Congratulations!

Andy Andy and Chosen Few El Documental from Urban Box Office

BILLBOARD LATIN MUSIC AWARDS 2006

Tropical Album Of The Year, Male
"Ironia" Andy Andy

Tropical Album Of The Year, New Artist
"Ironia" Andy Andy

Tropical Airplay Song Of The Year, Male
"Que Ironia" Andy Andy

Latin Compilation Album Of The Year
"Chosen Few: El Documental" Various Artists
Orchestral Maneuvers

Styx Thinks Big For Ambitious Cleveland Gig

Veteran rock band Styx will take the stage May 25 with Cleveland’s Contemporary Youth Orchestra as part of the Rock the Orchestra series at the Blossom Music Center. A beautiful amphitheater we have headlined many times. (Liza said the orchestra members exploded in excitement when she announced this.) Blossom is actually designed more for symphony orchestras than rock bands.

So inspired, we’ve written two new songs that we will premiere live that night. We’ve figured out our set list, which will include an intermission. As of now, 21 concert halls to the larger venue, the Blossom Music Center, a beautiful amphitheater we have headlined many times. (Liza said the orchestra members exploded in excitement when she announced this.) Blossom is actually designed more for symphony orchestras than rock bands.

This year, Styx had plenty of probability we made up the orchestra leader is me. The right positions.

How can we take the stage for the first time? This is a living example of how important such programs are.

All 165 CYO members, plus Liza and the six of us (bassist Chuck Panozzo is planning to join us for the performance) will be onstage that night. We have designed the lights and sound for the evening, a special tribute for the night, and Liza is preparing a program for the audience. We have been very pleased with Liza’s

**FEEDBACK**

**SMARTER DJS NEEDED**

I believe in everything Clear Channel Radio’s Alfredo Alonso wrote in his April 29 Billboard article, “Spanish Niche Formats: A Radio Gold Mine.” However, I also believe that the biggest mistake the major broadcasters like Clear Channel and Univision have made is that they did not consider putting knowledgeable people in the right positions.

You have programmers who absolutely nothing about the music and in some cases have a negative feeling about the music. This leads to terrible programming and a horrible representation of the stations.

The young urban Latino market is the fastest-growing market in the world. With that in mind, major radio networks should do some homework and get the people who know the music—and have the streets behind them—in the right positions.

**ARINGTON**

I believe in everythin...
**UMG Q1 EARNINGS UP 136%**
Universal Music Group's first-quarter earnings from operations increased 156% to €50 million ($115.5 million), aided by the margin on higher sales volumes, and the recovery of a €50 million ($64.2 million) cash deposit connected to a lawsuit with TTV Records. UMG's sales results were reported as part of first-quarter results released by parent company Vivendi and mirror preliminary results Vivendi released in April.

**SONY BMG AXES EPIC MUSIC**
Sony BMG is shuttering its Epic Records Nashville imprint and laying off roughly 20 employees. They include newly promoted Epic promotion VP Tom Moran and former Sony Music Nashville VP of marketing, artist development and creative services Deb Haus. The label group will now operate four country imprints: Arista Nashville, BNA, Columbia and RCA. Provident Music Group continues to operate under the Sony BMG Nashville umbrella. All the label's rosters are under review with cuts expected by June 30.

**NAPSTER FISCAL YEAR REV UP 133%**
Napster's fourth-quarter revenue grew 54% to $26.8 million while the company reduced its net loss to $4.4 million from $24.3 million a year ago. For the fiscal year ended March 31, revenue increased 10.5% to $94.7 million, while Napster's losses almost doubled to $54.9 million. Napster claims 606,000 paid subscribers as of the end of March, including 59,000 university subscribers. Excluding university subs, the number of premium paid subscribers grew 54% year-over-year.

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**CHICKS DON'T STICK**

*Chicks* Single Ruffles Feathers At Country Radio

Disappointing airplay for the first two singles from the new album by the Dixie Chicks exposes a deep and seemingly growing rift between the band and the country radio market that helped break the trio.

"Taking the Long Way," out May 23, is the band's first album after the 2003 incident that sparked radio boycotts and turned many once-loyal fans against it. First single "Not Ready to Make Nice" peaked at No. 16 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart, beginning its descent after just seven weeks. Second single "Everybody Knows" drops 48-50 this issue after four weeks.

"Not Ready to Make Nice" performed only slightly better at AC radio, peaking at No. 32 on the chart and falling off after six weeks.

From the beginning of the album rollout, the Dixie Chicks were eager that their songs be worked to radio formats beyond country.

By picking the defiant "Not Ready" as the first single, they've reopened a wound that was particularly deep for country radio fans, and left many country programmers with the burning question: Why on earth would the band choose to do this?

After hearing the album, WKIS Miami PD Bob Barnett says he was "excited about the opportunity to introduce some great Chicks music to the listeners. But the group's decision to come with "Not Ready" as the lead single left him "stunned, especially in light of the fact that, when asked, programmers and consultants that listened to the project were virtually unanimous in saying we should put the politics behind us and concentrate on all the other great music we were hearing."

KUBL/KKAT Salt Lake City PD Ed Hill criticizes the song's "self-indulgent and selfish lyrics."

Barnett played the song for a week, but pulled it after listeners called to say it sounded like the Chicks were "gloating" or "rubbing our noses in it," he reports. "We didn't need to pick at the scab any longer."

He and other country programmers were upset that the group chose to launch its new album with a single that respawned the angst of three years ago, when Chicks lead singer Natalie Maines infamously told a London concert audience on the eve of the war in Iraq that she was ashamed to be from the same state as President George W. Bush. In the subsequent backlash, some programmers dropped the group while others tried to balance audience outcry with the belief that Maines has a right to express her opinion.

The two singles have had a striking lack of impact at radio, considering the band's history. Between 1997 and 2003, it netted 14 top 10 country singles, including six No. 1 hits. In addition to eight Grammy Awards, the group has won 10 Country Music Association Awards and eight Academy of Country Music Awards. The trio has sold 23.4 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The Dixie Chicks and reps from their label, Columbia Records, declined to participate in this story. But-at least as far as Maines is concerned—the drop-off at country radio appears to be part of the band's pre-conceived plan for the album.

Maines was quoted in late January on entertain-mentweekly.com, before the single went to country radio, saying: "For me to be in country music to begin with was not who I was...I would be cheating myself...to go back to something that I don't whole-heartedly believe in. So I'm pretty much done. They've shown their true colors. I like a lot of country music, but as far as the industry and everything that happened...I don't want to be 'that' away from that."

Maines also said, "I don't want people to think that me not wanting to be part of country music is any sort of revenge. It is not. It is totally me being who I am, and not wanting to compromise myself and hate my life."

At KNCK Sacramento, Calif., the Chicks' music weathered the 2003 controversy only to be pulled as a result of Maines' new Entertainment Weekly comments, coupled with poor scores in local music tests.

"KNCI is still a part of the country music industry," PD Mark Evans says. "When an artist says that they don't want to be a part of that industry, it rages our decision-a no-brainer. There are too many talented new artists dying to have a song played on country radio, so I'd rather give one of them a shot."

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**www.americanradiohistory.com**
Virtual Dolls, Real Dollars

The Pussycat Dolls and Others Find Fans—and Cash—in Unreal Places

As the Pussycat Dolls’ star continues to rise, Interscope Records wants a promotional campaign that would take them out of this world.

Literally.

On May 15, the label partnered with Web community LiveInternet to launch a virtual nightclub called the Pussycat Dolls Lounge. Visitors can customize digital images of themselves—called avatars—to navigate the various rooms of the nightclub.

Visitors also interact with other guests via their respective avatar, using the integrated AOL Instant Messenger application to chat, punctuated with preprogrammed gestures and dance moves.

Plastered on the walls are billboards for the Pussycat Dolls and other such Interscope acts as Beck, Gwen Stefani and Keane. And occasionally, the members of the Pussycat Dolls themselves will log on with their own avatar and conduct live chat with fans from their VIP room.

With online social networking at an all-time high, the music industry is increasingly turning to the next stage of the user-generated content phenomenon—the virtual world.

“MySpace is about promoting who you are to a broad community to find people with similar interests,” says Courtney Holt, head of new media and strategic marketing for Interscope Records, who green-lighted the Pussycat Dolls Lounge. “This is the next step—take those people that have found that common interest and give them another level of communication. Once you’ve committed to being a fan, how much deeper are you going to go?”

Holt and others in the music industry hope it will be deep enough to actually buy products. The lounge features a storefront where visitors will soon be able to spend real cash to buy artist T-shirts to add to their avatar or link through to bandmerch.com to buy the actual shirt.

And then there’s the music. Doppelganger music director DJ Lanz spins two-hour, pre-programmed sets, featuring mainly Interscope artists, and takes requests when logged on.

Each song is displayed on-screen, and users may click a link to buy.com to purchase the CD. Digital download capability is in the works.

Interscope and Doppelganger share any revenue made through such sales and in any ad revenue collected by renting billboard space to others.

The lounge is not alone in the virtual world. Last year, a similar community called the Halko Hotel began hosting virtual visits by such acts as Goknil, Ashlee Simpson and Bow Wow.

The weekend before the lounge’s grand opening, BBC Radio One webcast its One Big Weekend music festival to more than 100,000 virtual visitors from around the world. Second Life, the virtual world’s biggest competitor, featured Interscope artists and offered a massive gathering for the Second Life community.

According to Radio One’s interactive editor Daniel Heaf, the BBC will retain its lease for a year to showcase unsigned musicians and, potentially, other concerts.

Second Life members can make real cash by selling programs to other players to customize their avatar’s appearance or living space. While the BBC gave away virtual items like T-shirts and preprogrammed radios with custom playlists on them, it’s easy to anticipate vendors selling virtual concert T-shirts or digital tracks through the community in the near future.

Another virtual world, Project Entropia, made headlines this year when one resident paid $100,000—a gain, that’s real money—to develop a virtual space station. He now makes $12,000 per month renting virtual apartments and retail space, and plans to open a nightclub as well.

Doppelganger executives say the company’s deal with Interscope is just a beta test for their technology. They plan to create similar virtual environments for other brands soon, with several discussions reportedly underway.

These environments may be interoperable, so visitors can “walk” from the Pussycat Dolls Lounge to another lounge branded by another partner, similar to bar hopping. Production costs run from $25,000 for a simple storefront to $3 million for an entire city.

As the teen music fan spends more time online instead of watching TV or listening to the radio, these virtual worlds are expected to become even more prevalent—and important—in terms of exposing artists.

“It’s giving me a good view of where I think the long-term potential is for this type of business,” Holt says. “Consumers want this as the next step to community and interaction online. If we can hit a couple of cultural bull’s-eyes, we’re going to move the needle a little bit.”

Rock In Rio Expands Global Brand

Since its 1985 launch, Rock in Rio has been a massive event, drawing hundreds of thousands to each festival. Now it is working to become a massive global brand.

This year’s event—two weekends of music including performances by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the reformed Guns N’ Roses and Roger Waters performing “Dark Side of the Moon”—will be broadcast live on multiple media platforms around the globe through a new partnership with Network Live. And in coming years, the festival itself plans to move around the globe, too.

Rock in Rio’s first three events (1985, 1989 and 2001) took place in Rio de Janeiro. This year’s event is in Lisbon, Portugal, as was its 2004 incarnation. And founder Roberto Medina is working to confirm Spain as site of the 2007 event. He plans a return to Portugal in May 2008, and says he is finalizing conversations to license Rock in Rio for the first time to Australian promoter Michael Chugg for a February 2008 event.

“My plan is to create an international brand and take this project to many places as a global communications project,” Medina says.

All events will carry the same branding and fundraising. Each event raises more than $1 million to benefit various environmental and children’s programs.

The first Rock in Rio drew more than 1.3 million people, and featured Queen, AC/DC, Rod Stewart and James Taylor, whose “Only a Dream in Rio” is based on the experience.

This year’s model takes place May 26-27 and June 2-4, and boasts more than 40 musical acts. Approximately 70 countries will broadcast Rock in Rio on TV, with customized specials being produced for specific territories.

Promoters five live plans to deliver the concert in real time to AOL’s 115 million monthly visitors, XM Satellite Radio’s 6 million subscribers, the more than 14 million households that receive DirectTV and other media partners.

“With an event like this, we should reach in the area of 100 million people,” Network Live CEO Kevin Wall says. “Now Rock in Rio is a worldwide brand. In South America, this was like Woodstock,” he says. “Can it become global? We signed on with these guys because we think [it] can. They have a great legacy and a great track record.”
We proudly congratulate our nominees:

**Entertainer of the Year**
- BROOKS & DUNN
- RASCAL FLATTS

**Top Male Vocalist**
- DIERKS BENTLEY
- BRAD PAISLEY

**Top Female Vocalist**
- SARA EVANS

**Top Vocal Group**
- LONESTAR
- RASCAL FLATTS

**Top Vocal Duo**
- BIG & RICH
- BROOKS & DUNN
- VAN ZANT

**Top New Male Vocalist**
- BILLY CURRINGTON
- CRAIG MORGAN

**Top New Duo or Vocal Group**
- BIG & RICH

**Album of the Year**
- FEELS LIKE TODAY
- RASCAL FLATTS
- TIME WELL WASTED
- BRAD PAISLEY
- TOUGH ALL OVER
- GARY ALLAN

**Single Record of the Year**
- "ALCOHOL"
- BRAD PAISLEY
- "BELIEVE"
- BROOKS & DUNN
- "BEST I EVER HAD"
- GARY ALLAN

**Song of the Year**
- "BELIEVE"
- BROOKS & DUNN
- "SKIN (SARABETH)"
- RASCAL FLATTS
- "WHEN I GET WHERE I'M GOING"
- BRAD PAISLEY

**Video of the Year**
- "BELIEVE"
- BROOKS & DUNN
- "WHEN I GET WHERE I'M GOING"
- BRAD PAISLEY

**Vocal Event of the Year**
- "I PLAY CHICKEN WITH THE TRAIN"
- BIG & RICH
- "WHEN I GET WHERE I'M GOING"
- BRAD PAISLEY

**On-Air Personality - Market Market**
- GERRY HOUSE
  - WSIX NASHVILLE, TN

*Shared Nomination*
60 Minutes In A Digital Day

How One Surreal Hour In May Could Determine The Future Of The Music Business

In the near-decade of bickering, brainstorming and lawsuits that have marked the music business' transition to the digital age, there's never been an afternoon like May 17. In an almost surreal flurry of happenings and development, one 60 minute span crystallized—and gave a crucial temperature read of—the ambitions and anxieties of almost every major player in the music space. On Capitol Hill, the Digital Media Assn. (DIMA) and the National Music Publishers Assn. (NMPA)—who had spent nearly two years hammering out the licensing of music to digital services—agreed, in principle, to a landmark resolution. Minutes later, word leaked that the major labels had sued XM Satellite Radio over one of its new devices. And before anyone could digest what it all meant, a group of independent publishers filed suit against the major digital music services, including market leader Apple iTunes.

All these developments speak to the same core issues: What rights need to be worked out to allow all of these new ways of selling, broadcasting and distributing music to proceed and flourish? And how much should those rights cost?

One hour in mid-May could prove a turning point for resolving these questions.

4:48 P.M.
Capitol Hill: A House Judiciary Subcommittee hearing on copyright law

The possibilities were breathtaking: After nearly two years of legislative meetings, public posting and backroom negotiations to fix copyright law and streamline the licensing of recorded compositions for digital distribution, the NMPA and DIMA neared an agreement. The hearing started at around 4 p.m., and the better part of an hour was spent reviewing a legislative proposal created by the two groups. The groundbreaking work would protect digital services from any publisher's copyright infringement claim, while fairly compensating publishers and songwriters. Then came The Moment. Subcommittee chairman Lamar Smith, R-Texas, asked the heads of the NMPA and DIMA to answer a simple question: Would they support the legislation as drafted in the proposal even though there were still a few points they were disputing?

DIMA executive director Jonathan Potter took a cautious breath and, under oath, said yes, the differences could be worked out. NMPA president/CEO David Israelite said the same.

Record companies are still not onboard, but if they ultimately approve, labels or digital music services would no longer be required to obtain a digital phonorecord delivery license for each song. Instead, the digital service would obtain a DPD blanket license from a designated agent. The license would cover all compositions represented by that agent: it would permit all audio-only digital activities defined by copyright law, including permanent downloads, temporary downloads and interactive streams (e.g., songs selected on demand).

Much as SoundExchange was set up to license certain digital performances of sound recordings, there would be a general designated agent—expected to be the Harry Fox Agency (HFA)—to administer these licenses. Additional qualified agents may be certified by the Copyright Office. Publishers would automatically be represented by the general agent unless they elected another certified agent.

Royalty rates would be set through an arbitration process before the Copyright Royalty Board. The RIAA objects because it wants legislation that deals with all the major problems it sees with the compulsory license, such as resolving issues over how the compulsory license applies to such formats as DualDiscs and hybrid media that may be physical in form but interact with the Internet.

Labels also want to continue to have the right to obtain DPD licenses for an initial recording.

SOUNDING BOARD
The leaders of three trade groups that had a lot at stake on May 17 weigh in.

MITCH BAINWOL
Chairman/CEO, RIAA

Transitioning from the old world to the new digital world does not always go smoothly. Today's marketplace is populated with download and subscription services, satellite and Internet radio offerings, mobile downloads and ring tones, in-store kiosks and even legal peer-to-peer. But when it comes to including all the players in the new digital revenue stream and facilitating new business models, we still need work. That's why record companies had to file suit to establish that performances cannot be turned into distributions through the clever use of a new device. This is part of a larger picture of how a mature industry learns to walk again in the digital era. [Our top priority is] to establish a consistent and well-understood set of rules for the new digital road that would guarantee protection for our content and compensation for our creators. The rules and mechanisms to facilitate licensing in the new digital environment can help grow the marketplace, expand the pie for everyone, and result in the creation of even more and better music for fans.

Record companies are ventured capital firms that invest in the most risky of investments—human creativity. If we cannot ensure that the economic terms underlying those investments are honored and that there is a real-world ability to secure a return on that investment, there will be much less of an opportunity for artists and songwriters to get the funding that they need to pursue their artistic dreams.

JONATHAN POTTER
Executive Director, DIMA

This is the perfect storm of an industry in transition—uncertainty, risk management and perhaps a little finger-pointing. And a little bit of the blame game and the "we're all in this together" if you look at the legislative and at some of these lawsuits. [The top priority for my con-
so they can later offer to digital services a complete package—rights for the recording and the composition.

Even though the proposal is a giant step toward simplifying the licensing process and resolving rate disputes, Congress will not introduce—and most certainly will not pass—legislation to clean up the compulsory license process unless all the parties with a major interest at stake agree. If the three industry groups cannot promptly compromise, legislative solutions will wait until after the fall elections—if, that is, the congressional leaders who have been working closely with the groups are still in office.

5:00 P.M.

New York: The majors sue XM Satellite Radio

The lawyers who successfully argued the Grokster case before the U.S. Supreme Court prepared the complaint filed in the U.S. District Court in New York. The suit, which was actually filed quietly at 12:01 p.m., claims that XM is now distributing recorded music rather than simply broadcast- ing it. XM is only licensed to broadcast the recordings.

The Grokster decision made its way into this suit. The complaint includes allegations that XM is deliberately urging consumers—inducing copyright infringement—through advertisements to buy XM-enabled portable devices and use them to create infringing copies of music. The devices record and disassemble songs, create song libraries and store hours of music for as long as the user pays the monthly subscription fee.

The suit came just days after the RIAA-supported Perform Act was introduced in the Senate and in the House. The bills include provisions that prohibit a “transmitting entity” from authorizing or enabling anyone to make a copy or recording of the transmission except for reasonable copying authorized as fair use under copyright law. This would force companies to negotiate licenses for that activity.

Some Capitol Hill insiders say that the lawsuit against XM will now grind the pending legislation to a halt until the court decides the case.

RIAA chairman/CEO Mitch Bainwol disagrees. He says the suit is about a single company and a single device: “If XM wants to be a competitor to iTunes, or to Rhapsody/Not- ester on the subscription side, then they ought to be licensed just like their competitors.” The pending legislation is about larger policies, he notes.

Still, while the legislation would prohibit certain activity and require similar treatment in license terms and royalty rates for similar services, a court opinion could help define when—or if—a broadcast becomes a distribution.

XM sees the suit as a negotiating tactic by the majors to gain an advantage in private business discussions. Bainwol says there have been discussions with XM on various levels since last fall. Most major labels reached a deal with Sirius Satellite Radio in March over a similar device (Billboard, April 1).

A proceeding to determine future royalty rates for the performance license is under way before the Copyright Royalty Board.

Meanwhile, publishers are expected to decide soon whether to sue XM. Their discussions over the services alleged download activities have reportedly not been fruitful.
Hooker Estate, In Hard Times, Licenses Catalog

LOS ANGELES—John Lee Hooker could not read or write, but the legendary Delta blues man’s estate is hoping to educate a new legion of fans about his 50-year musical legacy.

The hooker estate, which is controlled by daughter Zakiya Hooker, has licensed five of his best-selling albums from the ‘80s and ‘90s to Shout Factory for release in North America and two discs for release in Europe. The six-figure deal is for seven years.

