street marketing and live performances germane to the genre, is driving sales, Braun says.

John Sepulveda, VP of the entertainment division for SBS, says that reggaetón’s maturity has reached the concert halls. SBS put on last year’s “Mega10” show featuring multiple acts, and Sepulveda says that acts at a secondary level last year are now headlining shows. Audiences still want to see the big stars, he says, but “they want other options.”

WHO’S YOUR [NEXT] DADDY?
No artist has yet broken out of the reggaetón barrio to sell Daddy Yankee numbers. But here are six up-and-coming acts—each with an album on the Top Latin Albums chart—who show great promise. Peak chart position is in parentheses.

WISIN & YANDEL
Machete Music “Pa’ Mi Mundo” (No. 1)
The most successful of the new crop, they have sold 240,000 copies, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

TITO “EL BAMBINO”
EMI Televisa “Top of the Line” (No. 3)
Former member of Héctor & Tito blends beats with balladry and social conscience.

CALLE 13
White Lion/Sony BMG Norte “Calle 13” (No. 6)
Irreverent lyrics, wacky music, lots of hip-hop.

ALEXIS & FIDO
Sony BMG Norte “The1 Pulito” (No. 4)
Hard-hitting and outspoken, energetic performers.

RAKIM & KEN-Y
Pina/Universal Music Latino “Masterpiece: Nuestra Obra Maestra” (No. 2)
Cute and edgy, romantic and danceable.

ANGEL & KHRYZ
MVP/Machete “Los MVPs” (No. 51)
Not a high debut, but stable, consistent sales.

www.americanradiohistory.com
TV Show's No. 1 Slump
Chris Young Wins 'Nashville Star,' But Can He Move Records?

A 20-year-old singer/songwriter/guitarist Chris Young takes the reins as the newest 'Nashville Star' victor, he doesn't have particularly big shoes to fill. The talented Young, who had long been the show's front-runner, beat out nine other TV contestants—and hundreds of hopefuls who never made the cut at regional auditions—to win the fourth season of the USA network's country talent series May 2.

The victory nets him a recording deal with Sony BMG Nashville. Young has been assigned to the RCA Records roster and his first album for the label is due in the fall.

Young previously self-financed two studio albums and a Christmas album, selling them at his shows out of the trunk of his car.

Sony Music Nashville (now Sony BMG) was the program's partner for the first two seasons, bestowing recording deals on winners Buddy Jewell in 2003 and Brad Cotter in 2004. Last year's winner, Erika Jo, signed with Universal South Records.

Yet none of the previous winners has set the world on fire with record sales. While Jewell's debut album sold 55,000 pieces, according to Nielsen SoundScan, a 2005 follow-up sold only 80,000 copies. Second-season winner Cotter, who emerged as an outspoken critic of Music Row following his victory, released the one album he was entitled to as the winner but was quickly dropped by Sony after it sold just 136,000 units.

Teenager Erika Jo's 2005 debut sold 119,000 copies. She remains signed to the label and is working on a follow-up. Thus far the most successful and promising of the 'Nashville Star' alumni was not a winner at all. Miranda Lambert, who finished third in the show's first season, was signed to Sony much later. Her album, 'Kerosene,' has moved more than 700,000 units to date and continues to sell decently.

The only other 'Nashville Star' contestant known to have landed a significant record deal is Texan John Arthur Martinez, who came in second to Jewell and ahead of Lambert in the show's first season. He recorded one album for Dual Tone Records but hasn't been heard from since.

IN RESERVE: Executives at the 6-year-old Nashville studio Cartee Day Entertainment are expanding their operations to include publishing, production and artist management arms as well as a new independent label, Reserve Records. The label's first releases—from the group Rhine- stone and country/Christian singer Shirelle—are scheduled to street mid-May.

Cartee Day's Alain Cartee and Diana Day-Cartee will serve as the label's president and COO, respectively. Alabama entrepreneur Brent Tedwell joins the label as CEO. Day-Cartee says they're selectively looking for five more artists to sign. They also plan to add five writers to the publishing division.

ON THE ROW: Broken Bow Records has eliminated its publicity department, resulting in the departure of publicists Summer Harmon and Jennifer Herrington. Label GM Brad Howell says the layoffs were not performance-based, but the label could no longer afford to pay for both independent publicists for its artists and for an in-house publicity staff.

The BBR roster includes country artists Craig Morgan, Jason Aldean and newcomer Megan Mullins, among others.

In other news, Jeff Allen is the second casualty of the recent combining of Sony Music Nashville and RCA Label Group.

Allen joined Sony as VP of finance in 1995 after three years in the same role at Capitol Records Nashville. He is expected to exit the company shortly. His ouster comes on the heels of the April 19 layoff of Sony Music Nashville president John Grady.

Elsewhere on the Row, Jimmy Rector, the longtime Southeast regional promoter at BNA Records, has joined Raybeau Records as head of promotion. Rector will also be a partner in the Warner Bros.-affiliated label, which was launched in late 2004.

Other partners in the label include artists Kenny Alphin and John Rich (Big & Rich), Jon Nicholson, Cowboy Troy and James Otto, and executives Cory Gierman, Marc Oswald, Dale Morris and Ashley Worley. Raybeau's roster includes Troy and Otto.

Labels Rely On Van Gelder’s Engineering Touch, Again

In jazz, the RVG brand has mighty clout and speaks multiple volumes on sonic purity. It’s no surprise then that Blue Note and Prestige are capitalizing on the RVG tag with a new series featuring remastered classic CDs.

The man behind the abbreviation is Rudy Van Gelder, the sound engineer who revolutionized the way jazz is recorded, beginning in 1954 in his parent's living room in Hackensack, N.J., and continuing in his own studio in Englewood Cliffs, N.J., from 1959 to the present. He recorded all the jazz greats who made first-class discs for all the important in-the-day labels such as Blue Note, Prestige, Impulse, Verve and CTI.

"Rudy defined the way several generations expect to hear jazz," says Michael Cuscuna, director of catalog for Blue Note and the impetus behind the label's RVG Series. "He's the one who got closest to the way jazz sounds live at front-row center. Most engineers in the '50s were timid and moved the microphones away from the musicians. Rudy miked up close, recorded with as much volume as possible to avoid hiss and got the power, clarity and individuality of all the players."

Freelance engineer Joe Feiria, who started recording in 1971 and has worked with a range of musicians from drummers Paul Motian and Bobby Previte to guitarists John Scofield and Charlie Hunter, sings Van Gelder’s praise: "Rudy changed the way we perceive jazz recordings and the way engineers approach jazz."

Bassist Ron Carter, who recorded many of his own albums as well as hundreds of session dates at Van Gelder’s studio, says, "Rudy not only set and maintained the standard of jazz recordings, but he also set the standard for recording the acoustic bass."

Blue Note’s RVG Series, which started several years ago, continues with February’s release of more than a dozen gems including Dexter Gordon’s "Dipper," and Lee Morgan’s "Tom Cat.

Two more batches arrive Sept. 12 and 26, including dates by Donald Byrd ("Off to the Races" and Horace Silver ("Doin’ the Thing at the Village Gate").

Meanwhile, Prestige Now, an imprint of Concord Music Group, inaugurated its own RVG series in March with 10 masterworks, including Sonny Rollins’ ‘Saxophone Colossus’ and the Miles Davis Quintet’s ‘Relaxin.’ Van Gelder, in an e-mail exchange, says that he re-members the sessions and the artists well, and that today he still "feels strongly that I am their messenger." More Prestige RVG reissues arrive June 13 and July 18, including discs by Etta Jones ("Don’t Go to Strangers") and Oliver Nelson ("Screamin’ the Blues").

Here’s how the labels work with Van Gelder: They send him the masters that he originally recorded. "First I examine the tapes to see if they’re playable," he explains. "Next step, I hook up a chain to do an analog transfer. Every tape is different, so I do a lot of listening."

When asked if he has any favorites in the upcoming Prestige series, Van Gelder at first says, "I can’t have a favorite." Then he notes, "But anything with Miles Davis is OK with me. And Etta Jones is pure emotion on this album. "As for the Blue Note series, he says, "They’re all great music. I love them all, but Horace Silver is something special."

Cuscuna says that when he first approached Van Gelder to revisit the masters, he was hesitant: "Rudy was reticent to look at the past. But then it kicked in how much more he could do with the new equipment and what he had learned. He saw it as a challenge and opportunity. He’s given a new lease on life to some of these titles as Rudy brings the music out of the tape."
Neil Young: Living With War

**NEIL YOUNG**

Living With War

Producers: Neil Young, Niko Bolas, Reprise

Release Date: May 9

Young’s follow-up to the contemplative “Prairie Wind” is a sharp-toned rock album that serves as a fiery salve to the American spirit and a seething indictment of current political policy. Teamed with former bandmates Chad Cromwell (drums) and Rick Ross (bass) along with a 100-piece choir, Young takes well-aimed shots at the White House in biting rockers “After the Garden,” “Shock and Awe” and the much-publicized “Let’s Impeach the President.” He takes a more philosophical approach on sadder songs like “Families” and “Flag of Freedom,” and lets his liberal flag fly high on “Lookin’ for a Leader.” Young may be riding the wave of popular opinion and will clearly benefit from well-deserved publicity here, but there’s no doubt some will question where the Canadian native gets all this “we” stuff. In any case, a milestone effort.—RW

T Bone Burnett: The True False Identity

**T BONE BURNETT**

The True False Identity

Producer: T Bone Burnett

Columbia/D2M

Release Date: May 16

Fourteen years after his last release, T Bone Burnett arrives with “The True False Identity,” a griping yet comic collection of American songs braced with wit, heartbreak, social critique and spirituality. After prominent behind-the-scenes work as producer and soundtrack director, Burnett bursts back with his own hard-edged and soft-hearted tunes set in a clanky, snaky soundscape colored by his studio standbys like guitarist Marc Ribot and drummer Jim Keltner. Highlights include the eerie leadoff track “Zombieland,” the Stagger Lee/Delia-like, eight-bar blues “Based There We’ll Be To Hell,” the Busb’-bash “Fear Country” and the credible rocker “Baby Don’t You Say You Love Me.” While Burnett’s tunes brim with turbulence and intrigue, the fault lines open to a deep quest for faith. As he poignantly sings in “Every Time I Feel The Shift,” “When you run from truth, it comes in waves.”—DO

The Raccooners: Broken Boy Soldiers

Producers: Jack White, Brendan Benson

Third Man/V2

Release Date: May 16

While a hook-heavy romp that clocks in at just over 30 minutes, the debut album from this supergroup of sorts is an amalgamation of the band’s disparate blues, Brendan Benson’s pop melodies and the Greenhorns’ garage stomp, courtesy of Patrick Keeler (drums) and Jack Lawrence (bass). Detroit natives White and Benson trade vocals on much of the album, and on tracks like the British Invasion-flavored “Intimate Secretary,” it’s hard to tell where one begins and the other picks up. Along the way, the band delves into Graham Bond-style organ riffs (“Store Bought Bones”), three-chord rockers (“Steady, As She Goes”) and Beatles-esque harmonies (“Hands”). No one is at his edgier, most cutting edge than White here, and White fans looking for a new White Stripes record should temper their expectations. But as far as side projects go, this is as good as it gets.—BG