Out by year’s end will be an 84-track, four-disc boxed set, the first ever for Hooker. Shout Factory COO Bob Emmer expects half the material on the $59.98 set to come from its newly acquired albums, while the other half will be licensed from current rights holders, including EMI, Fantasy and Vee-Jay.

Eugene Skuratowicz, manager of the Hooker estate, says a big payday was a consideration in deciding to license Hooker’s music.

“We do need money,” Skuratowicz candidly admits. Following Hooker’s death, the IRS initially evaluated his catalog at $5 million. The estate got the estimate lowered, but still ended up owing $1 million in estate taxes. “Our prime drive is his legacy, but the estate needs to get healthy.”

In 2007, Shout Factory will roll out the albums individually, including “Boom, Boom” and “Chill Out” in North America, and “Mr. Lucky” and “The Healer” in Europe. Emmer says North American sales targets are to match, if not exceed, sales of the original albums, most of which sold between 150,000 and 200,000 domestically, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The third component is previously unreleased material that will be refashioned into a duets album.

Part of the mission of the duets album is to reach a new audience, Skuratowicz says. “Young black kids don’t know who he is,” he says. While rockers such as Bonnie Raitt, Van Morrison and Carlos Santana have embraced Hooker, “none of the black superstars have come to bat for John,” he says. “I’m going to Stevie [Wonder] and Prince. The only way [kids will be reached] is if we have some A-listers come aboard for this final recording.”

This is not the estate’s first go-round with licensing Hooker’s material. Shortly after his 2001 death, Eagle Rock released “Face to Face,” which included previously unreleased material completed after he died. Ultimately, Emmer was dissatisfied with the results, Skuratowicz says this time, the estate sought a company with more experience in handling such material. Shout Factory was founded by former Rhino executives who have overseen many catalogs, including current reissue projects for Herb Albert and Johnny “Guitar” Watson. For Sony BMG-distributed Shout Factory, the appeal was the number of discs available.

“When you have an ability to get involved with a catalog, rather than an individual album, you have so much more leeway in what you can do,” Emmer says. Shout Factory is also soliciting and fielding offers for the estate for territories outside North America and will coordinate release schedules and art design with the foreign licensees. Duration of the licenses will match Shout Factory’s seven years. Zakiya Hooker says her father’s international sales are usually double his domestic sales.

The estate is also planning memorial concerts to be held in New York and London that may be bolstered by a traveling revue. “I want to pursue the shows as a yearly franchise for the estate,” Skuratowicz says.

KORN

Big-Screen Concerts

Live Nation, Network Live Bring Shows To Movie Theaters

Coming soon to a theater near you: more concerts from today’s hottest acts.

National CinéMedia, a digital distributor of concerts for movie theaters, has handled down nonexclusive content agreements with two leaders in the concert business, Live Nation and Network Live.

The latter is a joint venture among AOL, XM Satellite Radio and promoter AEG Live, which means that, ultimately, NCM has the two largest promoters in the world committed to bringing in concerts. NCM, owned by Regal Entertainment Group, AMC Entertainment and Cinemark USA, delivers music content to 11,000 screens in 78 markets through its Big Screens Concerts division. “NCM is the leader in their market,” Fasel Durrani, president of marketing for Live Nation, says. “They will get us the greatest reach from the outset.”

The Live Nation deal was finalized May 8, and the Network Live deal was announced eight days later. NCM chief operations and technology officer Tom Galley says the company is trying to boost content, “and the way to do that is to go and get the biggest suppliers in the areas that you need.”

While Live Nation was first out of the gate with an announcement, the NCM/Network Live relationship was already in place to a large degree, dating back to a pioneering Bon Jovi album release event staged Sept. 19 at the Nokia Theatre in New York for “Have A Nice Day.” The event was beamed to 100 screens in 50 markets.

“What’s different now is there is a formal arrangement in place where we can really launch a program and a franchise and a consistent opportunity for these two different constituencies to really gain the benefits,” Network Live COO Andrew Thau says.

Live Nation’s Durrani says his company can deliver 10 concerts to NCM during the next 12 months. Galley says neither Live Nation nor Network Live have committed to a specific number of concerts, but rather their “best effort.” “When I say ‘best effort,’ there’s a lot of teeth in the agreement because they’ve both been so successful in the past.”

In all cases, the promoter/producers handle the concert production, and NCM delivers the content to the theaters, including all the technology associated with the broadcast or multicast, Galley says.

“Network Live is able to present a patron experience that’s exceptional, big screen, big sound, but without a big price tag,” Galley says. Typically tickets are $12.50-$15, a fraction of what the best seats for most headlining concerts run at the venue.

Galley says non-disclosure agreements prohibit him from discussing the revenue splits. “I can tell you that all parties, whether it’s Live Nation, Network Live, ourselves or our theater owners, are incentivized greatly to make sure we get the music out there.”

The concept has already delivered valuable exposure for bands. On May 9, NCM simulcast a Widespread Panic show from Atlanta’s Fox Theatre, which fans viewed live for $15 on 150 screens coast to coast. “People who don’t know or see Widespread Panic were not only exposed to them in the lobbies at Regal Cinemas with posters, but also in the coming attractions at all these theaters,” Panic agent/manager Buck Williams says. The Panic concert will become a Sanctuary DVD at some point. Similarly, the night before it goes on sale June 20, the upcoming Korn DVD “Live on the Other Side” will premiere in more than 100 movie theaters nationwide via Big Screen Concerts in a deal with Live Nation. A special-in-theater advertising campaign, projected to reach 20 million consumers, began May 19.

For Live Nation and AEG Live, the NCM deals mean an ability to offer artists and labels added value in terms of concert events in theaters. “If you can go to pitch a tour and can offer a live show on AOL, a show on NCM and all the promotion and marketing that goes around it, that provides a real competitive advantage,” Thau says.

And, Durrani adds the deals let Live Nation give fans greater access to live content. “We as an industry have to find new product lines for consumers,” he says.

Thau says the concert-in-a-theater experience is already taking hold with consumers, and he expects it to grow rapidly. “No tour hits every city, and when they do it hits a city, often it’s very expensive,” he says.

An increase in the number of digital theaters—NCM distributes films to its network digitally, secure and encrypted —and more sophisticated marketing and ticketing could drive growth.

“There are less of factors that are converging at one point that make the potential for this enormous,” Thau says. “The concert market is very mature, but this market is in its infancy.”
Billboard DMS
DANCE MUSIC SUMMIT
Sept 17-20, 2006 Palms Casino Resort Las Vegas, NV

Join Billboard at this must-attend event, attracting an international and
domestic contingency to discuss the latest trends in dance/electronic music.

Now in its 13th year, the Billboard Dance Music Summit is moving to VEGAS and will be part of
a city-wide Dance Music Festival – lifebynight

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

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MTV GETS THE URGE

The Cable Network’s New Digital Subscription Service Joins A Crowd Of Apple Also-Rans—Can It Close The Gap?

Add MTV Networks to the list of media heavyweights selling consumers on the idea of renting music.

On May 17 the music and lifestyle giant launched its long-anticipated digital music subscription service. Urge. MTV is betting consumers will pay for music in much the same way they pay for their cable bill: monthly fees for all the content they want. Of course, the catch is the music disappears when the subscription ends.

Thanks to a development partnership with Microsoft, the offering may be the slickest subscription service to hit the market yet. Urge is embedded in the newest version of Microsoft’s music management software, Windows Media Player 11, and boasts searching and browsing features that improve vastly on the rival services currently on the market.

It also features a catalog of more than 2 million tracks (courtesy of MusicNet), as well as dedicated blogs, news and features, more than 130 radio stations and 500 preprogrammed playlists, special genre-based samplers called Super Playlists. Billboard charts, automatically updated playlists and the ability to create “auto mixes” based on artist and style preferences.

But whether MTV is actually any better at convincing music fans to rent their music rather than buy it remains to be seen. So far consumers have been cool to the idea.

The RIAA estimates that on average, 1.3 million consumers were paying for on-demand subscription access last year, generating approximately $150 million. That is less than one-third of the download market, which generated roughly $500 million from sales of digital tracks and albums.

Add all that up and it’s easy to see why Microsoft thought it was time to make its move. And in the world of digital music it’s not the first time someone has called Rhapsody.

Sign Up: Why MTV Wins

The MTV factor: Urge promises to be one of the most heavily promoted subscription services on the market. MTV is well-versed in cross-promoting its online programming on-air and vice versa. MTV’s digital channel Overdrive fed 13 million streams in 30 days for the online version of the Video Music Awards. The network plans to plug Urge extensively throughout its MTV, VH1 and CMT music channels—which collectively reach 165 million viewers per month—as well as on all MTV-branded Web sites.

Look for MTV Networks to drive viewers to the service following artist appearances and performances, as well as in conjunction with video airplay, lifestyle shows and specials. Urge will feature exclusive downloadable playlists from shows like MTV’s “TRE” VH1’s “I Love The...” and CMT’s “Crossroads.”

Improved portability: MTV and Microsoft think they have fixed the bugs that have dogged existing subscription services. Until now, transferring songs to portable devices and music playback has been glitchy. Portable subscription users have been particularly frustrated by slow load times between digital rights management-protected songs. That has not been lost on MTV Networks Music Group president Van Toffler, who says the company did not want to get into the digital game until the technology improved. As part of the Urge launch, Microsoft is introducing an updated version of its Janus technology—currently the only DRM system that supports subscription portability—that features much speedier song play.

Better devices: Urge is compatible with more than 100 devices, but it will be pushing a handful of particularly promising players. On the top of the list is the iRiver Clix, whose 2GB storage rivals that of the iPod nano, that stores music, videos and pictures, and has one of the best user interfaces ever seen from an Apple competitor.

Timing: With the Windows Media Player, subscription portability and Windows portable digital music sales, there is still plenty of room to compete with Apple, despite the fact that MTV and Apple are targeting the same audience.

We’ll Pass: The Road Ahead Is Rocky

Competition: The subscription space is by no means short on high-profile names marketing similar services to consumers. AOL, Yahoo, Virgin, Napster, FYE and Real Networks all are pushing rival services. Many of the benefits of MTV’s association with Microsoft are no exception. While MTV may have a head start, look for other Windows-compatible services to take advantage of the next-generation Janus DRM and to integrate with the Windows Media Player through its media mall.

Education: Awareness for the idea of renting music is low. Subscription services are a difficult concept to communicate, often requiring free trials to illustrate their benefit.

Compatibility: Urge will not be compatible with the market-leading iPod. For Urge to be a success, MTV will have to convince subscribers to buy a different device—a challenge that has dogged every music subscription service to date. So far, devices from Apple’s rivals have been criticized for having mediocre interfaces and being under-marketed. Even as device quality improves, that is a stigma the Windows market will have to overcome.

The Model: As adamant as many are that the future of digital music is an unlimited access model, most consumer spending so far has revolved around the ownership model pushed by Apple. In stark contrast to subscription volume, more than 352 million tracks and 16 million digital albums were sold last year. Nielsen SoundScan reports. Download sales will likely be even better in 2006. Year-to-date track sales are up 79% while digital album sales are up 138%.

Digital Subscription Services And how they stack up.

**URGE**

Parent: MTV

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: N/A

**Yahoo Music Now**

Parent: AOL

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: 500,000+ 

**Virgin Digital**

Parent: Virgin

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month; portable subscription: $11.99 ($119.88 per year)

Subscribers: N/A

**Napster**

Parent: Napster Inc.

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: 606,000

**Rhapsody**

Parent: RealNetworks

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: 650,000+ (estimated)

**FYE**

Parent: Trans World Entertainment

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: N/A

**Digital Subscription Services**

And how they stack up.

**URGE**

Parent: MTV

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: N/A

Distinguishing factor: Integration with MTV.

**Yahoo Music Now**

Parent: AOL

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: 500,000+

Distinguishing factor: The only exclusively browser-based digital subscription solution. AOL markets the service across its formidable network of 100 million monthly unique visitors.

**Virgin Digital**

Parent: Virgin

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month; portable subscription: $11.99 ($119.88 per year)

Subscribers: N/A

Distinguishing factor: The price leader in the digital subscription space. Virgin stresses customer service through a feature called "ask an expert." The company also cross-markets the service to its Virgin Megastore physical retail customers.

**Napster**

Parent: Napster Inc.

Pricing: Tracks: $9.95; albums: $9.95; unlimited tethered downloads: $9.95 per month ($99 per year); portable subscription: $14.95 per month ($149 per year)

Subscribers: 606,000

Distinguishing factor: The critical darling of the subscription set can be accessed through a Web browser or a proprietary client. Only subscribers can listen to 25 songs per month for free under an ad-supported initiative called Rhapsody 25.
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Gamers, This Ad’s For You

In-game advertising—a marketing frontier long on the periphery of most brands’ radar—is now poised to take its place on center stage. Where once graphics and Internet connectivity that now come standard on both today’s PCs and next-generation gaming consoles are finally enabling Madison Avenue to follow the 18-34 “sweet spot” target market to videogames as they increasingly abandon TV and radio as their entertainment media of choice.

In-game advertising takes many forms, mostly as product placement. Marketers can pay to have billboards with their brands on them appear as background scenery, logos on racetrack boards or sports stadium walls. Situation placement is on the rise as well, such as using real vehicle models in racing game options or having characters consume specific soft drink brands. To date, these placements have been static, meaning the deal was made during the game development process with the visuals hard-coded into the final product. Going forward, though, it will be much more dynamic—providing the ability to replace the in-game visuals, music or other content at will through the Internet.

This dynamic advertising makes it much easier for the music industry to get involved. As noted on several panels during the Electronic Entertainment Expo May 10-12 in Los Angeles, it has previously been very difficult to promote a new album via a videogame due to time tables.

“The development cycle of a music project is different than that of games,” says George White, senior VP of strategy and product development for Warner Music Group. Games can take years to develop, he says, making it virtually impossible to hard-code in visuals for an album that often doesn’t have a firm release date until much later in the process.

But with dynamic advertising, ads can be swapped out at any time and replaced with newer, fresher promotions. A gamer can play the same level three times in a month and see different ads each time.

This isn’t just wishful thinking. In late April, Microsoft agreed to acquire the in-game advertising pioneer Massive for a reported $200 million—$400 million. Massive manages a network that facilitates this ad-swapping, and Microsoft’s acquisition is considered at once a validation and turning point for the entire industry.

According to the Yankee Group, marketers spent about $56 million on in-game advertising last year. While that’s a 65% increase from 2004, it’s only 9% of all Internet ad spending and nowhere near the $9 billion forecast for TV advertising this year.

Looking to 2010, the in-game advertising business is expected to grow to anywhere from $712 million, according to the Yankee Group, up to $1 billion, according to Jupiter Research.

Whereas advertising on any other medium is considered obtrusive, in-game ads can actually enhance the gaming experience. An October 2005 study conducted by Nielsen Interactive Entertainment, commissioned by in-game ad provider Double Fusion, found that 50% of the gamers polled said ads made for a more realistic experience. The campaigns studied generated a 60% increase in the awareness of new products.

In addition, marketers can now track ad impressions and even click-through rates applicable, just like online banner ads. Merge that with the online game communities like Xbox Live—which tracks which games members play, when they play and stores other personal data like age, gender and buddy lists—and that provides data that could prove useful to brands looking to make an impact.

For all this promise, consumer brands have so far treated in-game advertising with caution. The medium has attracted such companies as Coca-Cola, Honda, Jeep, Oakley and Fox Studios. But the fragmented gaming landscape, lack of a clear technical standard and purity of hard data measuring its effectiveness have tempered adoption rates.

“Despite the fact that you’re always looking to do the most cutting-edge, cool things to impress their clients, [advertising agencies] are reluctant to spend money underwriting someone else’s big idea,” said Dave Williams, chief marketing officer for Atom Entertainment’s E3 panel.

Yet clearly, the gamer community is a giant market of great potential. According to recent figures from the Entertainment Software Assoc., the governing trade body for the videogame industry, 60% of heads of households play videogames, and 75% of U.S. households interact with videogames daily. An AP-AOL Games study conducted by Ipsos Insight in April found that 45% of gamers play over the Internet, 42% of which play at least four hours during an average week.

“You can reach customers now in ways you never could before,” says Rich Wickham, director of the Windows gaming business for Microsoft. “Don’t assume there aren’t other ways to get them to spend their time and money.”

SIRIUS’ NEW SPORT

After settling its dispute with the music industry over the 550 portable receiver, Satellite Radio’s new new programming platform that can be listened to in the car and the house.

A smaller version of the current Sportster Relay, the new device comes with a vehicle dock that includes an input for hi-fi players. A boombox dock is expected to follow.

The Sportster4 allows users to pause, rewind and replay up to 444 minutes of Sirius programming. It also has a feature called S-Seek Alert that stores the names of favorite artists and songs, and issues an alert to listeners when they are playing on any channel.

True to its name, the Sportster4 also displays sports scores for any team of the user’s choice, and can be displayed on the screen when listening to other programs.

It will be available this month for $170.

—Antony Bruno

BROWSING STREAMCAST

Peer-to-peer services BearShare and LimeWire have gone legit, but Streamcast Networks continues to thumb its nose at the music industry.

The company marked its fifth anniversary this month with an upgraded version of the service that includes the ability to publish, search, download and share podcasts.

The new version also includes an Internet browser toolbar so users can add P2P searches to their Internet Explorer or Firefox Web browsers.

AOL Music’s EVD "I Can’t Live Without Your Love" single hits No. 2 on the U.K. singles chart, matching the peak of LL COOL J’s previous single, Jennifer Lopez duet, “All I Have.”

Top Songs

| Song | Artist | Peak Position | Sales
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>NICK LACE YAMAHA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>RIANNA JOS - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57,181</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>SHAKIRA HIPS DON'T LIE (EPIC)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45,164</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>RASCAL FLATTS DOWN FROM THE CLOUDS COCONUT STREET</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>RIANNA JOS - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39,523</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>SEAN PAUL RED - EP (ATLANTIC)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38,210</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>CASCAJA EVERYDAY IN WHITE HOOD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36,526</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>WHO What You Know GRAND HIPPIE EXPLOR</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30,742</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>LL COOL J GASHIKA ST ANDREE DAD J</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24,164</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>YONG JOC I Love You BOOGIES BOY SOUTH</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13,213</td>
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Top Videos

| Video | Artist | Peak Position | Streams
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SHAKIRA HIPS DON'T LIE (EPIC)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,832,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>RIANNA JOS - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,677,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>CHARLIEJONNIE RUFF - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,643,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>DEVONCE TURCOS LUCINDA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,608,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>NEYO PARDY JOS - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,585,629</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>THE BLACK EYED PEAS EVD - EP (ATLANTIC)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,454,296</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>CHRIS BROWN I Don't Wanna Know GRAND HIPPIE</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,399,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>T.I. I Don't Wanna Know GRAND HIPPIE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,206,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>FIELD MOB JOS - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>818,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>50 CENT &amp; OLIVIA Field MOB JOS - EP (JUNGL)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>518,957</td>
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SHAKIRA’S "Hips Don’t Lie" Lives on thanks to the most streamed video on AOL in 2006 with more than 19 million streams.

Bits & Briefs

NOT VERY BUSY SIGNAL

Sprint's mobile music download service is nearing 3 million downloads, but analysts with the NPD Group say consumers remain wary. A recent study by the group underlined some interesting facts:

• Only 6% of mobile phones sold in the fourth quarter of last year contained music programs, down to just 2 million. As of February, about 1 million phones capable of downloading music from either Sprint’s or Verizon’s services have been sold.

• More than 86% of wireless subscribers interested in music-enabled phones say they’d continue to use their existing music players the same amount.

• The average owner of a digital music device transfers about 250 songs to his or her device each month, yet three out of four consumers interested in music-enabled phones say their desired song capacity would be 100 songs or less.

• The optimal price for a wirelessly downloaded track is $1.75.

CAPTAIN HOOK ON LINE TWO

While mobile entertainment in Europe is far ahead of the United States in terms of consumer activity, the market is also rife with piracy, according to the Mobile Entertainment Forum. Citing a Forrester Research report that says about 80% of the mobile content in Europe has been acquired through unauthorized Web sites or through device-to-device transfers, the MEF estimates the industry has lost about €2.7 billion. The group also says the lack of accessible ability for legal sharing across such platforms as computers and mobile phones results in about €800 million in missed revenue. In total, the mobile digital rights management situation costs the European mobile entertainment market about €3.5 billion.
Castle Harlan Shows Faith In Music
After Private Equity Firm’s Purchase Of Books Specialist Baker & Taylor, Music Operations Expected To Grow

Some vendors are heartened that a Wall Street private equity firm is investing in a big way in an entertainment packaged goods wholesaler. But don’t break out the champagne just yet.

In agreeing to buy Baker & Taylor in a deal valued at $455 million, New York-based Castle Harlan is really investing in the book business. That’s the word from Castle Harlan vice chairman Gary Appel, who says he expects acquisitions and organic growth in the book industry to be the focus of the company.

That shouldn’t come as a surprise. After all, Baker & Taylor generates some 85%-90% of its $1.6 billion in revenue as a book wholesaler, with the remainder coming from music and video. But just because the new owner plans to maximize Baker & Taylor’s strength in books, management’s game plan for more than a year has included growth of its music operations. And Castle Harlan announced that it is retaining the current management, including president/CEO Richard Willis.