The Twilight Singers: Powder Burns

Producer: Mike Napolitano

One Little Indian

Release Date: May 16

Former Afghan Whigs frontman Greg Dulli has spent nearly 20 years advancing his solo career with “Powder Burns” his newest evolution. Producer Napolitano heavily influenced what would otherwise be Dulli’s straightforward, self-loathing rock recordings, adding layers of crunchy guitars, piano and throbbing effects. While Dulli’s bitters, drunken voice remains front and center, the backing vocals and orchestras nearly make the songs sound like a parody, marrying a beast to a beauty. The ReHelted “Candy Cane Crawl,” with vocals by Ani DiFranco, is too fancy for Dulli’s off-kilter caterwauling. A critically lauded “There’s Been an Accident” (with Joseph Arthur) capitalizes on Dulli’s lyrical desperation with crashes galore and a climax of cinematic strings. Dulli’s lyrics haven’t advanced much since he began using the Twilight Singers moniker, but the song arrangement and arrangements have seemingly moved forward without him.—KH

Jagged Edge: Jagged Edge

Producers: various Columbia/Sony Urban Music

Release Date: May 9

Jagged Edge is undoubtedly one of the most harmonious quartets R&B has seen this side of Boyz II Men. With each successive album, including this self-titled fifth effort, the group has continued to blend classic ballads like “Gotta Be” and “Let’s Get Married” alongside edgy hits like “Where the Party At? But that charm is often eclipsed by stale lyrics full of clichés and relationship jargon, made evident on tracks like “A’Hypnotic” and “So High” (“This girl is like my drug, I gotta re-up”). And because it rarely experiments with different melodies and ranges, the group’s songs tend to resemble each other. When some members do stretch beyond their vocal zones “Seasons Change” featuring John Legend, the results can be lovely.—CH

Christina Milian: So Amazin’

Producer: Cool & Dre

Island Def Jam

Release Date: May 16

With her third album, “So Amazin’,” Christina Milian tries to fully transform from peppy pop sweetheart to sweet urban souldess. But the former Disney Channel hostess still has yet to pinpoint her true identity. Here, the mostly mid-tempo production provided by Miami-based duo Cool & Dre gives synergy, and though Milian often continues off as a third-tier Beyoncé, her feathery soprano captivates when her lyrics do not. Lead single “So Amazin’” featuring British Young Jeizzy is instantly rousing, and her well-publicized breakup with ex-boyfriend actor Nick Cannon seems to be fodder for scorned-woman cuts like “Fooling” and ’Who’s Gonna Ride” featuring Faith Evans & Mafia. Ultimately, Milian is not strictly distinctive (besides physically), and although it can be a fun listen, “So Amazin’” only scratches the surface of who she really is.—CH

Blake Mills: Everything’s Gonna Be All Right

Producer: Chris Goldsmith

Real World

Release Date: May 16

The blues has been Musselwhite’s job since the 1960s. Thirty-nine years after his debut album, the singer/songwriter/harmonica player still puts in the hours and the effort. Describing the illustrious guests of 2004’s “Sanctuary,” Musselwhite sticks with his own band, mostly, and a few other selected electrician’s lamenmable, brought home by Musselwhite’s long, lonesome harp riffs. Opener “Church Is Out” is a hard-hitting, irreverent rock’n’roll tune, while “Town to Town” finds him trying to influence the liquor store playing electric guitar. It’s a story of a hard-luck, hard-working fellow that, at least metaphorically, could be about the albums as well as the songs just doing his job and doing it well.—WR

Bananarama: Drama

Producers: various

The Lab/Fuel/UMVD

Release Date: May 16

In the United States, Bananarama has been missing in action for 10 years. But with “Drama,” the duo a handle of beautiful synth-pop vocals including MuteE and Ian Manetro) deliver a cohesive collection of dancefloor-ready jams. Like contemporary British girl groups Girls Aloud and the Sugababes, Bananarama’s current song sonic landscape revolves in pop-allicious rhythms that cul from electro, trance and disco.

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CHRISTIAN McBride
Live at Tonic
Producers: Andy Blackman, Hunwit, Christian McBride
Roadmap
Release Date: May 16
While live sets can be duds, this three-CD package detonates. Recorded over two nights at New York's venerable Tonic, the plugged-in trilogy showcases McBride on acoustic and electric basses leading his band into funkland (disc one), then hosting late-night improv jams with an array of guests (discs two and three). With McBride's basses perfectly mixed and prominently featured, he and his band blaze through the tribute to late comedian Flip Wilson, "Clerow's Flipp'd," and scorch a 14-minute take on Weather Report's "Boogie Woogie Waltz." The jams start out slowly but develop magnificently with few downturns. McBride establishes a groove, then ushers in such marquee friends as Charlie Hunter (inventive guitar/sax) and Jason Moran (power-packed pianism) for the first night, and DJ Logic (scratch percussion) and Soulive's Eric Krasno (guitar stings) for the second. Label, it all bottled lighting.—DO

WORLD
GIKI
Gold & Wax
Producer: Bill Laswell
Palm Pictures
Release Date: May 16
Ethiopian vocalist Gigi (Ejigayehu Shibabaw) delivered a stellar debut in 2001 with her self-titled disc for Palm Pictures. Bill Laswell produced that initial project, which introduced world music fans to a rare talent. He's behind the boards again here, helping Gigi reaffirm the potential she showed five years ago. A natural-born songwriter, blessed with a splendid, supple voice, she keeps the right sort of company in the studio. In addition to Laswell's bass, percussionists Karsn Kale and Aysor Daoudi and wiz Bernie Worrell and guitarist Buckethead put the buzz in these tracks. The vibe is a dynamic synthesis of Africa and avant-garde, epitomized by the profound groove of "Salam" and the Afghan funk of "Hulu-Dane." "Gold & Wax" strikes an ideal balance between exoticism and instinctive groove.—PVR

LATIN
JEREMIAS
Esos Que Va Por Ahi
Producer: Sebastian Krys
Universal Music Latin America
Release Date: May 9
Venezuelan singer/ songwriter Jeremías's major-label debut (after one independently released album) is a collection of intimate and commercial songs. Jeremías is a disciple of the Latin American singer/songwriting tradition; a troubadour who tells stories with his guitar, a style that has not been successful in the United States in the past several years. But if anyone can break the jinx, it would be Jeremías, with his catchy songs, colloquial lyrics and knack for storytelling like the single "Uno Mas Uno" Es igual a Tres," a tale of a two-time-friend. True to its roots, "Ese Que Va Por Ahí" is sparsely produced but guitar-driven. Jeremías's coaxing voice and fine songs.—LC

CHRISTIAN LITTRELL
Welcome Home
Producers: various
Reagan
Release Date: May 2
Backstreet Boy Brian Littrell makes his solo debut with a stunning pop album, and its potent songs speak to love, faith and hope. Littrell is targeting the Christian market with this project, and the lyrical depth will no doubt strongly resonate with that audience. But the uplifting tone and gorgeous performances will strike a chord with BSB fans as well. Littrell's warm, engaging voice has never sounded more compelling. The a cappella "Jesus Loves You" is a joyous romp featuring Take 6, and Littrell's songs "When Angels Are Heroes" and "Worship You" are heartrending, especially in the essence of human nature and man's relationship to God. But the album's most powerful moment is "Done Without Godbye," which conjures one of the most heartbreaking images of Sept. 11, 2001, yet to be heard. Littrell plans to continue with Backstreet, but this album signs the arrival of a major new player in the Christian market.—DEP

CASCADA MIRACLE (3:25)
Producers: DJ Manian, Yano
Writers: Y Peifer, M. Reuter
Publishers: Rocks, ASCAP, Edition La Castella X-IT Media/Franseatic
Musikerlabel
Robbins (CD promo)
While "Everytime We Touch" is a fun, knee-bobbing singalong anthem, it sounds like hundreds of high-energy songs that have preceded it. And yet pop radio was primed for a non-hits rhythm track after years of shunning the genre and propelled Cascada into The Billboard Hot 100's top 10. But an label Robbins is well aware—via its 2005 smash with DHT’s “Listen To Your Heart” whose successor was DOA at radio—such songs seldom engender artist development (how many are even aware that Cascada is a German trio? "Chris [say bloo act?"). So the potential for follow-up "Miracle" is shaky, especially considering that the track isn't cut from precisely the same melodic cloth as "Touch." A new U.S. mix attempts to differentiate it ever so slightly, but there's no denying that this is more redux than seven mixes might give the song some retail muscle and dance radio should indulge, but Cascada already sounds like a one-hit wonder.—CT

JOSH HOGEO 360 (3:50)
Producer: Troy "TR" Johnson
Writers: J. Hage, T. Johnson, Alan
Publishers: various
Universal South (CD promo)
Lykke cracked the top 30 with his first effort and deserved an even higher score. He should achieve it this time around with the impressive "Do We Still?" Lykke wrote the song with Rob Crosby and Wil Rambeau, and the lyric captures the emotional angst of a relationship that's unraveling, especially in the clever hook, "We said 'I do,' but do we still?" Lykke has a warm, evocative sound, and he cleverly captures the sadness and uncertainty of a man caught in an unsightly emotional void. He has one of those great country voices equipped to deliver such a poignant song with an authority that's strikingly compelling. It's one of many potential hits on Lykke's noteworthy Universal South debut.—DEP

BLACK STONE CHERRY
Lonely Train (3:30)
Producers: Richard Young, David Barrick
Writer: Black Stone Cherry
Publishers: Them Young Boys/Buy, ASCAP
Roadrunner (album track)
Black Stone Cherry's "Lonely Train" is catching the retro-rock trend as the single from the group's forthcoming Roadrunner debut gains radio traction. The Kentucky band counts Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Lynyrd Skynyrd among its influences, which this track clearly reflects. But the song really comes across as a lighter version of Zakk Wylde's Black Label Society—dense, bruising guitars, dark undertones and a croaky-voiced singer. "Lonely Train" seems too an anti-war lament, although some of its lyrics ("You can't judge a book at looking at the cover, you've gotta find someone for messing with another") muddle the theme. Its thumping drum beats and jagged guitar solo are appealing, but Black Stone Cherry should forge more of a sound it can truly call its own.—CLT

CHICAGO WITH RASCAL FLATTERS
Love Will Come Back (3:48)
Producers: Jay DeMarcus, J. Schacht, J. DeMarcus, C. Sandford
Publishers: various
Rhino (CD promo)
"Love Will Come Back" is a vintage, hit-worthy effort, featuring the intricate harmonies, grandiose production and signature hook section that have made the group an AC staple for the past couple decades. Jason Schacht is joined on vocals by the red-hot Rascal Flatts. AC embraced first single "Feeler," but here's a song that can turn the format to the top. "Love" is truly a return to form.—CT
**Rock Keeps Rolling With Tool, Pearl Jam, Peppers**

A career-best sales week for Tool, 13 years after the band garnered its first Billboard chart ink, offers the latest proof that neither rock nor artist development are dead.