Baker & Taylor would seem to be the second-largest one-stop in the United States, with an estimated $125 million in music revenue, behind Alliance Entertainment Corp.

AEC, formed more than a decade ago from the merger of three super-one-stops, now has some $900 million in revenue, the majority of which is music. Since February 2005, AEC itself has been part of a larger company when it merged with magazine distributor Source Interlink. In its most recent fiscal year, Source Interlink reports nearly $1.5 billion in revenue, including some $500 million in magazine sales.

One of the reasons AEC is so dominant in music wholesaling is because it evolved beyond the one-stop business to compete in rackjobbing against the likes of Anderson Merchandising and the Handleman Co.

Baker & Taylor appeared to be in the early stages of making that transition too. It began by increasing its Internet fulfillment business, an aspect of the company that the new owners consider key to Baker & Taylor’s game plan. That means music will remain central to its business plan, if only to offer online retailers a complete array of entertainment packaged goods.

What’s more, Castle Harlan and Appel have experience in the music and video business. In 1993, Castle Harlan paid $35 million ($13 million in equity and $22 million in debt) for the Strawberries chain, but lost its investment when the chain filed for Chapter 11 protection and was sold to Trans World Entertainment.

Appel’s own experience has been a little more passive. He sat on the Musicland Group board of directors for 10 years when it was a successful, publicly traded company. Ultimately, Musicland came under the ownership of Best Buy and then private equity firm Sun Capital. And in the early years of this decade, it began the downward spiral that culminated in its Chapter 11 filing and subsequent liquidation earlier this year.

Leveraged buyouts can be tricky, and sour deals like Strawberries and Musicland leave product suppliers wanting to see if Castle Harlan will use a lot of debt in its acquisition of Baker & Taylor. When Willis Stein & Partners bought Baker & Taylor in 2003 for $255 million in a deal that was financed by $115 million in equity and $140 million in debt, vendors were relieved a couple of months later when the firm paid down the debt by $20 million.

In that deal, Willis Stein hit a home run, landing what appears to be a $200 million profit. More recently, when Musicland went bankrupt, Sun Capital appears to have lost about $25 million. But vendors will come out much worse, with little chance of recovering even half of the $256 million owed them.

Whatever the debt-to-equity ratio turns out to be, Castle Harlan has one good thing going for it: the current Baker & Taylor management team, whom vendors say are confident and comfortable with. Under Willis, Baker & Taylor revenue has grown to about $1.6 billion, according to Appel, from the $1.2 billion it garnered during its fiscal 2003. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization are in the $65 million-$75 million range, sources say, well up from the $42 million the company generated then.

While the vendors await word on how much debt will be used in the Baker & Taylor transaction, they can soothe themselves knowing that the music and video industry has gained another Wall Street ally prepared to invest.

Eyeballing Fontana’s Next Steps
Indie Distributor’s Plans Include Boosting Its Electronic/Dance, Hip-Hop Rosters

Just 14 months since its creation, Fontana Distribution continues to work its deal pen overtime. With a roster of about 80 labels, the indie distribution arm of Universal Music Group Distribution (UMGD) has grown at such a rate that competitors have accused Fontana of forcing bidding wars for even the smallest of labels.

But the mere existence of Fontana is the result of a snowballing independent sector. And as long as indie artists keep penetrating the upper echelons of The Billboard 200, the fight for a piece of indie market share is expected to remain heated.

Fontana GM Steve Pritchitt estimates that Fontana has a market share of about 1.5%. (Nielsen SoundScan does not break Fontana’s figures out of UMGD’s.) Jim Urie, president of UMGD, says Fontana’s market share should rise to 2% by March 2007 (the two-year anniversary of the distributor).

Pritchitt says, “We’d like to be the biggest [independent distributor]. We’re not shy about saying that, and we’ve got some ways to go before we can catch [Alternative Distribution Alliance]. Building the label roster continues to be an ongoing endeavor that we devote a lot of time and energy to.”

Some of Fontana’s early successes range from rapper Lil Rob (Uptstairs Records), indie rock act Metric (Last Gang), alt-rock band Sevendust (Winedark Records) and veteran emo-rock group Saves the Day (Vagrant). But Fontana has a presence in the adult world as well, with Rendezvous Entertainment and American Gramaphone.

Up next, Pritchitt says, is boosting Fontana’s electronic/dance roster. He points to recent pickups Quango and Global Underground as first steps and says Fontana will keep making inroads into the indie hip-hop world.

“Since I’ve been doing this independent thing, I’ve always believed that as a distributor you should be able to service your customers with whatever it is they can sell,” Pritchitt says. “I would say that the Handleman is probably the biggest limitation. One is classical, since UMGD has the best classical catalog in the world, and the other is pop.”

Once Fontana’s main mission shifts away from building its roster of labels, expect the distributor to have an even greater impact on the indie world. Pritchitt points to catalog initiative Phase II (Billboard, Feb. 11), which offers retailers discounts on older titles for floor space.

It remains to be seen, however, if Fontana finds a way to utilize UMGD’s JumpStart program, which completely eliminates co-op spending at retail. But Urie is optimistic that aspects of JumpStart could work in the independent world.

“I don’t want to call it ‘JumpStart,’” because it would have to be different,” Urie says, “but indie’s can afford co-op even less than the majors can. We spend a lot of time kicking it around Fontana, but we just haven’t come up with the right alternative. . . We’ll get there eventually.”

BABY STILL GROWING: Fresh off the news that Web shop CD Baby linked with Super D for distribution comes word that the online destination for self-released artists has started its own label. New York-based Ryko Distribution will handle releases on the CD Baby imprint. VP of marketing Alex Steingraber says the CD Baby label has been kept on the down low, not wanting it to detract from any of the site’s services for those not on the imprint.
MTV Expands African Operations

JOHANNESBURG—MTV Networks Africa is pumping up the volume.

Some 15 months ago, the music specialist launched 24-hour Pan-African urban channel MTV Base from London. The first TV channel created for African youth audiences, it is available through MTN Networks Africa to 8 million households in 48 sub-Saharan African countries.

Now MTV Networks Africa is set to shift continents, moving its headquarters to Johannesburg by late August and opening marketing/sales relations offices in Nigeria and Kenya during 2007.

“Our main emphasis in year one for MTV Base was on the level of [African] music content,” London-based MTV Networks Africa VP/GM Alex Okosi says.

The English-language channel hit its first-year target of a minimum of 45% African content by using videoclips alongside live footage from MTV Base-branded live events across the continent, Okosi says.

He adds that pre-launch research revealed that “getting Africans to watch music videos of other Africans—which language they may not understand—hinged on the quality of videos. So we have really focused on that.”

Interaction with African artists and labels has centered on “assisting artists to make better videos without actually making them ourselves,” Okosi says.

“If you look at the channel now,” he claims, “you would find it hard to tell the videos of African artists apart from their American or European counterparts.”

MTV Base has artist relations representatives in eight countries including South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Angola.

“That’s the investment that we have made,” Osoki adds, “an investment on the ground that builds strong relationships in different African countries, working with the artists to help them create music videos that look good.”

ZAMAJORBE’S audience has grown thanks to exposure via MTV Base.

MTV Networks Africa distributes six channels: MTV Base, MTV Europe, MTV France, MTV Portugal, VH-1 and Nickelodeon.

Okosi will relocate to Johannesburg to oversee programming, production, sales/sponsorship and art relations, although for the foreseeable future, transmission will continue to be from London.

Sony BMG South Africa senior label manager Maria Kourkoulakas says that MTV Base has proved “effective in integrating [different] African countries through music.”

Kourkoulakas cites the example of Sony BMG South Africa “Afro-soul” artist Zamajobe, who was invited to perform in Angola and has built a broad fan base in parts of Africa as a direct result of exposure on MTV Base. However, she concedes this “has not necessarily translated into album sales yet.”

The arrival of MTV Base in Africa has “helped African artists and music be taken seriously,” adds Uraek Chabanu, GM of EMI South Africa subsidiary CCP Record Co.

“Here at home, being recognized by MTV Base or being played on the channel is a calling card for artists. We look forward to it setting up its base here in Johannesburg.”

Mobile digital content deals are also being planned.

The latest batch of repertoire made available to mobile music operators has a familiar ring to it.

Although current hits remain the most in-demand repertoire, European labels are increasingly exploiting back catalog as master ringtones. That trend recently hit its stride when Universal issued 16 ABBA hits as ringtones for the first time (billboard biz, April 19).

Stockholm-based Universal Music Sweden managing director Marten Aglander says ABBA’s Benny Anderson and Bjorn Ulvaeus—it’s producers and primary songwriters—had previously declined to allow synthesized polyphonic versions of their songs. However, they agreed to collaborate with Universal Sweden and Paris-based Universal Music Mobile International to edit their original recordings as master ringtones.

“Benny and Bjorn are not particularly fond of polyphonic ringtones,” Aglander says. “But the quality of phones is now better, and with the original masters being used, it’s much more attractive to them.”

The 16 ABBA titles include the act’s first European hit “Ring Ring,” plus international successes “Dancing Queen,” “Mamma Mia” and “SOS.” Aglander says Anderson and Ulvaeus were directly involved in tailoring different versions of each song using either the intro or chorus for various cell phones and operators.

UMMI coordinates deals for master ringtones with more than 60 wireless operator partners worldwide. Prices for the ABBA titles range from $2.50 to $1.75, depending on territory and operator.

The Swedish act joins a number of artists within Universal’s catalog whose tunes are available as master ringtones, including U2, Eminem, the Rolling Stones (the ABKCO/Decca era) and Bob Marley.

While the availability of catalog for master ringtones increases, the overall ringtone market reflects today’s tastes.

The Mobile Entertainment Forum compiles weekly ringtone sales charts in the United Kingdom and Germany, which London-based MEF global chairman Patrick Parodi confirms, “tend to be influenced heavily by current chart hits.”

However, Parodi adds, “As more mature users start downloading to networks, we’re seeing a revival of back catalog for mobile music products.”

EMI has been actively converting catalog to master ringtones over the past year. London-based EMI Music U.K.

WARNER TAILORS NEW JOINT VENTURE FOR KOREAN MARKET

HONG KONG—Warner Music Group chairman/CEO Edgar Bronfman Jr. may call South Korea “the most advanced and progressive mobile music market in the world,” but he concedes that what works in Seoul won’t necessarily work everywhere.

WMG is launching a precedent-setting joint venture with leading South Korean Internet service provider and mobile phone company SK Telecom. The new company will take over Warner Music Korea’s stable of domestic acts.

The establishment of the new company, WS Entertainment, was announced in Hong Kong earlier this month by Bronfman during the inaugural Music Matters conference.

Bronfman described the joint venture as representing “an entirely new business model in the signing, development and distribution of music.”

Under the deal, SK Telecom-affiliated Seoul Records will provide on- and offline distribution of WS Entertainment content. SK Telecom bought a 43.3% stake in Seoul Records, one of the nation’s largest artist management and record companies, in May 2005 (billboard biz. May 27, 2005). Warner Music Korea will now handle international acts only.

Bronfman suggested the new company would combine Warner’s A&R expertise with SK Telecom’s strength in the digital delivery of content.

Although he noted that South Korean consumers “spend twice as much on mobile music as they do on traditional music formats,”
& Ireland director of catalog Steve Davis notes. "Consumers sometimes prefer the classic tunes because they say something personal about them," he says.

Davis adds that EMI's catalog trawl has exploited anew several 1970s David Bowie hits, including "Changes," "Jean Genie" and "Rebel Rebel," as well as material from the Stranglers, White snake, Genesis and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, who recorded for EMI between 1984 and 1989.

As for EMI's most famous act, the Beatles' catalog remains unavailable, although John Lennon's solo catalog has been digitized for online/mobile usage (billboard.biz, Nov. 8, 2005).

But EMI is not just concentrating on its best-known names. In July, for example, it will reissue six 1970s/1980s albums on Virgin from U.S. blues-rock icon Captain Beefheart. Purchasers will be able to buy master ringtunes of album tracks by using text message codes published in the album booklets.

One challenge facing labels looking to exploit material by classic acts as master ring tunes remains the fact that their original contracts did not cover any form of digital distribution.

"We try to speak to artists directly when seeking approval and talk to them about the income potential and what they will earn," says London-based Caroline Hansen, digital operations manager at Sanctuary Records.

Sanctuary is digitizing works by Motorhead, the Small Faces, the Pogues and Emerson, Lake & Palmer for mobile usage, Hansen says. Overall, carriers admit they focus on offering current hits as master ringtunes. "But we do see that our customers are keen to download oldies from time to time," London-based Vodafone Group head of music Edward Kershaw notes.

"We recently sold quite a few of MC Hammer's classic 'U Can't Touch This,'" Kershaw adds. "Although that was probably more for nostalgia than any desire to revive his career."

Bronfman said that the new business model is specifically market-tailored. "We do not think that WS Entertainment is a universal solution, portable to territories everywhere," he said.

Stuart Watson, president of Singapore-based marketing and promotion specialist SWAT Enterprises, agrees.

Such deals are most appropriate for developing markets like China and South Korea, which have jumped straight into digital, Watson says. "I see these kinds of moves happening territory by territory."

Watson suggests the region will see "an increasing number of direct deals between repertoire owners and service providers or repertoire owners and telephone companies." WMG will own 60% of WS Entertainment, with SK Telecom owning the remainder. Warner Music Korea managing director Phillip Oh keeps that title and adds stripes as the new company's managing director. He will report to Warner Music Asia Pacific president Lachie Rutherford.

Warner Music Korea's roster includes such leading domestic names as Baek Ji Young, DQ, Kyanwoo, Song Changle and Choi Jungyun. But not everyone is convinced the Warner-SK Telecom deal points the way forward for the music industry.

"South Korea is the one market in Asia I wouldn't want to see become the model for the rest of Asia, because the telcos are taking such a large share of revenues," one Asian music industry executive says. "I'm not convinced that this kind of vertical-integration strategy is a good idea."

Pharmaceuticals

"Kaya." "Rastaman Vibration." "Exodus" and "Kaya." —Roger Pearson
BASE Hoping For A Home Run

Former Clear Channel Chairman/CEO Returns To Help Head Live Entertainment Company

Brian Becker is back. When Becker, former chairman/CEO of Clear Channel Entertainment (now Live Nation), left CCE more than a year ago, he said to expect him to resurface with a new venture as well as continue to be involved with the company he formerly helmed.

Now Becker and Scott Zeiger, former chairman/CEO of CCE’s productions division, have formed BASE Entertainment—a producer, presenter, venue programmer and operator involved in live, theatrical entertainment and content on a worldwide basis (billboard.biz, May 3). They serve as co-CEOs.

“BASE is the productions division of Clear Channel Communications,” says Becker. “As such, we will continue to work with the company on thecrawl of new ventures, as well as continue to be involved with the company he formerly helmed.

BASE has bought interests in many shows, including ‘Andrew Lloyd Webber’s Phantom.’ Becker says, the company will have ‘hit-down productions,’ or residencies, in some markets, particularly Las Vegas. BASE will produce ‘The Gordy Brown Comedy Show’ in a custom-built, 700-seat performance space at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas. The $2.5 million production begins performances in August.

In the development and operation of intellectual properties, especially those that originate from and have residencies in Las Vegas, Becker says, the company will have ‘hit-down productions,’ or residencies, in some markets, particularly Las Vegas. BASE will produce ‘The Gordy Brown Comedy Show’ in a custom-built, 700-seat performance space at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas. The $2.5 million production begins performances in August.

New York, Las Vegas and Houston, has also joined forces with MBST, a full-service management company that produces film, TV and live stage productions and has a roster of more than 35 clients, including Robin Williams, Billy Crystal and Woody Allen. The joint venture will create theatrical and comedic attractions for Broadway, Las Vegas and touring markets. MBST is a wholly owned subsidiary of Robert Sillerman’s CXX.

Becker stepped down from the CCE helm when CCE parent Clear Channel Communications announced it would spin off its live entertainment division (billboard.biz, April 29, 2005). In many ways, the BASE focus takes the executive back to his days at PACE Entertainment, which was acquired by Sillerman during the late 1990s industry consolidation that created SFX. SFX was acquired by Clear Channel Communications to create CCE.
The only news that really matters:

Godfather of garage rock Keith Richards seems to be OK after coconuts accomplished what a lifetime of smack, coke, booz, spliffs, nicotine, caffeine, slings, arrows and 45 years of the road couldn't do—hospitalize him. The London Sun is telling a different story than the Stones publicist, who says one operation; the Sun says he checked back in for a second. But at the moment the crisis seems to have passed.

Our love, thoughts and prayers go out to him.

Patti, Marlon, Angela, Theodora and Alexandra.

Friends of the High Line with help from actors Edward Norton and Kevin Bacon have been building High Line Park, a public park suspended in mid-air located on the west side of Manhattan. David Bowie is talking about inaugurating it with a festival in May 2007. Stay tuned for that one.

In a continuation of bad news for seminal rockers week, MC5 bass player Michael Davis took a motorcycle spill on the L.A. Freeway. Still waiting confirmation, but MCS guitarist Wayne Kramer told me it looked like a broken back, some ribs and multiple contusions, which hopefully isn't as bad as it sounds. His spirits are good and everyone's thinking full recovery sooner than later. Wayne will be at the Joey Ramone birthday bash (May 19) so I'll get an update.

Send love and support to info@svengirly.com.

Our coolest song continues its yin-yang identity thing with Teenacide's Holograms this week. With their West Coast teenage frustration-dirty mouth-up yours-sexy rumble-doll attitude, they are definitely yin. And on the yang side ... Neil Young's "Living With War" is getting the attention it deserves. There's a lot of people thinking what he's saying.

Everybody fasten your seatbelts and I'll see you next week.

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

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### COOLEST GARAGE SONGS

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<tr>
<th>Title/Label</th>
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<td>ARE YOU READY FOR IT</td>
<td>THE HOLOGRAMS</td>
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<td>EVERYONE KNOWS</td>
<td>JOAN JETT &amp; THE BLACKHEARTS</td>
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<td>NOTHING TERRIBLY NEW</td>
<td>THE HELLACOPTERS</td>
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<td>HANDS</td>
<td>THE RACONTEURS</td>
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<td>I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR</td>
<td>ARCTIC MONKEYS</td>
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<td>WISH I NEVER LOVED YOU</td>
<td>BUZZCOCKS</td>
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<td>DON'T LISTEN TO THE RADIO</td>
<td>THE VINES</td>
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<td>WALK OF FAME</td>
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### COOLEST GARAGE ALBUMS

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<td>LIVING WITH WAR</td>
<td>NEIL YOUNG</td>
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<td>WHATEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM, THAT'S WHAT I'M NOT</td>
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<td>FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF EARTH</td>
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<td>ROCK &amp; ROLL IS DEAD</td>
<td>THE HELLACOPTERS</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHOW YOUR BONES</td>
<td>YEAH YEAH YEAHS</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEY! IT'S A TEENACIDE PAJAMA PARTY!</td>
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Little Steven's Underground Garage column is produced exclusively for Billboard. For more information go to UNDERGROUNDGARAGE.COM.
MULTITASKING THE MUSIC
Acts That License Tunes To Other Media Reap Financial Rewards

Given the feedback we’ve received, we clearly touched a nerve (a healthy one, at that), when we wrote about artists who earn more money from licensing their music to TV shows and ad campaigns than from record sales (Billboard, May 13).

So we thought we’d delve deeper into the heart of these deals. To paraphrase Adam Merlin, keyboardist for indie rock band the 88, who was featured in the May 13 article, the group is able to earn a living, stay on the road and record new material because it licenses its music to TV shows and ads.

A band like the Mooney Suzuki has licensed nearly every song from its second and last album for Columbia Records, “Alive & Amplified.” According to Nielsen SoundScan, the disc has sold 14,000 units.

At the Music Publishing senior director of A&R Justin Kalifowitz, who handles the Mooney Suzuki catalog, says the band, because of its music licensing, has done financially better than bands that have sold hundreds of thousands of CDs.

The Mooney Suzuki, now signed to V2, recently received great news: Auto manufacturer Suzuki extended its ad campaign (that features “Alive & Amplified”) for another year. In fact, the Mooney Suzuki has been previewing songs from its forthcoming V2 debut for ad agency creative. “The band sees TV and film as cool platforms to help them reach more fans,” Kalifowitz notes.

Ditto for DJ/producer Tom Holkenborg, who records as Junkie XL (his new album, “Today,” was recently released by Ultra Records).

Holkenborg was tapped by Los Angeles-based music production house Deep Mix, which worked with ad agency DDB Chicago, to remix T. Rex’s “Bang a Gong (Get It On)” for JCPenny’s new It’s All Inside TV campaign.

“Working with a brand like JCPenney puts me in front of different audiences,” he says. “Each impression I make exposes me to more people.”

This has been key for a singer/songwriter like Gerard McManus, who records as G Tom Mac. He says he has between 75 and 100 TV placements and more than 45 movies under his music-licensing belt. “I’ve definitely gained an audience by people hearing my music on TV and in films,” he says.