Tool's new "10,000 Days" takes no prisoners with first-week sales of $64,000, easily grabbing the top step on The Billboard 200.

Aside from beating Tool's prior best Nielsen SoundScan week, the new album's start represents a substantial lead of 283,000 over the chart's runner-up. Not that the No. 2 album slouches, as Pearl Jam's new self-titled set roars in with 271,000 sold, the veteran band's best sales week since 1998.

That's when "Yield" opened at No. 2 with 359,000 copies. Two years later, Pearl's "Binaural" would also start at No. 2, but with lighter sales (226,000).

The band, of course, has seen taller heights. In 1993, "Vs." became the first album of the Nielsen SoundScan era to surpass 900,000 in its first week (950,000). The following year, "Vitalogy" sold 877,000 when it became the second of three No. 1 career albums.

Tool, on the other hand, has never stood taller. Its last outing, "Lateralus," sold 555,000 when it became the band's fourth charting album and its first No. 1 in 2001. The band also grows in the global market, entering Billboard's Albums Eurochart at No. 1 for the first time. "Lateralus" entered that chart at No. 7, which turned out to be the title's peak.

Rock will continue its roll next issue, when another longstanding band is poised to keep the No. 1 spot in rock's camp for a third straight week. Chains' first-day numbers indicate Red Hot Chili Peppers' double-album "Stadium Arcadium" should have no trouble topping 400,000, more than enough to rule the roost.

Godsmack, now at No. 7, began rock's streak last issue when "IV" topped the page with 211,000 copies.

UNPLUGGED, PLUGGED: Aside from leading Tool's Billboard 200, Tool is also No. 1 in trend core-store chart Tastemakers and billboard biz list Top Rock Albums. The chart it cannot possibly lead is Top Digital Albums, as the band opted to forgo digital distribution for "10,000 Days."

That's not the only high-profile album to sidestep iTunes and its ilk recently. Prince also said no to download sales when "3121" became his first No. 1 since 1989, and independent label Victory kept Hawthorne Heights' "If Only You Were Gone" out of the digital marketplace.

Another indie holdout, TVT, has elected to join the download party, as evidenced by new entries on Hot Digital Songs from Lil Jon and Ying Yang Twins at Nos. 12, 56 and 75.

Much-buzzed-about Guns N' Roses eagerly jumps into the digital stream, putting downloads of its "St. Elsewhere" up for sale a week before the physical album's May 9 street date.

Aside from starting at No. 11 on Top Digital Albums, it also shows up at No. 7 on Top Electronic Albums, No. 11 on Top Heatseekers and No. 28 on Top Independent Albums.

Digital-only releases would not typically qualify for the last three mentioned charts, but street-date violations are also a factor, accounting for 9% of 4,000 sold and prompting the title's pre-CD bows. Of digital-only releases that have bowed on Top Digital Albums since that chart arrived in the Sept. 24, 2005, issue, Guns N' Roses holds the biggest one-week sum, edging Frena Apple's "iTunes Originals" by about 200 units.

**OBSERVATION DECK:** Although Tool's chart-leading 564,000 beats the No. 1 album from the same week of 2005 by more than a 2-to-1 margin, overall album sales are down from that comparable frame.

Nine Inch Nails' "With Teeth" was your champ a year ago when it opened at 272,000. In fact, this week's top 10, weighing in at 1.5 million, outsells the 10 best sellers from the stanza that ended May 8, 2005, by 29%. Thus, you might be surprised to see this issue's Market Watch lag year-to-year album sales by more than 9%. That indicates softer sales among slower-turning titles.

At this point of calendar year 2006, the No. 200 title on The Billboard 200 has averaged sales of 5,189, compared with 5,489 in the same span of 2005.

Catalog sales this year lag 2005 by 2.2% and in this particular tracking week by 16.2%.

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**Market Watch**

**Weekly National Music Sales Report**

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<td>ANDREA BOCELLI</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIHANNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAMES BLOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARK KNOPFLEER AND EMMYLOU HARRIS</td>
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<td>CHAMILLIONAIRE</td>
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<td>CARRIE UNDERWOOD</td>
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<td>NE-YO</td>
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<td>THE Pussycat Dolls</td>
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<td>MICHAEL BURLI</td>
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<td>JACK JOHNSON</td>
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<td>THE ALL-AMERICAN REJECTS</td>
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<td>BARRY MANILOW</td>
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<td>EMINEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSH TURNER</td>
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<td>RASCAL FLATTS</td>
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### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist (Label)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.  | B.B. King (Polk Ave) | The Warrior | AC/AD | 1118.94
| 2.  | John Mayer (RCA) | How Many Times | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1090.03
| 3.  | John Mayer (RCA) | Waiting on the World | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1086.02
| 4.  | Kool & the Gang (Uptight) | The Best of Both Worlds | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1061.01
| 5.  | The Eagles (Capitol Records) | Hotel California | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1058.00
| 6.  | The Eagles (Capitol Records) | Life in the Fast Lane | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1055.00
| 7.  | The Eagles (Capitol Records) | Desperado | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1052.00
| 8.  | The Eagles (Capitol Records) | Take It Easy | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1049.00
| 9.  | The Eagles (Capitol Records) | Life in the Fast Lane | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1046.00
| 10. | The Eagles (Capitol Records) | Take It Easy | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1043.00

### ADULT TOP 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist (Label)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1396.94
| 2.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1392.03
| 3.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1388.02
| 4.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1384.01
| 5.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1381.00
| 6.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1378.00
| 7.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1375.00
| 8.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1372.00
| 9.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1369.00
| 10. | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1366.00

### MODERN ROCK

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist (Label)</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1396.94
| 2.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1392.03
| 3.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1388.02
| 4.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1384.01
| 5.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1381.00
| 6.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1378.00
| 7.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1375.00
| 8.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1372.00
| 9.  | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1369.00
| 10. | Foo Fighters (Columbia) | Everlong | Modern Rock | 1366.00

### HOT DIGITAL SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artist (Label)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1396.94
| 2.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1392.03
| 3.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1388.02
| 4.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1384.01
| 5.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1381.00
| 6.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1378.00
| 7.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1375.00
| 8.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1372.00
| 9.  | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1369.00
| 10. | Rihanna (SRP / Def Jam) | Take A Bow | Pop/Adult Top 40 | 1366.00

Data for week of MAY 20, 2006. For chart reprints call 646.654.4633.
### Hot Singles Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Sales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Don't Want To Miss A Thing&quot;</td>
<td>Joe Elliott (Def Leppard)</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The One That Got Away&quot;</td>
<td>Kool &amp; The Gang</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;What I Did For Love&quot;</td>
<td>Loggins &amp; Messina</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Don't Stop Believin'&quot;</td>
<td>Journey</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Home&quot;</td>
<td>Goo Goo Dolls</td>
<td>8,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### POP 100 Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Daydream Believer&quot;</td>
<td>The Monkees</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Take Me Home, Country Roads&quot;</td>
<td>John Denver</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You Make Me Feel Like Dancing&quot;</td>
<td>Craig David</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I Want To Hold Your Hand&quot;</td>
<td>The Beatles</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Back In Black&quot;</td>
<td>AC/DC</td>
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### POP 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Bad Day&quot;</td>
<td>Danzig</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Temperature&quot;</td>
<td>Shinedown</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Where You Go&quot;</td>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I've Got You&quot;</td>
<td>Celine Dion</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Don't Cry For Me Argentina&quot;</td>
<td>Evita</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Chart Legend

- **Pop** (pop music) - 2006
- **Rock** (rock music) - 2006
- **R&B/Hip-Hop** (R&B/hip-hop music) - 2006
- **Adult Contemporary** (adult contemporary music) - 2006
- **Billboard** (Billboard Hot 100) - 2006

**Note:** The chart data is as of May 2006 and includes sales and airplay information as of that time.
### Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Blood Money</td>
<td>Blood Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ghetto Classics</td>
<td>Ghetto Classics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reality Check</td>
<td>Reality Check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The On Top Of Our Game</td>
<td>The On Top Of Our Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ain't Nobody Worryin'</td>
<td>Ain't Nobody Worryin'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Charm</td>
<td>The Charm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Emanicipation Of Mimi</td>
<td>The Emanicipation Of Mimi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Except_That_I'm_Savage</td>
<td>Except_That_I'm_Savage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ghetto Classics</td>
<td>Ghetto Classics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Blood Money</td>
<td>Blood Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The On Top Of Our Game</td>
<td>The On Top Of Our Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Emanicipation Of Mimi</td>
<td>The Emanicipation Of Mimi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Except_That_I'm_Savage</td>
<td>Except_That_I'm_Savage</td>
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### Top Blue Albums

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<th>#</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Greatest Hits: 30 Years Of Rock</td>
<td>Greatest Hits: 30 Years Of Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>People Gonna Talk</td>
<td>People Gonna Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Definitive Collection</td>
<td>The Definitive Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Ultimate Collection</td>
<td>The Ultimate Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Old New Ballads Blues</td>
<td>Old New Ballads Blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Into The Midnight</td>
<td>Into The Midnight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Be Yourself</td>
<td>Be Yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Best Of George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</td>
<td>The Best Of George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Change In The Weather</td>
<td>Change In The Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Best Of George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</td>
<td>The Best Of George Thorogood &amp; The Destroyers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Between The Bullet**

Mob Deep, better known as Mob Deep, has three albums on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with "Blood Money." The set makes the Hot Shot Debut meda because street-date violtions caused an early No. 97 how last week. The duo's vault to the top gets EPMD and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony for the most chart-capping albums by a rap group on this list.

- **Mob Deep**: Three's The Charm
- **Rick Ross**: Rather You Than Me
- **Jay-Z & Fabolous**: The Get Shorty Series

---

**Data for week of May 20, 2006**

For chart reprints call 646.654.4633

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

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**BETWEEN THE BULLET**

Havoc and Prodigy, better known as Mob Deep, rock their third No. 1 on Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums with "Blood Money." The set makes the Hot Shot Debut meda because street-date violations caused an early No. 97 how last week. The duo's vault to the top gets EPMD and Bone Thugs-N-Harmony for the most chart-capping albums by a rap group on this list.