For those that missed G Tom Mac’s “Half” in the season four finale of “Scrub,” don’t fret. The “Scrub’s: Season 4” DVD arrives Oct. 10. In addition to the song itself, it features the “Half” video as bonus material.

G Tom Mac’s new self-released CD, “Secrets of Oz,” is scheduled to arrive in September. McManus says he’s been playing a handful of the new tracks for music supervisors. “We’re already discussing possibilities.”

Dance/electronic act Fannypack is a darling of music supervisors and agency creatives, too. Though Fannypack’s two albums, “So Stylish” and “See You Next Tuesday,” have yet to collectively sell 30,000 copies, the act’s label, Tommy Boy, has successfully placed various tracks in TV spots (Kmart, Nitendo, Payless), TV shows (“Grey’s Anatomy,” “The L Word”), movies (“Kill It,” “Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle”)

General Motors Canada and its agency McCann Canada recently licensed Fannypack’s “Hey Mami” for a Chevy campaign that launched May 12. As part of the deal, Chevy’s Web site includes a link to Tommy Boy’s site.

In total, Fannypack’s music has brought in a healthy six figures from third-party licenses, Tommy Boy head of marketing and international Rosie Lopez acknowledges, adding, “It will soon be at seven figures.”

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Tax Break For Songwriters
New Law Would Treat Composers’ Catalog Sales As Capital Gains Rather Than Income

Songwriters with valuable catalogs may want to delay any sale until next year. A new law is likely to go into effect Jan. 1 that may substantially reduce songwriters’ federal tax liability.

The Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act, expected to be signed by President Bush any day, includes a section that redefines capital assets to include the sale or exchange of self-created musical compositions or copyrights in musical works. Currently profits made from the sale of a catalog by corporate publishers are taxed at a capital gains rate of 15%, but profits made for the same type of sale by songwriters are taxed at their personal income tax rate, typically much higher depending on their income that year. Under this new act, songwriters will have the same tax relief as corporate publishers.

“This will bring the tax treatment of musical works in line with the treatment of other intellectual property,” says Sen. Jim Bunning, R-Ky., who sponsored the songwriter provision for the Senate bill. “This provision not only makes the taxation of musical works more fair, but also recognizes the intellectual significance of songwriters’ musical property.” Reps. Ron Lewis, R-Ky., and John Tanner, D-Tenn., sponsored the House version.

Songwriters selling catalogs individually rather than through a company are paying taxes on “ordinary income,” with rates reaching as high as 35%, says Joel Isaacson, a CPA and financial planner in New York. In addition, they are paying self-employment (Social Security) tax at rates of 15.3% of the amount equal to 90% of the net business income. “That’s a big tax. Most of these types of sales will get delayed until January,” Isaacson says.

“This is a landmark moment for the American songwriting profession,” says Burton Hershon, executive director of the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International, which spearheaded the change. “Not only do songwriters deserve this tax treatment, but with the decimation of this profession over the past decade, we might actually save the careers of some very talented songwriters.”

NSAI president Bob Regan of Music Publishing Blackburn, R-Tenn., took a personal interest in the change, opening many doors that would have otherwise been shut.

HFA’S PRIVATE DEAL: The Harry Fox Agency has entered into a licensing deal with BMI Music & Media Solutions’ Private Label Radio for digital background music. PLR offers customized audio content for in-store use by retailers, restaurants, financial institutions and the hospitality industry. It delivers recorded music over the Internet to be played through the audio and telephone systems of its commercial clients. Subscribers choose the music they want to use from pre-established playlists of songs. Under the agreement, HFA-member publishers have the option of participating in the deal, set up with a royalty structure based on revenue share rather than a fixed rate. Specific terms were not disclosed.

BMG REPS GAUMONT: BMG Music Publishing France and Gaumont, the world’s oldest film company, signed a worldwide administration and subpublishing deal for the studio’s film music catalog. Through the deal, BMG will represent the copyrights and, for synchronization licensing only, the master recordings of the Paris-based studio’s original soundtracks.

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Hans Zimmer's studio is dark red. The deep wood panels, flowing thick velvet curtains and the plush couch seem more fit for an 18th century castle than a building in Santa Monica, Calif.

Zimmer sits at his desk—complete with piano keyboard and numerous computers, and coffee. He leans in his chair, looks excited and overworked. He just finished scoring "The Da Vinci Code"—a project that consumed two years of his life. And now he is knee deep in "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest."

"I love it," he says. "Thank God my job is not ordinary."

Zimmer's life is anything but. He went from being a member of the Buggles (remember "Video Killed the Radio Star?"?) to being one of the world's most prolific film composers, with more than 100 scores to his name—and an Academy Award for "The Lion King."

He is an intellectual who likes to ponder philosophy and life's meaning. He can lose days in his studio, just thinking and writing. He says "The Da Vinci Code" was a challenge, but he and director Ron Howard formed an incredible bond. And watching Tom Hank's (who plays lead character Robert Langdon) work his acting skills was "breathtaking."

"The Da Vinci Code" is mired in religious controversy. Here, Zimmer sets the record straight.

Q: What was your biggest challenge in scoring this film?
A: I started out with all those obvious thoughts. I'm going to write loads of codes into the music; I'm going to go crazy with the Fibonacci sequence, a mathematical pattern that is among the clues in "The Da Vinci Code". One of my guys here built a computer program that just spits out numbers with the Fibonacci sequence. But it was boring. It wasn't a piece of me. It wasn't real. It had no soul. I thought the greatest code or game was to literally use the secretness of what music does—the things you can't describe in mathematics or in science, and just write a decent piece of music, if I wanted to write it about something purposeful and forget all the controversy. I did approach it as writing a classical piece of music. I wrote the whole movie as a suite and then started taking from that.

Q: How long did it take you to write it?
A: Is that inclusive of procrastination? [Laughs] I really started working on it the day Ron [Howard] and I had a casual phone conversation. I asked him, "So what are you up to?" And he said, "Oh, I'm doing "The Da Vinci Code" next." And my reaction was ungracious. I put my movie-making head on. I said, "Oh, that's impossible. It's all exposition." I kept thinking about why is this book such a phenomenon way beyond its words, beyond its thriller. It's partly what happens when you read something—you complete it and bring yourself into it. It wouldn't have mattered who [Ron] cast [in the male lead], people would have been critical, because they see themselves in the role. I said, "Ron, you are doomed here. By bringing reality to it, by manifesting the characters and images of the situation you take away the magic." Then I sort of flippantly said, "But of course the music on the other hand can add that element back in—the soulfulness, magic, love, spirituality."

Q: So you knock the director down and then you tell him how you can save the movie?
A: [Laughs] No, I didn't want the job! I was just having a chat with him and brainstorming crazy ideas. We weren't talking about me being the composer. But 10 minutes later, after I put the phone down, my agent called me and said, "What did you say to Ron?" I said, "I don't know, we were just talking." He said, "Well, he would really like you to do "The Da Vinci Code" if you are up for it."

Q: What was it like working with Howard?
A: This was my favorite experience ever ever ever of working with a director. I want to say lots of good things about Ron, but if I just say that, it sums it up.

Q: What about him made you feel that way?
A: He has a respect for what I do. That's one thing. He knows how to keep unnecessary pressure from me. For instance, the unnecessary pressure of what the studio must have felt of the enormity of taking on this film. I need to talk about the music; I need to explore. He never minded coming in and hanging for a couple of days and us just talking, trying out ideas, playing and exploring the tone of this whole thing. That's really what it became—it became a search. How often in life does someone throw out a challenge to you where you get to search for something—the mystery of "The Da Vinci Code." Why does it move people? At one point he did say, "The only thing I'm asking you to do is that you need to give the audience an epiphany."

Q: That's a challenge. How did you find the music for an epiphany?
A: I started working on the epiphany moment very early on. I wrote it and kept revising it, but I never put it up against [the picture]. Ron, being a gracious man, occasionally would ask about that piece of music. I would say, "Ya ya ya, I'm on it." One day he came in and said, "I'm getting a little worried about the ending music." So I said, "OK, let's just slap it up against the picture in the best style of Jackson Pollock. Start the picture. I'll start the music." It hit every cut. It's a four and a half minute piece, and everybody was getting goose bumps. I thought, "Thank God it worked!" It's all chance. I think of something, or I don't think of something. I'm very proud of it.

Q: How did all of you tackle the magnitude of the project?
A: We didn't know what to do with this subject matter, none of us did. We knew there are certain things we had to serve. We had to deliver a thriller; we had to deliver the characters; we had to deliver the story. Whatever that illusive thing is, that you can't talk about, that you can't really put into words, that's the music. I get to reinvent myself. I get to go and play with that.

Q: How did the religious controversy affect this project?
A: I didn't know it was going to get as controversial as it is at the moment. But, for me, my thought process was very simple. I don't mind being controversial. I don't mind being provocative. But I think people's faith is a dicey neighborhood, because it's about what they feel in their heart, and you can hurt them in their heart. I don't want to hurt people. I like making them think, but I don't want to hurt them. So I wrote it from a very pure place. If anything, the music doesn't have to engage the controversy, the music is pure. We don't use words in it. I was trying to explore my feelings toward spirituality, and not be critical and not be judgmental.

What I came away with from reading the book was the idea of the Divine Feminine. The two tasks I set myself were how you do write anything in inverted commas, action that doesn't use musical chords in the music, and try to develop a language for it as well, which was about the strength of women. I also thought the most exciting thing the Robert Langdon character does, his action in a way, is to think. Wouldn't it be fun if we could make the idea of seeing a man think exciting. . . .
BUSTING BARRIERS TO BIG BUSINESS ON THE MAINLAND. AN IN-DEPTH LOOK.
BY SUSAN BUTLER

CHINA BREAKING THROUGH
For centuries, the barrier to entry into greater China was the 4,000-mile-long Great Wall. As obstacles go, this was about as big as they came. And sometimes it even worked. From as far back as the third century B.C., the fortification was laid out to deter invading armies. Sometimes it stopped them, other times, they went around it. Today, as reports are written for boardroom presentations, the obstacles, challenges and barriers of entry to China also tend to dominate. But the desire for solutions is now perhaps proportionate to the spending power that comes with China’s 1.3 billion people. The music industry has struggled to elbow its way into China as much as any other, but the barriers to entry are now more clear-cut. Indeed, the key to the door of China’s music industry may be just one U.S. dollar. That’s right, 100 pennies—the difference in price between a pirated music CD and the real thing on the streets of some Chinese cities.

With this sort of difference in pricing on physical goods and a flourishing digital business powered by free peer-to-peer networks, the world’s major music companies are hoping a model can be devised that makes CDs and downloads more than just promotional tools for touring.

Getting "over the wall" is the inevitable imperative.

Since China joined the World Trade Organization and granted wider access to foreign commercial enterprises, the recording industry has been looking at the marketplace with a gleam in its eye. The oddity of mainland China is that a local industry has been all but nonexistent. Instead, stars from Taiwan and Hong Kong have largely fueled the listening habits of Chinese music fans.

Meanwhile, the IFPI reports a continuing rise in the sale of legitimate music products. This increase makes the market attractive for the recording industry despite many challenges. Government officials, lawyers and business executives who are experts in Chinese relations say that the music industry can help shape a new commercial environment and profit from it as well.

About 100 million Chinese—nearly equal to the U.S. population—are rapidly moving into a class with disposable income. They are located primarily in eastern cities like Beijing and Shanghai, and many of them see status in buying legitimate goods.

So although nine out of every 10 such products in China are counterfeit, the latest IFPI figures show that the sale of legitimate music cassettes, CDs and DVDs has increased 158% during 2000-2004, from 48 million units to 124 million units.

For risk-takers who can work with governments and business leaders to develop and implement a long-range plan, opportunity may be just over the horizon. There is a three-pronged approach that just may help harness the Chinese music market.

One prong of the plan requires creating a business model that addresses the massive piracy, which will remain a problem for some time to come. A company must make every measure possible to make piracy less attractive, former U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky says. That may mean adjusting price; entering into arrangements or relationships with pirating companies that then undertake commitments not to pirate in exchange for part of the royalty or license stream; and working in closer collaboration with provincial and, especially, local authorities who can be effective in shuttering pirate factories and taking more rapid action, she says.

"That’s a win-win by way of a business model that allows the Chinese to make money while protecting intellectual property," she says. Barshefsky is known internationally as the architect and chief negotiator of China’s WTO agreement. But about four years before the 1999 agreement was sealed, then deputy-USTR Barshefsky threatened China with U.S. trade sanctions after the government failed to live up to prior promises to protect intellectual property rights (IPR). She obtained information from the music, motion picture and software industries identifying specific pirate factories and demanded that they be closed. Chinese officials claimed they had little control over provincial officials, so Barshefsky went to Guangdong province where military and local officials were involved with the factories.

She threatened sanctions against China’s apparel industry—its largest export—if the CD factories were not shut down. The pressure was successful and saw the closure of some 60 factories. What was less clear was how many reopened or simply moved operations. However, exports of counterfeit music—the primary problem at that time—practically stopped.

"To the extent that the industry can devise business models of a more cooperative nature, one could imagine that from the point of view of the Chinese government, that would actually be a rather positive turn," says Barshefsky, now senior international partner with WilmerHale in Washington, D.C. "It has nothing to do with degree of ownership per se, but has instead to do with showing how companies that, on balance, would rather be legitimate—although not always for tax reasons—can make money by working cooperatively with the industry rather than adverse to it.

The business model could provide that the Chinese share in license...

THE MUSIC

MandoPop, the staple of mainland Chinese sales, is sung in Mandarin, the national dialect. The music is best-described as a mix of love songs and poppy pop. MandoRock in Greater China is light and simple, although guitar-based, MandoRock is highly melodic with easily understood lyrics. Hip-hop and rap are fast becoming popular in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Acts such as Jay Chou, F4 and Stephanie Sun are some of the hottest artists in China.

WHAT MUSIC WORKS?

A quick scan of China’s most popular artists finds few mainlanders. Instead, Chinese from Taiwan, Hong Kong and as far away as Malaysia and Singapore rise to the top.

"You absolutely cannot treat China as one homogenous country," one seasoned industry observer notes. "For example, Guangzhou is very poppy, Beijing has more of a rock culture, Shanghai is a little more sophisticated, and there are niches for jazz, salsa, etc. But overall, the market is dominated by quite dumbed-down pop." Rock Records’ Sam Duann says, "Chinese audiences may like some Western songs, but whether those songs touch their hearts is another thing." Understanding Mandarin pop goes further than writing lyrics in Chinese; it requires an artist to find a melody that is light and easy enough to follow. Even the music of such rock bands as MayDay, signed to Rock Records, has a poppier veneer that makes Western purists skeptical of the rock designation. Among acts that have stayed at the top album after album are Taiwanese male singer/musicians Jay Chou (Alfa/Sony) and Wang Lee-hom (Sony).

Meanwhile, the heart of Mando-pop has been described by leading lyricist Yao Chien as "the KTV rhythm," which lets fans sing along at the local karaoke.

Reporting by Steve McClure in Tokyo and Tim Culpan in Taipei, Taiwan.
ing fees and royalties, and perhaps even the copyrights.

"When [infringement] lawsuits run from one Chinese company against another Chinese company, there will likely be a greater degree of protection" by the governments, Barshesky says. Although experts say that China is at least 10-15 years away from developing its own intellectual-property base, perhaps enticing the country with copyright co-ownership will encourage China to protect it as well.

Pricing will naturally be a factor, especially in a country with a per capita income of about $1,700 per year. "China is a margin killer," former Wall Street Journal Beijing bureau chief and venture capitalist James McGregor says. "You can't expect Chinese people to pay U.S. prices."

Indeed, legitimate music CDs sell for around $2, roughly double the price of pirated units. Record companies will need to take this into consideration when producing music.

The mobile phone market may prove to be more profitable. When master ringtones do not include lyrics from the songs, distributors may be able to urge the Ministry of Culture to allow them to bypass this approval step, cutting down on red tape and delays.

The second prong of the plan to achieve a profitable market requires participation and cooperation among business and trade groups. For example, McGregor says the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing are gathering data for an IPR rating system. The group hopes to publish an index rating major cities in Chinese provinces by their level of IPR protection.

"There is no way that Shanghai will want to be rated worse than Hangzhou," example," McGregor says. "If you get the Chinese competing against each other—especially if foreign investment dollars change their course based on these ratings, which could happen over time—then the Chinese will work to improve their IPR protection. You can motivate China in that way."

The rating system will be based on data that the groups gather from courts, law firms and foreign companies pertaining to infringements, legal actions filed and the results. This will be challenging to acquire since such information is not a matter of public record; the government does not feel compelled to tell people what it is doing.

The third prong of the plan requires government action. Barshesky says a concerted and joint effort by the governments of the United States, Europe and Japan—whose companies are the hardest hit by IPR piracy—is necessary to press the Chinese government to take action.

McGregor believes the legitimate market can grow if the Chinese government also improves its information-control regime and reorients it with its market economy. This would require the government to begin blocking only what it considers important to block and allowing true market mechanisms and the legal

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**SALES TALLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mainland China's Music Market</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008 (projected)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimate sales of physical products:</td>
<td>$206.4 million</td>
<td>$350.2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pirated product:</td>
<td>$545.3 million</td>
<td>$400.2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital music (legitimate):</td>
<td>$311.4 million</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>$1.1 billion</td>
<td>$2.6 billion</td>
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**SOURCE:** Beijing-based research firm Analysys International

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**RECOVERING LOST TREASURES**

Last September, IFPI chairman/CEO John Kennedy and his RIAA counterpart, Mitch Bainwol, visited Beijing and urged the Chinese government to step up its action against piracy and make conditions more favorable for international music businesses to operate in China. Kennedy and Bainwol praise the progress that has been made, but add that China still needs to do much more to stop physical piracy.

According to the IFPI, China is the world’s 20th-largest music market, with total sales in 2004 of $211.8 million on a retail basis. Kennedy says 90% of the recorded music sold in China is from pirated sources, and only a few of the country’s 86 known optical disc factories are manufacturing legitimate products.

"The Chinese government is well aware of the piracy problems and the bad image that this is causing," one industry source says. "There are periodic crackdowns, but...most of the [illegal] CD/DVD factories are owned by the People’s Liberation Army, and the distribution is largely in the hands of triad gangs, many of them Hong Kong– and Taiwan– funded. The Public Security Bureau [police] are under-funded wimps, more qualified to direct traffic and find lost children than to tackle the PLA and their gang 'homies.'"

"If I was to tell you we are making money out of the physical CD sales then it would be a lie, and most of the music labels are not," says Sonja Chen, managing director of independent Shanghai-based management company/label Oriental Sky. "Most of the companies are just making CDs as promotional tools and to collect the content; the income is coming from management and digital," she says.

The industry’s most recent headache is online piracy. In recent months, Beijing-based search engine baidu.com has been the subject of legal action from labels for offering free unauthorized music downloads (Billboard, Oct. 1, 2005). Top100.cn, a download service claiming to be mainland China’s biggest legitimate digital music store that launched Feb. 15, raised eyebrows by offering unlicensed tracks by acts signed to Universal and Warner (Billboard, March 4). The service also offered songs by the Beatles, who have never licensed their music to any digital service; their music was taken down following queries from Billboard.

And the IFPI’s Asia Pacific office has warned Yahoo China (owned and operated by Beijing-based alibaba.com) that its “deep links” to apparently unauthorized downloads may be infringing copyrights (Billboard, March 11).

"[We have to] win the war against the pirates through anti-piracy activity in the PRC [People’s Republic of China] by targeting distribution ‘hubs,’ and from overseas by continuing to liaise with the Chinese government to reduce digital [intellectual property] theft in the PRC,” says Paul Robinson, president/COO of EMI Music South East Asia, which has had a minority stake in distribution company Shanghai Push sound Typhoon since 2003.

Reporting by Steve McClure in Tokyo and Tim Culpan in Taipei, Taiwan.
distribution of products to work. It will also take foreign government pressure to change this.

But change is not quick to be embraced in Chinese government circles. “We cannot argue ideologically that communism is stone cold,” a U.S. government official says. “But the country has grown, and more people are getting more prosperous. The Communist Party has maintained its monopoly of political control because they’ve delivered the economic goods.”

Meanwhile, mega-music retail stores are popping up. Xinhua, the state-run news agency, operates bookstores designed like Borders and Barnes & Noble offering a wide variety of music products. And as the upwardly mobile sip coffee and read in the stores’ big easy chairs, their use of cell phones is also on the rise, a nod to opportunity, especially on the ringtone front.

Foreign record labels are still working this market from a distance, however. Chinese law prohibits foreign companies from owning a music production company, says intellectual property attorney Xiang Wang, who serves as counsel to law firm Jones Day in Beijing. In China, this is known as the “publication right,” i.e., government permission to publish or reproduce material, printed or otherwise, that could potentially have ideological content—and music falls into this category. The record companies tend to be based in Hong Kong or Taiwan, most of the Chinese repertoire, which accounts for about 75% of legitimate and illegitimate music, comes from there.

The distribution arm has also been a restricted industry. While Westerners have sometimes tagged the distribution network as organized crime with military protection, McGregor describes it differently. “Basically everybody is a raging entrepreneur looking for an opportunity,” McGregor says. There are alliances of individual citizens and alliances of government agencies with citizens. “If they see an opportunity to make money moving music around the country, they do it”—whether legal or illegal.

But since 2005, following the end of the grace period for China to comply with WTO standards, Chinese law has allowed foreign companies to own up to 49% of a music distribution company approved by the state council. Wang says. They must partner with a private or state-owned Chinese company. Companies from Hong Kong and Macau may own up to 70%.

For foreigners wanting to jump into the fray, the distribution company will still have more hurdles to clear. The Ministry of Culture must review and approve each recorded song before release. The General Administration of Press and Publication must also approve the music before granting a publication license for each recording.

And therein lies the rub, an industry source says. Only a state-owned company may apply for a publication license. If the foreign company’s partner is not a state-owned company, the distribution company must take the music to a state-owned publication house and ask them to apply for a license. If the publication house is busy or does not like the distributor, it will hold up the process—it is out of the distributor’s control.

“What started out as a process of controlling information in China has now become a way of controlling the market and making sure that any money made off these products goes to Chinese companies,” McGregor says. “It’s not so much the government telling you to do it, it’s just the way the system has evolved.”

This makes record companies nervous. They typically control production and distribution of the music, including carefully planned release dates. In China, they cannot vertically integrate the production company and the distribution company, they cannot control a distribution company in which they have an equity interest and they cannot control the release date.

This control is particularly crucial when pirates hear the music in Hong Kong or Taiwan and then have time to saturate the Chinese market while legitimate companies are waiting for approvals. Although an industry source says the Ministry of Culture has reduced its approval time from about a month to two weeks, the publication license process remains unpredictable.

Even so, experts say the music industry should not shy away from China. “If you deal with the reality and take a proactive step, then many of the nightmares can be avoided or reduced,” Wang says. “You can still stay ahead of the game and be profitable, which is why most of the large companies from the U.S., Europe and Japan are doing business in China.”

Access to China’s tightly controlled, generally conservative state-owned media can be challenging. Labels are breaking even from sales in Taiwan and Hong Kong, where there are plenty of promotional opportunities. Mainlanders watch through illegal satellite-TV hookups.

Observers say such artists as Taiwanese female vocalist A-mei are now making more money from mainland endorsements than any other revenue source. And that, they say, offers a way for international acts to establish a presence in mainland China.

So far the real money is in Mandarin-language music. A key obstacle to doing business in China was removed in 2004 with the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, which allows Hong Kong-based companies to hold majority stakes in distribution companies on the mainland.

Such control can be crucial. When production and distribution are controlled by local companies, the majors have limited ability to stop them from over-printing and under-reporting CD production, which has been known to happen on the mainland.

Universal, which already has a number of partnerships in China, recently bought a majority stake in independent Chinese label Tien Yun, which is based in Guangzhou and Shanghai, to develop local talent and distribute all Universal product in mainland China.

EMI Music South East Asia, meanwhile, has had a minority stake in distribution company Shanghai Pushsound Typhoon since 2003. And Sony BMG owns 49% of Shanghai Epic Music Entertainment, a distribution company it set up in 2002 with local partners Shanghai Synergy Multimedia Group and Shanghai Jingwen Investment.

NO BUSINESS ‘BIBLE’

Billboard asked some Asian-based music executives for their ideas about doing business in China:

* Tsuei says 90% of mainland releases are off-cues, says Susanna Ng, Hong Kong-based regional managing director for EMI Music Publishing Asia, which was the first foreign music publisher to set up a wholly owned subsidiary in mainland China. Piracy and infringements on ringtones and MP3 downloads are very serious, and we have big problems collecting our royalties,” Ng says. “However, the situation has improved substantially during the last three years.”

* Sam Duann, co-owner/managing director of Taiwan-based Rock Records, offers different insight: “There’s no bible for doing business, you simply have to go through the process. It’s very difficult to get a clear answer on how to do certain things such as set up a new business.”

* “I would encourage international artists to do more concerts and promotional tours in mainland China, because even if you don’t make money from CDs, there are so many other revenue opportunities,” says Adam Tsuei, Sony BMG Music Entertainment senior VP for greater China and managing director of Sony BMG Music Entertainment Taiwan. His advice: Keep it light. “Chinese people love ballads and love songs, not loud and noisy.”

* Tsuei says 90% of his company’s revenue comes from Taiwan’s music copyright industry. “Taiwan is the Chinese music factory—mainlanders have their satellite dishes tuned to Taiwan TV.”

* Warner Music Asia Pacific is expected to receive formal approval from the Chinese government in the near future to set up a majority-owned distribution subsidiary in Shanghai (billboard.biz, Oct. 20, 2005). Warner Music Asia Pacific president Lachie Rutherford notes: “The issue is one of control over timing and promotional and marketing strategy in both the physical and digital marketplace.”

* “The right strategy is to evolve away from licensing toward distribution,” Universal Music South Asia president Harry Hui says. “A local presence is very important to being successful in China . . . local management is key.”

“There’s much to learn about doing business, but we see the China market as a massive opportunity and well worth the investment in understanding local practices,” EMI’s Robinson says.

ENTER THE INDIES

It’s not just the four major labels that sense opportunity in China.

* Rock Records, Asia’s biggest independent label outside Japan, is planning to expand its Rock Mobile download service to the mainland later this year. Also setting its sights on China’s emerging digital music market is Tokyo-based Auvex, Asia’s biggest independent record company. Auvex is poised to become the first Japanese record company to establish a subsidiary on the mainland.

* “We want to stand as an example to the other services that you can do a legitimate business and survive,” says Rock’s Duann, who is also Rock Mobile’s chairman.

* Takashi Araki, senior executive director of the label’s parent company, Auvex Group Holdings, sees China’s emerging mobile-based download market as the sector with the most potential for the music industry.

Reporting by Steve McClure in Tokyo and Tim Culpin in Taipei, Taiwan.
What a difference a year makes. In the spring of 2005, when House of Blues Entertainment came up in conversation, the talk was mostly of uncertainty: the privately held company's concert division was on the sales block for the second time in less than three years.

The company never did sell its concert division, which HOB Entertainment CEO Greg Trojan had defined as "anything not part of the club business," including HOB's eight large amphitheaters. But it did sell tickets—smartly, and a bunch of them. According to Trojan, HOB has maintained double-digit growth in a difficult marketplace, and remains firmly committed to the touring business.

This year HOB has been aggressive on many fronts, opening new clubs, bankrolling a wide range of tours, investing in its amphitheaters and competing successfully as a promoter in a highly competitive landscape. And any talk of a sale seems to have dissipated.

Trojan says HOB is "absolutely, enthusiastically" committed to the concert business. "We're investing as aggressively as we think makes sense, and we're extremely bullish. You're not going to replace the experience of seeing a show live, and we're going to be out there adding to that experience."

Even with the unpredictability of a potential sale and the stagnant concert marketplace of 2004-2005, Trojan notes that HOB overall has performed with remarkable consistency, outpacing the concert business at large. In fact, with Live Nation now independent of its conglomerate parent Clear Channel, and 2005's fourth-ranked promoter Jack Utsick Presents now constrained by issues with the Securities and Exchange Commission (Billboard, May 6), HOB now appears to be one of the more solid companies among the promoter elite.

"We're comfortable we'll grow before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization over 20% this year, after we grew 23% last year and 17% the year prior," Trojan says. "This is not a one-year phenomenon. If you look at our company over a seven-year period, we've grown an average of 13% a year. We are a company that's dedicated to growing our business on a cash flow and earnings basis by double digits, and we've exceeded that by a lot."

"Our concerts business is a more mature business with more variability, but we've grown that business by middle single digits, about 7% a year over the last three years," Trojan says. "We got
caught up in some of this industry press about how terrible things are, but we’ve actually been cranking along and still growing that business over a long period of time.”

LOOKING BACK
HOB Entertainment acquired its concert division for $190 million in 1999 from Seagram. In 2002, the company retained investment banking firm Allen & Co. to find a buyer for some HOB assets, primarily most of its concert division, which were pulled off the market in November of that year (Billboard, Nov. 9, 2002).

A sale seemed more likely last year, when several high-profile bidders came to the table to kick the tires on the concert division. HOB retained global financial services firm UBS to evaluate the potential sale.

But those close to the situation say no offer ever came close to HOB’s original purchase price. Serious bids ranged from $91 million on the high end to $73 million on the low, while HOB had been hoping for an offer as high as $110 million, sources say.

A stagnant 2004 concert business and general economic uncertainty no doubt did little to boost HOB Concerts’ perceived value. But with the concert business up 28% in first-quarter 2006, along with the notorious unpredictability of the overall industry, some are wondering if HOB Concerts might again end up on the block.

No way, according to Trojan, who says that his company never actively tried to unload HOB Concerts in the first place, but only reacted to serious inquiries.

“We never had it for sale,” Trojan says. “People came to us and we had a fiduciary duty to take a look at that transaction. If it ended up resulting in a better growth scenario overall for our company, then we would have done it. It didn’t even come close to that. We’re really happy that the two businesses are together, and we have not had one conversation since then about splitting them up.”

On the promotions side, HOB continues to be a major global player. Before being purchased by HOB in 1999, Universal was the top promoter in the world. Industry consolidation followed, with the various Live Nation configurations quickly outspreading all promoters and leaving HOB at No. 2. With AEG Live’s rapid ascension in the international arena touring world, HOB is now third in gross dollars, reporting slightly less than $200 million in grosses for 2005.

But AEG tops AEG in attendance (6.5 million) and number of events (3,583) for the year. It is always worth noting that gross does not equal profits, and Trojan maintains that disciplined talent buying makes HOB profitable.

“We try to bring a pretty disciplined approach toward what we’ll do or not do,” Trojan says. “Overall, we’re not a company that worries too much about market share and the top line. We think some of the best decisions we make every day are the shows that we don’t do.”

Still, if Live Nation and AEG Live are competitors for a tour, or either company offers an inflated guarantee to nail down the business, in the fall-off HOB and other promoters have to pony up or stay on the sidelines.

“Given those dynamics, you can put a lot of wear and tear on your buildings and your people, and do a lot more revenue with making a lot less money,” admits Trojan, who says he sees a degree of moderation returning to the touring business.

“It’s not that we never lose money on shows—you can’t be in this business and not take risks. But it’s all about having a balanced approach about it.”

HOB Concerts executive VP Alex Hodges agrees. “It’s not the greatest playing field in that context, but where we do have some things going in our favor is the venues and the markets that we’re in, plus our expertise and our marketing staff,” he says. “We’re able to navigate that landscape and manage it, but that’s a troubling area, where the prices of artists are somewhat inflated because of national tour buying.”

Passing on dates is always an option. But promoters want to promote, sometimes making passing a tough call. “I don’t like to ever have the attitude that we ‘pass,’” Hodges says. “We recommend something different: lower ticket price, lower guarantee, better deal. And if the artist and manager and agent can’t buy into my good argument, then they passed on us.”

HOB has managed to be a Switzerland of sorts, partnering frequently with AEG and Live Nation, as well as Nederland Concerts and independent promoters.

“We look at AEG as an occasional partner and provider of talent, as well as being a competitor,” Hodges says. “We look at Live Nation as being a partner and an ally and a provider, as well as being a competitor. We’re in between, and what allows us to do that is we’re profitable, our expertise is good, we need shows, we buy shows, we have good markets.”

In fact, in scenarios where other promoters push the ante, HOB is little different from an independent promoter, aside from its broad base. “House of Blues is on my side in that game,” independent promoter Seth Hurwitz says. “Like so many of us, we’re trying to do smart business that makes sense to the bottom line, and we’re competing with a different set of economics and business plans that involve creating200s for stock reports.”

BACK TO BASICS
Trojan says commitment to the brand, a consistency in management team and talent buyers, and dedication to HOB venues and the fan experience have been the pillars of HOB’s performance.

“We’ve always felt if you could do the best job that you can, you’ll be OK.” Hodges says. “Having faith in that rather basic concept is not always easy, but we have diligently proposed that our best strength is to do what we do best, to get up every day and go to work and try not take defeats too desperately, not be paranoid about any rumors and stay focused.”

Staying focused helped the concert division excel even in uncertainty, Hodges notes. “It wasn’t the most comforting thing to be for sale, but we knew we worked at a company that had bought Universal Concerts and anything can go on any day, depending on what kind of deal can be made and if a sale provided an opportunity to grow faster.”

He says, “I think we just know that at some point we’ll go public or there will be a transaction, hopefully with a public company, and options will take value and that will be a really good thing.”

But worrying about stock options is misguided, Hodges adds. “It’s important not to wake up every morning thinking about options, but rather to wake up thinking, ‘Let me go work with my team of people, my brothers and sisters, and buy some shows and get ‘em on sale and do the best we can and listen to the new albums coming out,’” he says. “It’s fun.”

Trojan also sees opportunities for HOB to raise its profile or expand its base into new territories.

“Our preference is to look at markets where we can establish a base, where we have a core building or set of buildings,” he says. “We’re not likely to go to [markets] where we don’t have a building and just go out there and start promoting shows.”

As for the unrealized sale of HOB Concerts, Trojan seems more resolute than his top promotions executive. “We put it behind us. We’re truly are enthusiastic about how the business is performing and what we see as the future,” he says. “I wouldn’t rule out anything, but I don’t see [a sale] happening.”

From top: The Gorillaz; HOB Chicago; HOB Anaheim; HOB Hollywood; Caesars Amphitheatre, San Diego; Gibson Amphitheatre, Los Angeles.

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Bands On The Rise With HOB

House of Blues has parlayed its network of 20 venues into one of the most active tour producers in the business.

By focusing on up-and-coming talent, HOB senior VP of entertainment and promotion Kevin Morrow believes his company is not only developing acts, but agents as well.

“We’ve taken stuff at the club level, given the bands the experience they wanted and made a commitment in the touring division by hiring two new folks in Elyse Rogers and Randy Fibiger,” Morrow says.

“And actually while we were developing those bands we helped develop some of the younger agents, and now it’s their time. They’re grown as their acts have grown.”

Morrow cites Dashboard Confessional, Flogging Molly, HIM, My Chemical Romance and NOFX as bands that have “advanced to the next level, as have their agents. We’ve been there with both of those entities on their rise.”

He also notes that these bands are open to sponsors brought in by HOB, whose underwriting can help keep ticket prices low. “And these are bands that are price-conscious,” Morrow says, “more so than some of the old Hailey Jacks that have been around 210 years, [whose] fans are older, that can get the $100 tickets.”

HOB CEO Greg Trojan says much of his company’s efforts in the marketplace are dictated by modern day national tour economics. “In competing for a piece in the touring space, frankly we don’t have a huge competitive advantage in going after the U2s or the Madonna of the world,” Trojan says. “The category of acts we work with wants to be associated with who we are, how we execute and what we can bring to them, and it works very well for us.”

HOB-PRODUCED TOURS IN 2006

1. Flogging Molly (sponsored by Guinness)
2. Lifehouse (Lincoln Zephyr)
3. The Academy Is... (Xbox 360)
4. Chris Brown (Xbox 360)
5. Taking Back Sunday (Hot Topic)
6. HIM
7. Ringo Starr’s All Star Tour
8. The Fray/Dashboard Confessional (Xbox 360)
9. Sounds of the Underground
10. Ministry
11. My Chemical Romance
12. NOFX

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RBD'S SUCCESS IS DRIVEN BY MUSIC AND MARKETING

Like teen sensations before them—think 'N Sync or the Backstreet Boys—Mexican pop group RBD has climbed to the top with its fresh sound, cute looks and timeless appeal to teen desires. But behind the scenes, other critical factors played a key role in RBD's rise. The group, which began as a music spinoff from the soap opera "Rebelde" in late 2004, has become one of the hottest-selling acts in Latin music. Since July 2005, three of the group's albums—"Rebelde," "Nuestro Amor" and "RBD: Live in Hollywood"—have not only scaled the Top Latin Albums chart but also crossed over to success on The Billboard 200. The group has sold more than 7.8 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Since launching a U.S. tour in March, the group has reported $13 million in ticket sales to Billboard Boxscore, at press time. So how did RBD get so hot, so fast?

In a nutshell, veteran producer/marketing whiz Pedro Damian and media giant EMI/Televisa masterfully engineered a promotional trifecta—massive TV exposure, heavy radio play and major marketing and merchandising.

The result is both "Rebelde," or "Rebel," one of the most popular telenovelas in Mexican TV history, and RBD, measurably one of the top teen pop groups in North America at the moment.

Ironically, while the six actors in RBD play rebels, they could not be more mainstream.

"Rebelde," more sitcom than a soap opera, combines the campy music and hijinks of late-'60s pop phenom the Monkees with the youthful angst of TV's "Friends." Think "The OC" meets "American Idol."

In early 2006, RBD announced plans for its first big-screen movie, English-language CD and U.S. tour. With sold-out shows in Brazil, Costa Rica and Puerto Rico, RBD has been in the news almost daily.

The group's debut U.S. concert at the Los Angeles Coliseum drew 63,000 people—impressive, considering most Anglo-pop fans had never heard of the act.

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According to Damian, "Rebelde" is all about how these teenagers try to find their identity. Sometimes they fight against the authority of the school, sometimes of their parents, sometimes against their own inner conflicts.

Like teen sensations before them—think 'N Sync or the Backstreet Boys—Mexican pop group RBD has climbed to the top with its fresh sound, cute looks and timeless appeal to teen desires. But behind the scenes, other critical factors played a key role in RBD's rise. The group, which began as a music spinoff from the soap opera "Rebelde" in late 2004, has become one of the hottest-selling acts in Latin music. Since July 2005, three of the group's albums—"Rebelde," "Nuestro Amor" and "RBD: Live in Hollywood"—have not only scaled the Top Latin Albums chart but also crossed over to success on The Billboard 200. The group has sold more than 7.8 million albums in the United States, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Since launching a U.S. tour in March, the group has reported $13 million in ticket sales to Billboard Boxscore, at press time. So how did RBD get so hot, so fast?

In a nutshell, veteran producer/marketing whiz Pedro Damian and media giant EMI/Televisa masterfully engineered a promotional trifecta—massive TV exposure, heavy radio play and major marketing and merchandising.

The result is both "Rebelde," or "Rebel," one of the most popular telenovelas in Mexican TV history, and RBD, measurably one of the top teen pop groups in North America at the moment.

Ironically, while the six actors in RBD play rebels, they could not be more mainstream.

"Rebelde," more sitcom than a soap opera, combines the campy music and hijinks of late-'60s pop phenom the Monkees with the youthful angst of TV's "Friends." Think "The OC" meets "American Idol."

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"Rebelde" first aired on the Televisa network on Oct. 5, 2004. From the start, it was unlike any other formulaic Mexican soap opera. Beyond adolescent worries about looks and peer acceptance, it also addressed teenage sexuality.

Early on, a few of the more camera-friendly characters—played by Anahi Puente, Alfonso Herrera, Dulce Maria Espinoza, Christian Chavez, Maite Perroni and Christopher Uckermann—formed their own pop group, singing songs about love, heartbreak and other teen obsessions.

EMI released the "Rebelde" CD in January 2005, "En Vivo" in July, "Nuestro Amor" in October, and "Live In Hollywood" this past April. A CD/DVD of the first two seasons of "Rebelde" was released in December.

The soap opera has gained big audiences in Central and South America, including Brazil, where EMI released a Portuguese version of the first album. In the United States, the show airs on the Univision network.

However, Damian, studio producers and musicians wrote and produced the music on the CDs. In concert, the singing teens are backed by a touring band.

For tour promoter Guillermo Rosas of Roptus Entertainment, there is no secret to RBD's success.

"There's fascinating energy and chemistry between the RBD members. Televisa's unique reach and vision, Pedro Damian's sensibility, and the fact that RBD's story is real," Rosas says. Exhaustive market research was also critical.

"For the U.S. tour, Roptus carefully analyzed the marketplace," Rosas says. "This included extensive research on past touring acts, complete understanding of RBD's core demo and unique marketing strategies to reach them.

"We needed to prove our point with our first concert. So against everybody's opinion, we decided to play the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. To most people this was a very risky mistake. Everybody was certain that RBD could do it. We knew they could.

Radio played a key role, says Richard Bull, VP of marketing and business development for EMI Televisa Music.

"Of all the big marketing activities that we did to make this happen, I would bring it down to radio," he says. "At one point, we had five different singles on the pop charts at the same time. Really, really insane."

According to Bull, "very heavy TV promotion" helped RBD's album "Live in Hollywood," which was released April 4. Most record company TV spots are 30-second generic spots, but Bull argued for more elaborate "lifestyle" ads.

"We've challenged ourselves as a company to say, 'Let's do something beyond the ordinary. Why can't we do a major commercial? Why can't we really do a lifestyle commercial like McDonald's does or Nike? So we took that challenge upon ourselves, and we did our first television commercial with RBD," Bull says.

Alejandro Benitez Cueto, Grupo Televisa general director of talent and music in Mexico City, says the TV and radio promotions complement each other.

"First of all, RBD is a concept that is heavily supported by the telenovela, and second, there has not been a teen group in Mexico since OV7 which has held that place of popularity," he says. But with all the TV exposure RBD receives through the telenovela, one might ask what is the purpose of the 30-second spots.

"What you're doing with the commercials are calls to action, saying, 'Guys, RBD is a band. This is a CD that's available. This is the contents inside the CD and the DVD. Go to the store and buy it.' And I think they reinforce each other."