- **Mob Deep**: Three's The Charm
- **Rick Ross**: Rather You Than Me
- **Jay-Z & Fabolous**: The Get Shorty Series

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## R&B/HH Airplay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 20</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
<th>LABEL</th>
<th>WEEKS ON AIR</th>
<th>WEEKS ON CHART</th>
<th>WEEKLY TIDE</th>
<th>PEAK RANK</th>
<th>SELL-R</th>
<th>SELL-R %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Alive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lil' Kim</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>No More Drama</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kanye West</strong> &amp; <strong>Tyrese</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Things Fall Apart</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bob Marley &amp; the Wailers</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Dilemma</strong></td>
<td><strong>T-Pain</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Bartender</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kanye West</strong></td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
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## R&B/HH Singles Sales

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>This Kiss</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pink</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sixteen</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>Lil' Wayne</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Stand Up</strong></td>
<td><strong>Eminem</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Assault &amp; Battery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Illinois Chicago</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
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## Rhythm & Hip-Hop Airplay

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<th>LABEL</th>
<th>WEEKS ON AIR</th>
<th>WEEKLY TIDE</th>
<th>PEAK RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Poppin' That</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lil' Flip</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Assault &amp; Battery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Illinois Chicago</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>The Prez</strong></td>
<td><strong>2Pac</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Letterman</strong></td>
<td><strong>T-Pain</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Lose Control</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nelly</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
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## Rhythm & Hip-Hop Singles Sales

<table>
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<th>WEEKLY TIDE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Poppin' That</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lil' Flip</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Assault &amp; Battery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Illinois Chicago</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>The Prez</strong></td>
<td><strong>2Pac</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Letterman</strong></td>
<td><strong>T-Pain</strong></td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Lose Control</strong></td>
<td><strong>Nelly</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BETWEEN THE BULLETS

NINE-YEAR CLIMB FROM ‘WHEREVER’ TO NO. 1

Almost nine years after he first appeared on Hot Country Songs, Jack Ingram nabbed his first No. 1, earning the Greatest战士 (nearly four million audience impressions). His “Wherever You Are” also becomes the first No. 1 for the recently opened Big Machine imprint.

Ingram got his first chart ink in the July 19, 1997, issue when “Flutter” opened at No. 69 on what was then a 7-position chart. That song peaked at No. 51 on the Aug. 22, 1997, chart. Ingram’s previous high.

This week’s No. 1 battle pitted Ingram against Jason Aldean’s “Why,” an especially meaningful tussle since neither artist had previously rung the top bell. “Why” holds at No. 2, finishing just 233,000 impressions behind Ingram in the closest No. 1 race since 211,000 listeners separated George Strait’s “She Let Herself Go” (No. 1) and Carrie Underwood’s “Jesus, Take the Wheel” (No. 2) on the Jan. 14 chart.

—Wade Jerten
### HOT LATIN SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>46.</strong> QUE ME ALCANCE LA VIDA</td>
<td>Sin Bandera</td>
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Data for week of MAY 20, 2006 | CHARTS LEGEND on Page 50

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

www.americanradiohistory.com
### LATIN AIRPLAY TOP 40 (POP)

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<td><em>Waist</em> (D. Morales Mixes)</td>
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### LATIN AIRPLAY TOP 40 (TOP LATIN ARTISTS)

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### ALBUMS

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<td>GROWING PAINS: GOD'S DESTINY/CHARISMA</td>
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8. BORN TO BE WILD

9. BOYS OF SUMMER

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· The Billboard Q&A With An Influential Artist
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Correspondent - Los Angeles - Billboard Information Group

VNU Business Media publishes over 40 business publications, 20 directories, stages events, conferences and trade shows, and operates 150 electronic products. We operate around the globe, covering some of the most powerful industries in the world including entertainment, retail, media, travel and design.

Billboard Magazine, a VNU publication, currently has a career opportunity for a Correspondent to be based in the Los Angeles Bureau.

This position requires the correspondent to deliver mission critical reporting tailored with timely perspective, insight and analysis of the Latin music space. The role requires a bilingual person (Spanish and English) who can deliver pieces for the weekly magazine of Billboard and Billboard Radio Monitor, whilst offering robust coverage for the online properties. There are also key responsibilities associated with Billboard’s annual Latin Music Awards and Conference. In addition to reporting responsibilities in the Latin space, this position will also fulfill the West Coast editorial needs of posting stories for Billboard.biz - the 24/7 online face of Billboard’s coverage of the music industry. The job requires extensive writing, reporting and project management skills. Experience in Web publishing is essential.

Education: Must have a degree in a relevant area of study.

If you meet these requirements, please send your résumé and cover letter including salary requirements to:

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PLATEFUL OF PROJECTS

Track has learned that the release of Kelly Rowland’s sophomore solo set for Columbia/Sony Music has been moved from July to first-quarter 2007. Manager Matthew Knowles says more time is needed to properly set up the project. “We want to make sure our marketing strategy is a multi-tiered approach that capitalizes on the synergies afforded by her other projects,” Knowles tells Track. (Surely, it’s not because Beyoncé has a solo album due in the fall.)

As for Rowland’s ‘other projects,’ she co-hosted the fifth annual MTV Asia Awards ceremony May 6, where she premiered her new single “Gotta Go” for a worldwide audience. On May 13, the Destiny’s Child co-founding member will be in Atlanta to kick off the five-city Soft Sheen-Carson/Vixen Model Search for women of color. Additionally, Rowland, a spokesperson for Soft Sheen’s Dark & Lovely hair-care line, will be Vibe magazine’s summer ’06 cover girl (the issue hits stands May 16).

THESE THINGS HE DOES

Fountains of Wayne is working on its new album for Virgin Records, which could be out by year’s end, FOW’s Adam Schlesinger tells Track. “We’ve got a bunch of stuff recorded,” he says. “Usually what happens is we record way more than we need, and certain songs start to fall by the wayside.” It will be the group’s first album for Virgin since its former label, S-Curve Records, folded following founder Steve Greenberg’s departure to become president of Columbia Records.

Additionally, Schlesinger, who wrote that catchy little title tune for 1996’s “That Thing You Do!,” is working again on crafting smart tunes for a movie. This time, he’s writing songs for upcoming flick “Music & Lyrics,” which stars Hugh Grant and Drew Barrymore. And yes, Schlesinger says, the pair can wrangle. “They sing quite well,” he says. Who knew?