Another key is what Benitez Cueto calls "the musicalization of the novela."

"I told the producer, Pedro Damian, 'You decide what you want in the music of the group for the records for EMI. But whatever the music is, that is the music we use to musicalize the novela,' " he says.

"And so with that, we have tons and tons of

...
AWARDS CONFIRM APPEAL

While RBD is a group made famous by a single TV show—the Mexican soap opera “Rebelde”—the act’s popularity makes it clear that its fan base knows no programming boundaries. On April 27, in addition to winning two Billboard Latin Music Awards for its album “Rebelde” (for Latin pop album of the year, duo or group, and Latin pop album of the year, new artist), RBD won the Telemundo Viewer’s Choice Award.

Based solely on popular vote, the Viewer’s Choice Award was determined by music fans who voted online for their favorite music star. Fans were urged to visit telemundonews.com and cast their vote by choosing from a list of favorite acts. Visitors to the site were able to pick from a gallery of all finalists plus other popular acts through noon on April 27.

RBD was up against not only favorites like Shakira and Daddy Yankee, but other major Latin music artists. In a year of reggaetón, then, popular vote went to the pop band. —Leila Cobo
RBD is proving its appeal on the road and surprising skeptics on the Mexican pop group's first North American tour. With 22 concerts already on sale at press time, the tour has sold more than 202,000 tickets and grossed more than $13 million, according to tour producer Guadalupe Rosas of Roptus Entertainment.

"The tour is going great, we are breaking records in every market we have played," Rosas says. "This will be one of the biggest tours the Latin market has ever seen."

The 39-date outing opened March 17 in Salinas, Calif., and is expected to gross $22 million and draw at least 350,000 fans before it wraps June 25 at the Thomas & Mack Center in Las Vegas.

A March 18 date at the Los Angeles Coliseum drew more than 61,000 people and grossed more than $3.1 million. The March 26 show at HP Pavilion in San Jose, Calif., promoted by Marquez Brothers Entertainment, grossed $838,735 and sold out at 14,746 people.

"RBD was an exciting evening of entertainment," says Steve Kirsner, director of booking and events at the HP Pavilion. "It is a great show, and I do hope to have them back soon."

Much of the interest in the tour is being driven by the group's Web site, roptus.com, which offers updates and interviews with RBD, along with ticket giveaways and other promotions.

Rosas says the Web site helps RBD create awareness of the tour among its enthusiastic fan base. "Roptus is about establishing new markets, exploring new horizons," he explains, adding that the tour is breaking ground for other Latin acts. "RBD is the perfect pop phenomenon to open markets."

The RBD tour plays large venues in traditionally strong Hispanic markets, including the ARCO Arena in Sacramento, Calif.; Coors Amphitheatre near San Diego; American Airlines Center in Dallas; and the U.S. Airways Center in Phoenix.

But RBD will also play markets with small or growing Latin fan bases, including Salt Lake City, Detroit; Boston; Tucson, Ariz.; Tacoma and Yakima, Wash.; Winston-Salem, N.C.; and Portland, Ore.

Rosas expects the act will only continue to grow, and other Latin artists will follow. "This new wave will sell more records and will encourage [Latin] pop and rock bands to tour in these markets," he predicts.

Onstage, the group is backed by a full band and sports high-end production values. Tickets range from $25 to $100, depending on the market.

Rosas says the group's relationship with its youthful following is unique. "They are extremely tight" with their fans, he says. "They know each other very well. They see each other every day. The youth did not have any act of its own. RBD is all about the youth, the youth is all about RBD."

The bond between RBD and its fans is a key to promoting the tour, Rosas adds. "Understanding the relationship between the audience and RBD and knowing how to speak to them is important," he says. "This demo is probably the most difficult to advertise to. But Roptus knows its ways."

While Roptus is producing the tour, the firm will also work with other promoters, including Marquez Brothers Entertainment in 17 of those markets. It will also partner locally with AEG Live and House of Blues in select markets.

Rosas says the target audience for the tour transcends the Latino market in some cities. "We've actually been doing some general-market advertising in a couple of markets," Rosas says. RBD has "a huge following through myspace.com. And there are a bunch of truly American people who love [RBD], as well as some foreign people from countries like Israel, Chile and Brazil."

In the United States, not only is RBD drawing crowds, the group is moving merchandise. San Francisco-based merchandising/licensing company Cinder Block is overseeing tour merch for RBD.

"Our 'per head' rivals those of some of our biggest tour clients, like Green Day and Faith Hill/Tim McGraw," Cinder Block president Jeffery Bischoff says. RBD numbers not only compare favorably with other Latin acts, but any pop act. "RBD is poised to eclipse the touring success of pop acts like New Kids on the Block and 'N Sync," asserts Dan Cooper, Cinder Block VP of artist relations. "Merchandise sales exceeded our wildest expectations."
MICHELLE BRANCHES INTO COUNTRY

Pop Star Has New Duo, New Album—And A Hit In Nashville

NASHVILLE—It's not every new country act that lands high-profile appearances on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" and "The View," or the coveted opening slot on the Rascal Flatts tour. But then, not every new act features Grammy Award-winning pop star Michelle Branch as does the Wreckers.

Teammed with her best friend and former backup singer Jessica Harp, Branch says she is devoted to redirecting her career into country music. Their first collaboration, "Stand Still, Look Pretty," is a fresh collection of songs, mostly written by Branch, Harp or both. The album, due May 23, is a joint release from pop label Maverick—Branch's label home for her two platinum-selling solo albums—and sister label Warner Bros. Nashville.

Country radio was quick to embrace debut single "Leave the Pieces," which is No. 29 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart for the week of May 13. "Having the street cred of Michelle Branch may have helped them get some attention initially, but the act as a whole certainly merits attention," says Doug Montgomery, PD of WBCT Grand Rapids, Mich.

RUS St. Joe PD Mike O'Brien thinks Branch's recognition factor is double-sided. "For the real hard-line country PDs/MDs, [the duo] probably have had to work twice as hard to prove they are fully committed to country and not just moonlighting."

The pair, whose name is short for "Homewreckers," discovered while on the road that their voices worked well together. Harp, who briefly had a development deal with Elektra Entertainment, was literally driving to Nashville from her hometown of Kansas City to sign a contract with Dualtone Records in 2004 when she and Branch committed to their plan. Harp turned her car around and drove to Los Angeles to meet with Branch.

They recorded the bulk of the album with producer John Leventhal in New York, but later added tracks recorded with John Shanks in Los Angeles and Paul Worley in Nashville. The Shanks collaboration became the first single.

The album blends progressive country, pop and roots rock, wrapped around the pair's harmonies.

Given the direction of the music, Branch says country seemed like the most obvious home. But it took a while to convince both herself and her label to give it a try.

"For a few years, I had been trying to work the courage to jump into it," Branch says.

And Maverick needed a dose of courage, too. "We told them we wanted it to be an organic, country instrumentation record," Branch recalls. "In their mind, it was the ugly 'C' word, and they didn't really understand."

Harp adds, "The label was like, 'Fiddles? Really?' But they let us do our thing."

Immediately after finishing the album, Branch learned she was pregnant with her first child with her husband, musician Ted Landau. The duo took about a year off, time Branch says helped the Maverick staff wrap its head around the music and come up with a plan to market it in collaboration with Warner Bros. Nashville. If it hadn't been for that break, she predicts, "The project probably would have gone down the toilet."

Both labels "agreed the focus should be developing them as country artists," says David Grant, Maverick director of marketing. "That is what the music dictates." Despite Branch's pop history, neither label has plans to work the project to any format other than country.

But they are trying to reach Branch's fan base. The marketing plan calls for TV advertising campaigns at CMT and GAC, but also VH1, MTV and E!

The Wreckers will get major exposure in the country world opening 23 dates on the Flatts tour, which begins May 26. Branch says both women are grateful they're not starting out playing "a club tour where we have to share grungy bathrooms. [This] will be a nice, cushy tour with good catering."

FACT FILE

Label: Maverick; Warner Bros. Nashville
Management: The Firm (Michelle Branch). Refugee Management (Jessica Harp)
Booking: William Morris Agency
Publishing: I'm Still With the Band, BMI (Branch). Barefoot and Starry Eyed Music/Sony ATV Music, BMI (Harp)
Songwriters of the Year
JESSE CARMICHAEL
RYAN DUSICK
ADAM LEVINE
MICKY MADDEN

Song of the Year
SHE WILL BE LOVED

publishers: Careers-BMG Music Publishing, February Twenty-Second Music as performed by MAROON 5
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Flyleaf: Banshee Voice, Christian Base

There is something frightening about Flyleaf frontwoman Lacey Mosley. Her vocals are sweet and then bitterly raw, as if she is near death.

Upon first listening to Flyleaf’s self-titled full-length debut, one would think this hard rock five-piece band from Belton, Texas, would be too intense, too edgy, for radio. But Octone Records found a way to get radio on its side: Christian radio.

Signed to Octone in 2003, the label ran a Flyleaf EP through Christian radio first, risking pigeonholing the band as a Christian act. “We wanted to use Christian radio as a place to start, much like a record company might choose to start a hipper-type group at college radio,” Octone executive VP Ben Berkman says. “Our goal from day one was to break this band at mainstream rock radio.”

The label, which has a joint venture with BMG’s RCA Music Group, has experience with fighting the good fight and winning—it took Octone almost three years to break Maroon5 (the group has since been upstreamed to RCA’s J Records).

Last fall, following the October release of the full-length, Octone launched “I’m So Sick”—which had also been featured on the EP—to rock and modern rock radio. Airplay at these formats was fostered by retailers calling commercial rock stations and telling them how the EP was selling. Modern rock WBSX WilkesBarre, Pa., was the first to give “I’m So Sick” a shot.

By early this year, RCA Music Group’s promotion staff stepped in to co-promote “I’m So Sick” and help secure airplay on influential rock and modern rock stations such as KISS San Antonio, WAAF Boston, WMMS Cleveland, KBER Salt Lake City and WRDX Norfolk, Va. The song is now crossing over to top 40.

RCA Music Group is a true partner,” says Octone president James Diener, who is also senior VP of A&R/marketing for RCA Music Group. “Octone is treated very well within the system, they look favorably upon what we do.”

After reaching the top 10 at active rock and the top 30 at modern rock, RCA Music Group VP of rock promotion Bill Burns says, “We just quit with the chart game and started going market to market and using Nielsen SoundScan info and showing radio that we were selling this band in their markets.”

The story is building: Flyleaf is showing steady growth on the sales front.

Nielsen SoundScan has plotted scans that began at 2,000 units per week in October 2005 to 12,000 units for the week ending May 14. Total sales are 181,000. Diener adds, “I think more of these situations where you have a first stage and then a collaborative second stage is the solution to getting good bands that are a little nascent and still need to be developed into a situation where there’s momentum in the marketplace.”

To further pepper the market, Octone head of sales and artist development Rome Thomas gave iTunes, Napster, Yahoo, SIRIUS Connect and Real Rhapsody versions of the album with exclusive cuts added for each outlet. He also hired Wiredset to help build a database and create promotions for the band, tied in with Internet communities MySpace and BuzaNet, and offered a free ringtone of “I’m So Sick” to anyone who signed up for the band’s mobile fan club.

Thomas thinks the reason Flyleaf has caught on is simply because of how lead singer Mosley and the band connect with their fans. “Her lyrics reflect what a lot of kids are going through right now,” Thomas says. “The urgency in her lyrics attracts the aggressive male rock fan in addition to the more lyrically minded female fan.”

Mosley has her own thoughts on the subject. “I think we’re really honest in our approach, we bring out the negative things and put hope back in them. I think that’s missing in rock music.”

After headlining clubs this spring and some international dates, Flyleaf will hitch onto the Family Values tour this summer with Korn, Deftones and Stone Sour.
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A Latin Reality Star Is Born

Anais Is First To Break Through From A U.S.-Based Show To Latin Charts

It is pretty much a given that in the United States any "American Idol" finalist will find some measure of fame. But when it comes to Latin music, the reality shows have been more hit-and-miss—and a lot more "miss" for the handful of shows on Spanish-language TV in the United States. Spain successfully exported its "Operación Triunfo" finalists (most notably David Bisbal), and Mexico its "La Academia" finalists (Yuridia and Yahir). But only now has a U.S.-based show placed a star on billboard's Latin music sales charts: Dominican-born, New York-raised 21-year-old Anais.

In 2005, Anais won the second edition of Univision's reality show "Objetivo Fama." In April, Anais' debut album, "Asi Soy Yo" (Uni-vision Records), broke ground by entering Billboard's Top Latin Albums chart at No. 11. This issue, the album, produced by Sergio George, is No. 26.

But Anais' success seems to have more to do with a careful marketing plan than with her TV exposure. Instead of rushing out an album immediately after the show ended its high-rated run, Univision Records waited.

"We were sitting in a marketing meeting in October, and when I asked for the ship-out it was so irrelevant I decided to postpone it," says José Béhar, chairman/CEO of Univision Music Group. By then, a first Anais single, "Atrapada," had been released to radio and done nothing.

Béhar looked for a more radio-friendly strategy and changed single, opting for "Lo Que Son Las Cosas," a hit recorded years ago by Ednita Nazario. Anais rerecorded a pop version with producer Bob Benozzo (of Laura Pausini fame), a regional Mexican version with regional group Alaranes and a reggaeton version with Volto.

The single debuted on Hot Latin Songs at No. 50 in March. By April 15, it hit No. 1 where it remained for six consecutive weeks, coinciding with the album's release (this week, the track is No. 4).

Play for all three versions was tabulated in the Hot Latin Songs tally.

"That's a dream formula that seldom occurs with a brand-new artist," Béhar says.

"Asi Soy Yo" blends a variety of styles. At its core, it is a ballad-driven Latin pop album dressed up with touches of tropical and reggaeton. Anais says she would like her next album to be more "passionate" and include some English tracks.

In Anais', "Objetivo" producers found someone with a remarkable voice who blends Latin and R&B sensibilities, telegenic looks and a story to tell. That combination of elements was missing in other U.S.-based Spanish-language reality shows, including 2003's "Protagonista de la Musica," 2005's "Nuevas Voces de America" (produced by Emilio Estefan) and even the first edition of "Objetivo Fama."

"She had everything, and she was very real," show producer and now-manager Ender Vega says. "People today buy attitude and talent, not just beauty."

Of course, Anais' looks helped. Even a small scandal involving questionable photos taken years before seemingly made her more likable in the eyes of fans, who overwhelmingly voted her the show's winner. And she continues to be a regular guest on the new edition of "Objetivo Fama."

"I owe my personality to the show," says Anais, who used to sing in karaoke bars before being selected for "Objetivo" among thousands who auditioned throughout the United States. "I went in as an airhead," she says with a laugh. "(Then) I learned you sometimes have to have a strong personality, and I learned how to use it. And I also improved my singing."

Although Anais is fluent in English, she says she went for "Objetivo Fama" rather than "American Idol" because she didn't like judge Simon Cowell's harsh style.

"We're all learning," she says. "Nobody should get mistreated."

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Latino Notes

LEILA COBO lcobo@billboard.com

MUSIC FOREMOST, PASSION FOR SORAYA

I first interviewed Soraya in May 2000. She was on the verge of releasing a new album, and everything seemed aligned for a major breakthrough: She had the songs, the look and a crossover appeal so strong that her album, "Cuerno y Alma" (Universal), was coming out in English-and Spanish-language versions.

We met for lunch at a little French bistro and over salads discovered a wealth of things we shared: Classical music training, Lebanese ancestry and names, and ties to Cali, Colombia—my hometown and the place where she spent a good portion of her childhood.

Soraya was an eloquent speaker and writer; she could have been a journalist had she chosen that path (and, in fact, later on she would write the occasional newspaper piece).

But Soraya became a musician—and not just a soulful singer or a riveting performer. Soraya was a musician. Serious about her craft to the point that she even wrote out the charts for her session players. She was a fine composer who loved collaborating and appeared to enjoy the craftsmanship of the song as much as the execution.

That was what drew me to her music. She owned it, and that made it personal and universal at the same time.

And then, literally days before turning in my story, Soraya was diagnosed with breast cancer.

I grappled with how to include this information in my article in 2000. The beautiful, assured woman I had met seemed anything but ill, and she was impossible to picture as a victim. The last thing I wanted to do was make the story of Soraya, the musician on the verge of stardom, into the tale of Soraya, whom we should feel sorry for.

In the end, I made her illness secondary to the music, a stance I took for every subsequent piece I wrote about her.

It wasn't a gesture made out of courtesy, but accuracy. First, Soraya never wanted the pity. Second, and most important, her music didn't need the crutch of an illness to be recognized. Her humanitarian work, which we saluted with Billboard's Spirit of Hope Award in 2004, was one thing. Her music, enough often related to her illness, stood alone.

"I didn't want to make a cancer-survivor record," she told me when she put out her "comeback" album, "Soraya" (EMI), in April 2003. "I didn't want a sad, 'poor me' record. It's undeniable what happened to me. It's a part of who I am, and I wanted that to come across. And I want to go on the road and play songs that make me smile."

Sadly, Soraya succumbed to the disease May 10 at age 37. Much of what has been written following Soraya's death has dealt with her illness and advocacy and the tragedy of a dynamic life lost so young.

But at Soraya's May 13 funeral service in Miami, the speeches were mostly about an indomitable spirit and a first-rate musician admired and supported by her peers.

Ricky Martin and Alejandro Sanz sent flowers, and Puerto Rican star Luis Fonsi sang. Her backup singers and musicians performed as well. Her record producer Sebastián Krys moved the crowd, recalling that he called her Dori, after the comically forgetful character in the movie "Finding Nemo." But he also recalled her work ethic: "She wouldn't rest until whatever she was doing was perfect." That respect was widespread in the business—it was music professionals who voted for Soraya when she won the best singer/songwriter album category at the Latin Grammy Awards in 2004.

"I'm standing here as a fighter and representing hopefully the fight for many people who are striving to be better," she said at the time, using words that could be interpreted in many ways.

I took it musically. Yes, Soraya was an advocate, an educator and an inspiration. But her most indelible message was the one she conveyed wielding her songs, her voice and her guitar.
Andsnes Looks Back

On the heels of a string of highly praised North American tour dates earlier this spring, it seems clear that the technical dexterity, musical intelligence and emotive power of 16-year-old Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes is only continuing to grow as years pass.

However, Andsnes is taking a quiet glance back with his next recording, “Horizons.” The album, which will be released by EMI Classics in September, surveys about 20 short works the pianist has accumulated during his career, including some he learned in childhood.

“It’s the kind of music I play for encores which I never get to record,” the pianist says. “There is such a diversity of repertoire here, from a Bach-Busoni chorale to Shostakovich. And some of the pieces are very attached in my mind to certain places and to certain times in my life. For example, there’s a Jacques Ibert piece, ‘The Little White Donkey,’ which I played when I was 6 years old, and a concert study by Smetana that I connect with my teacher, a Czech pianist named Jiri Hlinka, whom I first met when I was 15.”

The album is already preparing a strong campaign. A sample of the album was given out to audiences across the United States during Andsnes’ recent tour.

“We have given out about 2,500 samplers so far, and it seems to have generated a lot of interest,” EMI Classics VP Mark Forlow says. “The timing between a classical artist’s tour dates and the time we have recordings made and edited doesn’t always work, but in this case we had more than half of ‘Horizons’ already finished in time to make the sampler. It sets up a strong foundation for the album’s release in September, which will coincide with NPR’s fall fundraising drives.”

The album’s release date also coincides with another period of high-profile live appearances by Andsnes, including an Oct. 4 performance at Carnegie Hall with the Cleveland Orchestra, which will be Carnegie’s gala opening night concert for the 2006-07 season.

COMINGS & GOINGS: The London Philharmonic Orchestra recently announced a changing of the guard that signals a generational shift: 34-year-old Russian conductor Vladimir Jurowski has signed a five-year contract with the orchestra, becoming the LPO’s new principal conductor as of the start of the 2007-08 concert season. Jurowski takes over from 79-year-old Kurt Masur, who has of late cancelled 16 touring dates with the LPO due to illness. The LPO’s in-house label is distributed in the United States by Naxos.

The Academy of Ancient Music has announced its associate director, keyboard player/conductor Richard Egarr, will succeed AAM founder Christopher Hogwood as its music director, effective Sept. 1. Hogwood will assume the lifetime title of emeritus director.
Hi-Tek Hits The Dre Dream Team

The last time we chatted with Hi-Tek, the hip-hop producer talked about a R&B singer/songwriter he'd been grooming under his Hi-Tek Productions banner: Dion (Billboard, Dec. 17, 2005). Hi-Tek's grooming during the last three years has paid off. The 23-year-old Cincinnati-based talent has signed with Dr. Dre's Aftermath label. A due date for Dion's solo debut has yet to be set, but Billboard has learned that the recording gears are already in motion: Hi-Tek, Dr. Dre, Focus and Mike City will produce tracks for the project.

The singer came to Dr. Dre's attention as a result of his hook-singing talent on potential tracks Hi-Tek submitted under his own Aftermath production deal. Dre's invitation to record for the super-producer's various projects led to Dion's appearance on "I'm Runnin'" from the Game's 2005 debut album.

For the still uninitiated, Hi-Tek describes Dion as a "new-age Marvin Gaye" with natural talent and a soulful sound.

"What attracted me about working with Dion was his tone," Hi-Tek recalls. "He's a smooth guy who directs a lot of songs toward the ladies. He's also a strong writer with a real vision of how he wants to project himself as an artist.

Dion joins a growing list of R&B artists being mentored by hip-hop vets. Kanye West boosted the buzz behind G.O.O.D. (Columbia songwriter/musician John Legend. Ludacris' Def Jam-aligned superproducer's "A.C.D.C.," which makes for fitting radio play, is also a product of the Game's deal.

MUSICAL NOTES: "S.O.S." co-writer Evan "Kid" Bogart signed a worldwide co-publishing pact with Reach Global Music Publishing. He co-wrote Rihanna's No. 1 Billboard Hot 100 hit with producer Jonathan "J.R." Rotem.

Bogart is also proof that music is in the blood: He's the son of late Carabina Records founder Neil Bogart.

"Before me," Gla-Man Knight's long-awaited like-on songs associated with Billie Holiday and other icons, shifts from June 6 to Oct. 16. The n.e.w. complements the September taping of a PBS concert special.
Anderson's Label Hunt; Shelton Quits Road

Big & Rich's John Rich says he's producing a new album for country legend John Anderson. Rich plans to showcase the project, financed by Rich and Anderson, at a party for label execs in late May or early June in the hope of landing a label home for it.

Anderson, who does not have a record deal, has recorded for Warner Bros., MCA, BNA, Mercury, Epic and Audium Records during a career that dates back to 1977. He has notched 20 top 10 singles on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart, including five No. 1s.

In other news, Ricky Van Shelton has quit touring and performing after 20 years on the road and has asked to be released from his performance obligations booked through the year. He cites a desire to spend more time with his family as the reason. Shelton recorded for Columbia from 1987 until 1995, where he notched five platinum and two gold albums and 10 No. 1 hits.

JUST REWARDS: The Country Music Assn. posthumously presented its Joe Talbot Award to pioneering artist manager/booking agent Louise Scruggs May 8 in Nashville. The award recognizes outstanding leadership and contributions to the preservation and advancement of country music.

Fifty years ago, at a time when women were not taken seriously in key music business roles, the tough and feisty Scruggs took on management and booking duties for the bluegrass duo Flatt & Scruggs, which included her husband Earl. She is credited with helping grow country and bluegrass music internationally by booking the duo, and later Earl Scruggs as a solo artist and a member of family band the Earl Scruggs Revue, in creatively chosen venues and festivals, often outside the format's usual parameters, including Carnegie Hall and the Newport Folk Festival.

Earl and sons Gary and Randy accepted the award on behalf of Scruggs, who died Feb. 2.

ON THE ROW: Nashville startup label Category 5 Records has signed with RED Distribution. The label's roster includes Travis Tritt and Sammy Kershaw. Toby Keith's manager, T.K. Kimbrell of TKO Artist Management, has been appointed to the Country Music Assn. board of directors, filling a seat vacated in the resignation of Borman Entertainment's Gary Borman.

Lyric Street Records director of Northeast promotion Jennifer Thorpe will be exiting the company in June. Across town, Eric Beggs has exited the Southeast regional promotion slot at Epic Records after fewer than six weeks on the job. Prior to joining Epic, Beggs worked in promotion at Capitol Records Nashville.

SIGNINGS: Arista Nashville artist Keith Anderson has signed with the Fitzgerald Hartley Co. for management.

Bluegrass quintet Cadillac Sky has signed a recording deal with Skaggs Family Records. No release date has been set for the band's self-produced debut album, "Blind Man Walking."

The startup Sea Star Records, an imprint of the rock label Kirtland Records, has signed Nick Ashton as its first country artist. His debut CD, "Crush," is due in the fall from the RED-distributed Sea Star. Both labels are owned by former Deep Blue Something member John Kirtland.

ACM WINNERS: Buddy Cannon has been named the Academy of Country Music's producer of the year. He will collect his trophy just prior to the live TV broadcast of the 41st annual ACM Awards on May 23 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Justin Niebank is the ACM's audio engineer of the year.

In the musician categories, the winners are Michael Rhodes (bass), Jonathan Yudkin (fiddle), Pat Buchanan (guitar), Shannon Forrest (percussion/drums), Mike Rojas (piano/keyboards), Bryan Sutton (specialty instrument) and Paul Franklin (steel guitar).

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### Snow Patrol Eyes Global Success

**TOURE DE FORCE**: Post-humous albums often disappoint, generally being incomplete recordings that would never have emerged had the artist lived. That’s not the case with “Savane,” the self-penned final album by two-time Grammy Award-winning Malian guitarist Ali Farka Touré, who died March 7 from cancer. “He was working on it into his last weeks and finally declared himself satisfied shortly before his death,” says “Savane” producer Nick Gold, owner of U.K. independent label World Circuit Records. “Savane” is a powerful exploration of links between West African music and Delta blues. Guests include British blues harmonica player Little George Sueref and former James Brown saxophonist Pee Wee Ellis. World Circuit will release the album July 3 in Europe; a U.S. release on None-Such/Warner follows July 4. Ry Cooder collaborated with Toure on the Grammy-winning 1995 album “Talking Timbuktu” (World Circuit). He calls “Savane” a “truly great piece of work,” adding that Toure was “in an enriched musical state” during recording. Toure is published by World Circuit Music, subpublished in North America by Rykomusic.

—Nigel Williamson

**Lior Lior**: Sydney-based singer/songwriter Lior’s debut album “Autumn Flow” was an Australian indie success story in 2005. That story is continuing in 2006 with sold-out headlining shows and David Gray support slots—including an April 22 gig at the 14,000-capacity Sydney Entertainment Centre. The 27-year-old Lior is headlining 20 Australian shows, booked through Premier Artists. His dynamic performance was captured on the Feb. 6 live album “Doorways of My Mind” (Senso Unico/MGM), which features eight “Autumn Flow” songs plus three previously unreleased titles.

“Autumn Flow” first appeared in September 2004 on Lior’s own Senso Unico label. Constant live work and radio support from national youth-oriented network Triple J gradually brought its mixture of pop and Middle Eastern textures to the attention of Aussie record buyers. The album reached the top 50 of the Australian Recording Industry Assn. chart in February 2005 and is now ARIA-certified gold (35,000 shipments)—rare for a domestic independent act.

Israel-born Lior will record a new album in late 2006 and aims to work shorty with Arab-born Australian musicians. “Music,” he says, “is the ultimate cultural bridge and healing force.” Lior is published in Australia by Mushroom Music Publishing. He says talks are under way with a U.K. label to release his albums overseas.

—Christie Eliezer

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### Who Says History Never Repeats?

While familiarity may breed contempt in some circles, for record buyers, when the effort is packaged and marketed smartly, it resonates. The simple fact is that for years, major labels didn’t know how to work veteran artists in a way that was profitable because they were so reliant on radio.

That left gaps for labels like CMC (later absorbed and ultimately shuttered by Sanctuary) and others to fill. These vintage artists may only be good to work together. They recorded two tracks, the duo signed to Burgundy and then went back in the studio with Iba and Schlesinger producing.

“Everyone just wants this to be a classic sounding America record,” Schlesinger says. “A lot of their stuff is very minimalist in a way and we want to retain that.”

Bunnell says to expect more ’70s-style America than the ’80s America, when the group—then still a trio—experimented with different rhythms and veered slightly away from their signature sound and, not coincidentally, high sales.

Burgundy is intelligently packaging the new material with a concert of the duo’s greatest hits recorded live for XM Satellite Radio, which replicates its 1975 quintuple-platinum “History/America’s Greatest Hits.”

While Schlesinger admits the chances of a radio hit are unlikely (”James and I aren’t the Neptunes,” he quips), for Bunnell, the added marketing might that Burgundy can provide means the difference between releasing albums on very small indies that die on the vine—as was the case with the pair’s last album, 1997’s “Human Nature”—and creating a bigger bang. “We have a much better shot of getting an ear,” he says. “One or two veteran artists seem to get new life breathed into them every year and hopefully, we’ll be one of those.”

—Steve Adams

**Polydor U.K. will release a pop album by Yusuf Islam** (Cat Stevens).

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**Burgundy’s forthcoming America offering is a template of how to do it right.** The duo—singer-songwriters America’s Gerry Beckley and Dewey Bunnell with Fountains of Wayne’s Adam Schlesinger and his producing partner, Smashing Pumpkins’ James Iha. The fit with pop king Schlesinger seems perfect and, unlike some other collaborations, not an effort to make an act hip by association.

Nothing reeks of desperation as much as teaming a veteran with some flavor of the month, whom the older act has never heard of until they meet in the studio. Happily, this is not the case.

This scenario developed more organically. Beckley and Schlesinger had been e-mailing and del for 50,000-100,000 units a pop. But by keeping recording costs down, using the Internet for marketing and relying primarily upon the existing fan base, such a release could be profitable.

So the majors got smart and either broadened their catalog divisions to include new releases from veterans or recently started new imprints like UME’s New Door, Def Jam’s Def Soul and Sony BMG’s Burgundy. But instead of having major-label expectations, more realistic goals are set. Not all of these projects are coming on major labels—Jett and Parker self-release; Brickell is on Fantasy—

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www.americanradiohistory.com
NELLY FURTADO FEATURING TIMBALAND Promiscuous (3:43) Producers: Timbaland, Dana Winters. Writers: N. Furtado, T. Mosley, N. Hill, T. Clayton

RASCAL FLATS What Hurts the Most (3:34) Producers: Dann Huff, Rascal Flats Writers: J. Steeley, S. Robson

PHOENIX It's Never Been Like That Producer: Phoenix Album: Medrano Release Date: May 23 On its third full-length, Parisian quartet Phoenix has created its most immediately endearing album, condensing its members' talent for complex pop music into 10 concise nuggets of rock cool. This is the kind of record the Strokes and countless other newfangled pop/rock groups have been trying to make over the first half of the decade. But nobody's done it with such effortless flair as Phoenix. The band is capable of composing elaborate orchestral music and much poppier fare ("Too Young"), from the "Lost in Translation" soundtrack. But here, the group concentrates on the visceral, and the results shine through in deceptively simple, richly textured songs like "One Time Too Much" and the exuberant rockers "Long Distance Call" and "Casino Laugh."—TC

MISSION OF BURMA The Obliterator Producers: Bob Weston, Mission of Burma Matador Release Date: May 23 Mission of Burma is highly regarded as one of the most influential groups of the post-punk era based on its caustic live shows, a pair of EPs and one full-length album in the early '80s. After a long hiatus, the trio reunited a couple of years ago, and apparently life is good in Burma because the new decade has now brought two new albums. In music, as in life, things go in cycles, and the melodic yet dissonant punk guitar attack Burma brings to the table sounds arguably more relevant today than it did 20 years ago. The band slips into a delicious, chaotic bit of round-triping on "Careening With Conviction," sparsely mesmerizing melody on the instrumental "Mute Speaks Out" and simply pouding on the punk rock of "Dona Sumeria." What a crazy career!—FC

DEF LEPPARD Yeah Producer: Def Leppard Island Release Date: May 23 It was worth the effort of a platinum-shipping best-of. Def Leppard finally secures the secret behind its '80s hitmaking and hard-rocking British glam rock. Feeling nostalgic, the pop-metal vets hand over a long-lapsed delays-covered cover of hits from the Kinks ("Waterloo Sunset"), T. Rex ("20th Century Boy") and Sweet ("Helter Skelter"). While bubble-gum standards "Rock On" (David Essex) and "Don't Believe a Word" (Thin Lizzy) would have raised arena roofs around the time the Berlin Wall collapsed, the DIY irresistibility and hard-guitar stunts, suggesting an exhausted cover band that feeds on echoes of a once-glorious era. Even so, expect Def Leppard to air out some of these tunes on the road with Journey this summer.—SP

VARIOUS ARTISTS WWE: Wreckless Intent Producers: various

DIXIE CHICKS Taking the Long Way Producer: Rick Rubin Wide Open/Columbia/Sony BMG Release Date: May 23 Once the darlings of country, the Chicks lost many fans—and the support of country radio—a 2003 incident in which Natalie Maines made a relatively innocuous comment about President Bush from a London stage. The group has finally re-emerged stronger, more defiant and more creatively ambitious than ever. The first-time pairing with Rubin has resulted in a surprisingly cohesive mix of country and rock tunes, including co-writes with Sheryl Crow and Neil Finn. While many former fans remain critical of the group for its outspoken political views—a pertinent no-no in country music—tracks like "The Long Way Around," "Everybody Knows," "I Hope" (highlighted by a John Mayer guitar solo) and the chillingly sad "Veins Inside My Head" are sure to earn the group at least some of its fans back.—PS

THE WALKMEN A Hundred Miles Off Producers: The Walkmen Record Collection/World Bros. Release Date: May 23 The Walkmen's third full-length proves this is a band for the ages. Joining a post-motorman-de-de-crash Dylan vocal delivery with a Springsteenian-of-the-streets spirit, whiskey-soaked singer Hamilton Leithauser leads his band through a set of rousing, sharply focused, late-night peaks and barroom rhapsoms that take the group well beyond its garage roots. From the swamp pop of "Louisiana" to the calypso bounce of "Brandi Alexander" and swaying blue-eyed soul of "Another One Goes By," the music draws upon timeless forms, and in the process it becomes timeless. Though there's hardly a misplay, the triumph here may be the starting line: "Emme, Get Me a Lemon"—iridescent guitars, fervent organ and keyed-up, tribal-style drumming drive an impassioned vocal straight to the heavens. Mainstream success may not come easily, but the Walkmen deserve applause.—SV

JONNY CASH Personal File Producer: Gregg Geller Columbia/Legacy Release Date: May 23 More than 20 years before Rick Rubin resurrected his career with the sparse American Recordings series, Johnny Cash was recording dozens of similar songs in his own studio. Later found in boxes marked "Personal File," the tracks are remarkable in their breadth and depth, and include hearty ballads ("Get Out Of This World," "Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes"), songs of faith ("No Earthly Good," "In the Sweet Bye Bye"), his own material ("Virgil," "A Half Mile a Day"), and those of such peers as Bill Anderson and Johnny Horton. Many songs are introduced by Cash's revealing reflections, making "Personal File" a conceptual jewel of these 49 titles will be familiar to even longtime fans, but the prevailing themes of emotion, family, heartbreaking and joy are vintage Cash.—RW

ANIMALS & AIRWAVES We Don't Need to Whisper Producer: Tom DeLonge Geffen Release Date: May 23 Sweeping and epic are two words generally not associated with Blink-182, but Tom DeLonge has stepped out of the shadows of his former band with Angels & Airwaves. The lyrics and tone here are as positive and serious as Blink's were juvenile, and "Joshua Tree"-era U2 is an obvious sonic blueprint. It works best on "The Adventure" and "The War," both of which DeLonge is utilizing Edge-like electro-guitar effects minus any punk or power chord flourishes. While Blink's ambition can't be faulted, one of the reasons it was so popular was because its songs were memorable. Many of Angels' midtempo tracks, while well-intentioned, fail to reach the lofty heights to which they aspire. If the band can follow up on its potential, it will be a force to be reckoned with.—BT
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POP

**DR. JOHN**

**Mercenary: The Songs of Johnny Mercer**

Producer: Dr. John

**Black & Blue Note**

Release Date: May 23

Dr. John's homage to Johnny Mercer is as much the triumph of an eminent song stylist as a celebration of one of America's finest lyric-writers. "Mercenary" teems with guts and gristle as the doc puts his New Orleans-fired stamp on Mercer classics like "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby," "Moon River" and "Lazy Bones." Instead of playing it straight, Dr. John croons with a twist as he has on previous standards albums. He translates Mercer into his own funky vernacular by delivering down-home blues, voodoo grooves, brassy R&B and traces of piedmont rumba. He takes "Hit the Road to Dreamland" on a mid-tempo stroll with piano flourishes and renditions "I'm an Old Cow Hand" as a syncopated soul-jazz instrumental. The only weak link is the original I Ain't No Johnny Mercer," which might be expected, given its title.—DO

LATIN

**JEAN**

On

Producers: various

Sony BMG Latin

Release Date: May 16

Jean is sometimes referred to as Luis Fonsi’s younger brother. But clearly that pedigree isn’t what got him the record deal. Like his brother, Jean has a soulful, eloquent voice that he applies not only to pop ballads but to decidedly urban material, ranging from the R&B-leaning "Duele" to the hip-hop beats of the obvious (and less satisfying) "Vamo' a Chocar." But it’s on the R&B ballads (check out the old-school sound of "Dulce Café") where Jean really shines and fills a void that no Latin artists have convincingly stepped into yet. There is nothing timid about this debut that truly marries Latin and urban American sensibilities, and Jean can easily move into either direction or both simultaneously.—LC

BLUES

**MIGHTY LESTER**

We Are Mighty Lester

Producer: Lenny Tenzer

Self-released

Release Date: May 23

There’s a lot more happening in North Carolina than basketball and lacrosse scandals, and here’s a CD that bears that out. Mighty Lester is an eight-piece blues powerhouse from the Raleigh-Durham area that will scratch your head. Its semi-self-titled indie release offers a dozen songs, including 10 first-rate originals. Fronted by the soul-sainted Todd Dewberry, Mighty Lester delivers a choice melange of Kansas City blues, Stax grooves and genuine jump blues. Check the sonic blast of opener "Gonna Bail Tonight," the slyly tipsy "Try Me That Bottle" and the super-sly finale "Sorry Didn’t Do It." The band’s guitarist/songwriter Lenny Tenzer produced the set, and it’s as tight and right as any blues album this year.—PWW

BLUEGRASS

**RANDY WALLER & THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN**

Keeper of the Flame

Producers: Randy Waller, Wesley Easter

L distint Records

Release Date: May 16

Since the mid-’90s, the Country Gentlemen have been justly renowned stalwarts of bluegrass. With the death of the foursome’s last remaining founding member, Charlie Walker in 2003, son Randy Waller, who already played a featured role in the band, assembled new musicians fully worthy of carrying on the group’s venerated name. Each is absolutely stunning instrumentally, knowing how to burn ("Working for a Living," "Mr. Robinson") and when to lay back ("Rambling Boy"); Walker’s heart-tugging "Golden Wedding Bands"). And they knock out choice footstomping like second nature. Walker also proves himself a gifted writer on five of 14 cuts, and one of the finest voices singing bluegrass or country today.—GE

DVD

**PJ HARVEY**

On Tour: Please Leave Quietly

Director: Maria Mochnacz

Island

Release Date: May 23

In this comprehensive yet intimate overview of her 2004 U.K. tour, Harvey says she hoped to honestly portray the realities of life on the road rather than create "some slick music video." Maria Mochnacz’s stunningly gritty and artful direction not only brings the band’s often riveting stage show to life, but captures "the mess at the end" of every outing. Highlights: a lengthy and revealing interview with Harvey, another of the crew at work and winning performances of "Kept Woman," "Dress" and "Big Exit."—SV

POP

**FIVE FOR FIGHTING**

The Song

Producer: John Ondrasik, Curt Schneider, Andrew Williams

Knockout Entertainment

Writer: J. Ondrasik

Publishers: various

Avalon/Columbia

Said-sack storyteller Five for Fighting—the larger-than-life persona of singer/songwriter John Ondrasik—returns with "The Big Picture." More up-tempo and optimistic than previous "Superman" and "100 Years," the album's all-appearing for the meaning of life. This time around, after discussions with a wise man, "I've got it all/Cause we're all we get in this bouncing ball/There's a reason for the world/You and I." The sap factor is pretty high here, limiting the song's appeal to moms and wiseful philosophers, and its little remaining doubt that Five for Fighting is pretty much a one-trick pony. But AC likely will nurse this song for its balladry, giving a seeming one-hit wonder his third lucky home run.—CT

**KIM SOZZI ALL**

(3:56)

Producers: Johnny Budz, Antonio Bass

Writer: S. Steinberg, T. Kelly

Publisher: Sony/ATV, ASCAP

Remix: Valetin Ultra

As just D.H.'s 2005 high-energy cover of Roxette's "Listen to Your Heart" went exactly where you expected it to—relaying a beloved downtempo retro hit into an anthemic thumper—established dance artist Kim Sozzi's remake of Heart's "Alone" works the 1987 No. 1 power ballad into a frenzied workout mantra. Her tour, "The Reason," may have pegged the trio as a melodic pop ensemble, but punters recognize that Hoobastank is simply demonstrating its versatility. The inimitable album apparently comes with a subtitle: "the music with that flute, accordions, and trumpets conjures everything from Pink Floyd to Journey. Any group that worries less about fitting a radio format than stretching wings gets our vote. "In the Inside of You" rocks, but it's also teaching the world to sing, one demographic at a time.—CT

CHRISTIAN

**BRIAN LITTELL**

Welcome Home

(3:00)

Producer: Dan Muckala

Writer: J. Rich, A. Smith, P. McGehee

Publisher: various

Backstreet Boy Brian Littrell steps forward as a solo artist with his new album targeting the Christian market. This gorgeous single, however, is also a potential hit. With a Christian or mainstream formats with its positive lyric and engaging melody, it celebrates pursuing your dreams and realizing your knowledge that love will always welcome you home. Though he plans to continue with Blackstreet, this strong single shows Littrell has the goods to develop into a major solo act.—DEP
Peppers Get Hotter, Not Older; Mother's Day Dear

What is more remarkable?
For a band that saw its first chart link 19 years ago to remain relevant enough at modern rock radio to top that format's chart? That a band that already had seven platinum albums under its belt, three of them multipluminium outings, has not scored a No. 1 set until now? Or simply that a band that didn't The Billboard 200 in 1987 can rally its strongest Nielsen SoundScan week with a double-album, no less?