DYNAMIC TRIO

You may have heard that Lionsgate, Track hears the William Friedkin-directed “Bug,” which stars Ashley Judd, for a fall release. And that it will have its world premiere at the 59th annual Cannes Film Festival (May 17-28). Track now hears that new songs from Audioslave’s Cherry Cornell. Velvet Revolver’s Scott Weiland and System of a Down’s Serj Tankian will likely be heard in the film’s theatrical release.

THE SOUND OF PHILADELPHIA

Staying with Lionsgate, Track hears its end-of-year film, “P.D.R.” (that would be Philadelphia Department of Recreation), will feature the sounds of classic Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff recordings (original versions and newly recorded covers). “P.D.R.” stars Terence Howard and Bernice Marcell and marks the la- bouratorial debut of South African Sunu Gonera, who honed his creative chops making commercials.

STILL A THRILL

Jody Watley is a woman on a mission. Fully understanding the changed landscape of the music industry, the R&B/pop/dance artist has partnered with Virgin Megastore for the release of her new album, “The Makeover.” Due this summer from Watley’s own label (Avitone Recordings), “The Makeover” will be exclusively sold through the Virgin chain. Watley tells Track. As part of the deal, the artist will embark on the Jody Watley Virgin Megastore Makeover Tour, which will make appearances for fans, live performances and autograph sessions. In creating these events, Watley says she and Virgin are “making over” the traditional artist-in-store visit. By the way, that beautifully chilled-out cover of Madonna’s mid-’80s top 10 hit “Borderline” you’ve been hearing in the trendier lounges of New York’s Meat Packing District and Miami’s South Beach is the lead single from “The Makeover.”

REACHING FOR THE GOLD

Cherry Lane Music Publishing seems to enjoy pushing the envelope of what music publishers typically do. Track hears that Cherry Lane has booked two of its artists, Sony BMG Urban & Tropical newcomer Jean (whose album, “On,” arrives May 16; and the unsigned Nini Camps, for live conce- ts) during the 2006 FIFA World Cup (June 9-July 9). First-generation Cuban-American Camps apparently has a friend and fan in Aida Turturro. Track couldn’t help but notice the “Sopra- nos” actress at Camp’s recent New York showcase.

But there’s more aural stuff from the soccer field. The refrain from producer RedOne’s “Bamboo” has been named the official melody of the 2006 FIFA World Cup. It will truly be a melody heard ‘round the world. It has even been incorporated into three songs for the World Cup’s official music program, including “Time of Our Lives” by Il Divo and Toni Braxton. Care for the “Bambo” ringtone? It’s just a few clicks away.

Meanwhile, Shakira and Wyclef Jean are scheduled to perform the 2006 FIFA World Cup Mix of “Hips Don’t Lie” at the World Cup Final in Berlin. Indeed, this would be the “Bambo”-infused version.

LUCKY STAR

Track loves the fact that Nancy Sinatra was deemed worthy enough to receive a star May 11 on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Those “boots” finally paid off.

---

EXECUTIVE TURNSTABLE

EDITED BY SARAH HAN

RECORD COMPANIES: Universal Music Enterprises in Los Angeles names Mike Davis executive VP/OM. He was executive VP of sales and marketing at Universal Music & Video Distribution.

Virgin Records in New York names Jennifer Frommer VP of strategic marketing. She was head of marketing at Spin magazine. Virgin Records also names Lauren Zucker senior director of strategic marketing. She was director of business development at Knitting Factory Entertainment.

Toucan Cove Entertainment in Seattle promotes Robert Evanoff to senior VP of artist relations and development. WV Toucan Cove Entertainment, also names Deborah Brosseau VP of publicity. She was founder/president of Brosseau Audience Development.

Both are based in Los Angeles.

Universal Music Group names Dorothy Hui director of digital content development. She was director of new media at Universal Motown Records Group.

Sunset Record Group in New York names Todd May head of creative development. He was creative director at DiscLogic.

Jewish Music Group in Studio City, Calif., names Deon Schachtel national director of sales. He was associate director of domestic sales at Warner Strategic Marketing.

PUBLISHING: BMI in New York ups Richard Conlon to VP of new media and strategic development. He was VP of marketing and business development, media and new technology.

The Harry Fox Agency in New York promotes Stephen Rhodes to VP of distribution, reporting and licensing technology. He was senior director of technology development.

Zomba Music Publishing in New York names Peter Visvards director of pop/rock creative. He was director of A&R research at Columbia Records.

Send submissions to shan@billboard.com.

FOR THE RECORD

Contrary to the Billboard Stars report on Dennis Arfa’s Artist Group International in the April 22 issue, Queenysyche is not an AGI client. Monterey International (agent Garry Buck) is the band’s sole booking agency.

A report in the May 6 issue headlined “Sony BMG Sued Over Artists’ Digital Rates” requires clarification. Third Story Music, which sued Warner Music Group in May 2005 over Tom Waits’s recordings, is an independent publishing and production company. Waits does not hold any ownership interest in that company, and he was not a part of that company’s lawsuit against WMG.

In the May 13 issue, a headline about a new service backed by WEA incorrectly characterized the initiative. The service will help independent retail stores enter the digital download business. Also, a Billboard Bulletin and billboard.biz version of the story incorrectly stated that the stores will carry only Warner Music Group titles. They will be able to sell downloads from all labels that offer their music digitally.

Also in the May 13 issue, the story headlined “Mission Cole: Diva Takes Charge” misspelled Ron Fair’s name. It also stated that Cole’s upcoming “Impossible” video would be shot in Prague, but it is no longer being shot abroad.

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