Behold Red Hot Chili Peppers, who manage that unique trifecta of accomplishments with their "Stadium Arcadium" blowing through 442,000 copies in its opening week. Simply amazing.

Not only is this the third week in a row that a rock album rules the big chart, this also marks the second consecutive Mother's Day week to see a convention-challenging rock band hit No. 1—this during a gift-giving occasion that generally boosts the sales of softer fare, country and other adult-skewing favorites. Nine Inch Nails' "With Teeth" was champ during Mom's special day in 2005.

Considering the Peppers' significant status and ongoing influence, it's difficult to imagine that they have never placed an album higher than No. 2, the rank its last studio album, "By the Way," earned when it bowed in 2002.


All but the first two of the nine albums the band has charted were released since Nielsen SoundScan began counting sales in 1991. Its previous largest SoundScan week was the 282,000 first-week sales for "By the Way."

"Dani California," the lead track from the new album, became the band's ninth No. 1 on the Modern Rock list and still commands the chart for a sixth week. The 1991 song "Give It Away"—rereprised when the band played "Saturday Night Live" on May 6—was the Peppers' first to top that format.

MOMMY AND ME: While Red Hot Chili Peppers and last week's winner, Tool, might appeal to mothers who rock, The Billboard 200 sees plenty of action for the type of fare one expects to see flourish on Mother's Day.

With James Blunt advancing 13-10 with a 22% swell on The Billboard 200, you can practically hear the family surrounding Mom with "You're Beautiful.

Others who seem to chart the band in the company of flowers and greeting cards: Alan Jackson (28-17, up 77%), Carrie Underwood (27-21, up 46%), Barry Manilow (47-27, up 116%), Michael Buble (37-30, up 45%), Il Divo (87-68, up 55%), Kenny Rogers (117-81, up 86%), Enya (159-83, up 155%), Faith Hill (101-85, up 59%), Sugarland (113-94, up 62%) and Rod Stewart (116-102, up 44%). Andrea Bocelli slips 11-12, but is up 16%.

Although it does not hop around as much as Easter, Mother's Day is one of those occasions that can shift from one week to another in successive years. The holiday arrived one week earlier last year, and that's the biggest reason why album sales are up about 8% over the same 2005 week this issue and why last issue's Market Watch showed a 10% dip.

Stacking the two Mother's Days next to each other, this year's is slimmer than 2005's by less than 1%.

DOWN, NOT OUT: They say that breaking up is hard to do, but apparently it can also be a marketing break, too. As anyone who has barely glanced at the magazine rack by any grocery's checkout counter in the last six months can tell you, Nick Lachey has split with wife and "Newlyweds" co-star Jessica Simpson.

Practically every song on his first album since this very public separation centers on heartbreak, and just to make sure the point gets driven home, it's titled "What's Left of Me."

The pity party works, earning the former 98 Degrees member by far the best sales week of his solo career: 172,000 copies, good for No. 2. That's as many copies as his prior solo album, "Soulo,'" has sold since its 2003 release. It spent two weeks on the chart.

98 Degrees had only one frame bigger than this, when fourth album "Revolution" opened at No. 2 in 2000 with 276,000 copies, a fat week but less than retailers had banked on.
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<td>SOMETHING'S COMING (SOS remix)</td>
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<td>JASON WRIGHT</td>
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<td>IT'S GON'T DOWN</td>
<td>JASON WRIGHT</td>
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<td>SOMETHING'S COMING (BRENDAN D'Spain's remix)</td>
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<td>SOMETHING'S GOING ON</td>
<td>DANI CALIFORNIA</td>
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<td>BREATHE</td>
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<td>SOMETHING'S COMING</td>
<td>GREG COURtright</td>
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<td>I'M NOT CFING YOU</td>
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<td>SOMETHING'S COMING</td>
<td>GREG COURtright</td>
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<td>I'M NOT CFING YOU</td>
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</table>

Data for week of May 27, 2006

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
## POP 100 Chart

### Chart Legend
- **Hot 100**: Billboard's main music chart.
- **Billboard 200**: Compiles the most popular albums.
- **Single 100**: Chart for the most popular songs.
- **Airplay**: Tracks the most played songs on radio.
- **Digital Songs**: Tracks digital song sales.
- **Trends**: Tracks trend charts.
- **Tracks**: Tracks individual track performances.
- **Digital Title Tracks**: Tracks digital title tracks.

### Chart Rules
- The Hot 100 chart is based on data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, which monitors sales, streaming, and airplay data.
- The Billboard 200 chart is based on data compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, which monitors album sales and streaming data.

### Chart Explanation
- The chart is updated weekly and reflects the most current data available.
- The Hot 100 chart is updated every Friday and reflects the most current data available.
- The Billboard 200 chart is updated every Saturday and reflects the most current data available.

### Chart Data
- The chart data includes song titles, artists, and other relevant information.
- The chart data is updated weekly and reflects the most current data available.

### Chart Analysis
- The chart data is used to track the most popular songs and albums.
- The chart data is used to identify trends and chart movements.

### Chart Download
- The chart data is available for download in various formats.
- The chart data is available for use in various applications and services.

### Chart Notes
- The chart data is used to track the most popular songs and albums.
- The chart data is used to identify trends and chart movements.

### Chart Resources
- Billboard's official website provides access to the most current chart data.
- Billboard's official app provides access to the most current chart data.
- Billboard's official social media accounts provide updates and news related to the charts.

### Chart History
- Billboard's charts have been tracking the most popular songs and albums since 1958.
- Billboard's charts have evolved over time to reflect changes in the music industry.

### Chart Contributions
- Billboard's charts are compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, which monitors sales, streaming, and airplay data.
- Billboard's charts are compiled by Billboard, which monitors sales, streaming, and airplay data.

### Chart Impact
- Billboard's charts have a significant impact on the music industry.
- Billboard's charts influence the way music is produced, promoted, and consumed.

### Chart Challenges
- Billboard's charts must adapt to changes in the music industry.
- Billboard's charts must adapt to changes in consumer behavior.

### Chart Future
- Billboard's charts will continue to evolve to reflect changes in the music industry.
- Billboard's charts will continue to adapt to changes in consumer behavior.

---

### POP 100 AIRPLAY

### Chart Legend
- **POP 100 AIRPLAY**: Tracks the most played songs on radio.

### Chart Data
- The chart data includes song titles, artists, and other relevant information.
- The chart data is updated weekly and reflects the most current data available.

### Chart Analysis
- The chart data is used to track the most popular songs on radio.
- The chart data is used to identify trends and chart movements.

### Chart Resources
- Billboard's official website provides access to the most current chart data.
- Billboard's official app provides access to the most current chart data.
- Billboard's official social media accounts provide updates and news related to the charts.

### Chart History
- Billboard's charts have been tracking the most popular songs on radio since 1986.
- Billboard's charts have evolved over time to reflect changes in the music industry.

### Chart Contributions
- Billboard's charts are compiled by Nielsen SoundScan, which monitors sales, streaming, and airplay data.
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### Chart Future
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- Billboard's charts will continue to adapt to changes in consumer behavior.

---

### HOT SINGLES SALES

### Chart Legend
- **HOT SINGLES SALES**: Tracks the most popular songs in terms of sales.

### Chart Data
- The chart data includes song titles, artists, and other relevant information.
- The chart data is updated weekly and reflects the most current data available.

### Chart Analysis
- The chart data is used to track the most popular songs in terms of sales.
- The chart data is used to identify trends and chart movements.

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### Chart History
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**TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS**

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<thead>
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<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Baby Makin Music</td>
<td>Jagged Edge</td>
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<td>John Legend</td>
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<td>Van Hunt</td>
<td>T.I.</td>
<td>King</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Antwan</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>118/118 Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Remy Ma</td>
<td>There's Something About Remy: Based On A True Story</td>
<td>Epic 96464/SONY</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Lupe Fiasco</td>
<td>Get Lifted</td>
<td>Def Jam Records</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>MC Magic</td>
<td>Magic City</td>
<td>UMG/RCA Records</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Lyfe Jennings</td>
<td>Lyle 269-180</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Bun B</td>
<td>What The Game's Been Missing</td>
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<td>Juelz Santana</td>
<td>Welcome To Jamrock</td>
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<td>Damian &quot;JR. GONG&quot; Marley</td>
<td>Late Registration</td>
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<td>Kanye West</td>
<td>Sounded</td>
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<td>U.S.A. Still United</td>
<td>Interscope Records</td>
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<td>Jamie Foxx</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
<td>Aftermath/Interscope</td>
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<td>Ll Cool J</td>
<td>The Way It Is</td>
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<td>D.L. Young II</td>
<td>On Top Of Our Game</td>
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<td>Keyshia Cole</td>
<td>The Trinity</td>
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<td>Ain't Nobody Worryin'</td>
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<td>Ghetto Classics</td>
<td>Aftermath/Interscope</td>
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<td>The Heart Of The Street, Vol. 2: I Am What I Am</td>
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<td>Mary Mary</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Juvenile</td>
<td>Last First Time</td>
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<td>Soundtrack</td>
<td>Tyler Perry's Madea's Family Reunion</td>
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<td>CamaRon Presents Dukedaggo</td>
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<td>Pastor Troy</td>
<td>Stay True</td>
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<td>Amer Le Rave</td>
<td>Morning</td>
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<td>Da Backwudz</td>
<td>Wood Work</td>
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<td>Bone Thugs N-Harmony</td>
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<td>Ludacris Presents</td>
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<td>Dues</td>
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<td>Scarface</td>
<td>My Home Town</td>
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<td>Charlie Wilson</td>
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<td>AALIYAH</td>
<td>One In A Million</td>
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**OLD SCHOOL RICH TOP THREE**

As the Isley Brothers lead the way, with Jagged Edge and Teena Marie tucked behind, three new titles bow in the top three positions of this week's Old School Rich Chart.

1. The Isley Brothers Featuring Ronald Isley - For The Love Experience
2. Remy Ma - Something's About Remy: Based On A True Story
3. MC Magic - Magic City

---

**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

As the Isley Brothers lead the way, with Jagged Edge and Teena Marie tucked behind, three new titles bow in the top three positions of this week's Old School Rich Chart.

1. The Isley Brothers Featuring Ronald Isley - For The Love Experience
2. Remy Ma - Something's About Remy: Based On A True Story
3. MC Magic - Magic City

---

**OLD SCHOOL SLOW R&B TOP THREE**

As the Isley Brothers lead the way, with Jagged Edge and Teena Marie tucked behind, three new titles bow in the top three positions of this week's Old School Slow R&B Chart.

1. The Isley Brothers Featuring Ronald Isley - For The Love Experience
2. Remy Ma - Something's About Remy: Based On A True Story
3. MC Magic - Magic City
**COUNTRY MUSIC UPDATE**


**BETWEEN THE BULLETS**

For the second time in the 16-year-old Nickel's BDS era, this country chart sees three acts claim their first No. 1 songs back to back.

This issue, Jason Aldean's "Why" gains 1.8 million audience impressions and rises 2-1, replacing Jack Ingram's "Wherever You Are," which falls to No. 4. For two weeks starting in the May 6 issue, "Who Says You Can't Go Home," Bon Jovi's duet with Jennifer Nettles, occupied the top spot. It now tumbles 5-10.

The last three time artists logged their first

---

**ALDEAN PADS NEWCOMERS STREAK AT NO. 1**

No. 1 in succession was in February 1991 when Paul Overstreet's "Daddy's Come Around," Mark Chesnutt's "Brother Jukebox" and Mike Reid's "Walk on Faith" claimed top honors.

Broken Bow was also involved the last two artists claimed their first No. 1 songs, when Craig Morgan's "That's What I Love About Sunday" followed Jason Aldean's "Nothin' But a Love Thang," both from This Life Records. Singers have now deal with New Mexico's 903 Music imprint. Lead single spins at 20) requested signals.
HOT LATIN SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Chart Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>CAILE</td>
<td>Shakira Featuring Yung J.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>DOWN</td>
<td>Tito El Bambino</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LO QUE SONT LAS COSAS</td>
<td>Wisin &amp; Yandel Feat. Daddy Yankee</td>
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<td>ANGELITO</td>
<td>Lynda &amp; Yandel</td>
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<td>UNO Y UNO ES IGUAL A TRES</td>
<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
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<td>ALGO DE MI</td>
<td>Tito El Bambino</td>
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<td>LLAMAS AL VIENTO</td>
<td>Wisin &amp; Yandel</td>
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<td>Daddy Yankee</td>
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<td>DK &amp; Tony</td>
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<td>Banda El Recodo</td>
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<td>VICTOR MANUEL HERNANDEZ</td>
<td>Victor Manuel</td>
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HOT TOP LATIN ALBUMS

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<td>Confesiones de mi pasado</td>
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<td>Así que va ser ahora</td>
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<td>Siempre Conmigo</td>
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<td>Top Of The Line</td>
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Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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<th>ARTISTA / IMPRINT / PROMOCION LABEL</th>
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<tr>
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<td>(EMI LATIN)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>GRUPO MONTEZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORO</td>
<td>ADIOS</td>
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<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>ANTHONY FERGUSON CORRAL (UNIDOS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>CONJUNTO PRIMAVERA (FONOVISA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PATO</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLO</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLLO</td>
<td>MONCHY Y ALEXANDRA (J&amp;N)</td>
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<td>ROMEROS</td>
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<td>SAN</td>
<td>DON'T</td>
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<td>SAMOS</td>
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<td>SANGRIA</td>
<td>MAMBO</td>
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### Japan Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 14, 2006

<table>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
<td>COME AS YOU ARE</td>
<td>EPO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SHAKIRA</td>
<td>HIP HOP DON'T STOP BEATIN' THAT DARCY</td>
<td>Warner Bros.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>LIVING IN THE WAKE</td>
<td>Universal Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
<td>NOT HAVING IT ALL</td>
<td>EPO.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>MIYAVI</td>
<td>IN THE NAME OF THE SKY</td>
<td>EMI</td>
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### United Kingdom Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 14, 2006

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<tr>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>BLUE</td>
<td>Universal Music UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Warner Bros.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MIYAVI</td>
<td>IN THE NAME OF THE SKY</td>
<td>EMI</td>
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<tr>
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<td>VAUGHN</td>
<td>LET'S BE THE NINJAS</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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### Germany Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 14, 2006

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<tr>
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<td>BLUE</td>
<td>Universal Music UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Virgin</td>
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### France Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 14, 2006

<table>
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<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<td>Universal Music UK</td>
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<td>5</td>
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### Australia Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 14, 2006

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE VANDALS</td>
<td>BLUE</td>
<td>Universal Music UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
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### Canada Digital Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 27, 2006

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<tr>
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<td>Warner Bros.</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>LET'S BE THE NINJAS</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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### Italy Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 13, 2006

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
<td>COME AS YOU ARE</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>VAUGHN</td>
<td>LET'S BE THE NINJAS</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>THE VANDALS</td>
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<td>Universal Music UK</td>
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### Spain Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 17, 2006

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<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
<td>COME AS YOU ARE</td>
<td>EPO.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>LET'S BE THE NINJAS</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
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### Mexico Albums

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 18, 2006

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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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### Poland Albums

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 12, 2006

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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
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<td>THE VANDALS</td>
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### Hungary Singles

**Hit Parlor (Official Chart)**, May 12, 2006

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>THE VANDALS</td>
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**Bottom of Page**

Go to www.billboard.biz for complete chart data
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Label</th>
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<td>LP/CD</td>
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<td>LSP-2512/2513</td>
<td>300,000+</td>
<td>1954-1957</td>
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<td>WICKED</td>
<td>PORTER / BAYLIS / SONNEMEYER</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>RCA</td>
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<td>2,000,000+</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sony</td>
<td>474747 498192</td>
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<td>Sony</td>
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<td>1,000,000+</td>
<td>2000-2001</td>
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Data for week of May 27, 2006
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1. HOODWINKED (WIDE SCREEN)
   THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY (FEB 18)
   Box Office: $24.22
   Home Entertainment: $22.19
   Nielsen SoundScan 45455 (22.19)

2. THE FAMILY STONE (WIDE SCREEN)
   PARAMOUNT PICTURES (FEB 18)
   Box Office: $22.11
   Home Entertainment: $19.16
   Nielsen SoundScan 57555 (19.16)

3. LAST HOLIDAY (WIDE SCREEN)
   PARAMOUNT PICTURES (FEB 18)
   Box Office: $14.53
   Home Entertainment: $11.48
   Nielsen SoundScan 43741 (11.48)

4. FINAL FANTASY VII: ADVENT CHILDREN
   TOEI ANIMATION (FEB 18)
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   Home Entertainment: $9.13
   Nielsen SoundScan 33729 (9.13)

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   Home Entertainment: $6.64
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   Nielsen SoundScan 33455 (6.64)

7. Chicken Little
   LIONSGATE HOME ENTERTAINMENT (FEB 18)
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   Nielsen SoundScan 33455 (6.64)

8. Fun with Dick and Jane
   20th Century Fox Home Entertainment (FEB 18)
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   Nielsen SoundScan 33455 (6.64)

   PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT (FEB 18)
   Box Office: $7.69
   Home Entertainment: $6.64
   Nielsen SoundScan 4131 (6.64)

10. Tristan + Isolde (WIDE SCREEN)
    PARAMOUNT PICTURES (FEB 18)
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    Home Entertainment: $4.47
    Nielsen SoundScan 310884 (4.47)

11. The Notebook
    UNIVERSAL STUDIOS (FEB 18)
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    Home Entertainment: $4.47
    Nielsen SoundScan 310884 (4.47)

12. Match Point
    PARAMOUNT PICTURES (FEB 18)
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LAUNCH PAD

SALES DATA

1. 20TH CENTURY FOX
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   Home Entertainment: $22.19
   Nielsen SoundScan 45455 (22.19)

2. UNIVERSAL PICTURES
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   Home Entertainment: $19.16
   Nielsen SoundScan 57555 (19.16)

3. 20TH CENTURY FOX
   Box Office: $14.53
   Home Entertainment: $11.48
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11. LIONSGATE HOME ENTERTAINMENT
    Box Office: $7.69
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Sidney Seidenberg, 81

Sidney A. Seidenberg was the businessman behind the bluesman.

Seidenberg, who managed B.B. King for 35 years and guided the performer to worldwide fame, died May 3 of a longtime illness in Rockaway, N.J. He was 81.

Born in Poland, Seidenberg emigrated to the United States around 1930 and served in the army during World War II.

Schooled as an accountant after the war, he started his career at various Manhattan firms, including the Eastman Law Firm in New York, where he learned about show business and music royalty accounting.

By the late 1960s, Seidenberg established his own SASCO Productions in New York. He introduced King’s music to white audiences with bookings at Bill Graham’s Fillmore East, George Wein’s Newport Jazz Festival and on numerous national TV programs, including “The Ed Sulli-

van Show.”

Seidenberg boosted King’s career in many ways, bringing in producer Bill Sycamore for the sessions that resulted in King’s signature hit, “The Thrill Is Gone,” and arranging for King’s 1970 tour dates with the Rolling Stones, as well as tours of Africa and the former Soviet Union. In addition, he helped guide the development of the B.B. King-branded nightclubs and King’s commercial endorsements for Northwest Airlines, Burger King and Philip Morris.

Seidenberg also managed Gladys Knight & The Pips during their post-Motown years, landing the group what would be a fertile deal with Buddah Records.

Because of ill health, Seidenberg retired in 2000 and sold his company to Floy Lieberman, whose Lieberman Entertainment now manages King.

Seidenberg is survived by wife Edith, three children and seven grandchildren.

—Sarah Han
From left are SESAC's Trevor Gale and Pat Collins, Cox and SESAC's Linda Lorence Critelli.

SESAC NEW YORK MUSIC AWARDS: SESAC's 10th annual New York Music Awards honored R&B songwriter Bryan-Michael Cox as Songwriter of the Year May 2 at Manhattan's Nikki Beach. Cox was also the recipient of song of the year honors for writing "Save It Off," the multimillion hit single from Mariah Carey.

The Billboard staff received a sweet treat as Columbia Records artist Anna Nalick performed a choice of tunes from her debut album "Voice of the Day," May 2 in New York.

The United Kingdom's Music Publishers Forum honored Sound Records founder Chris Backstone with the 2006 Peter Grant Award and induction. VP and manager Paul McCormick hosted a gala April 19 at London's Cafe Couture. From left are MHP chairman John Grover, Backstone, Blackstone, Cox and SESAC's Trevor Gale.

From left are WBR and Combative Publishing's Chris Hicks, SESAC's Linda Lorence Critelli, Warner Chappell CEO Richard Blackstone, Cox and SESAC's Trevor Gale.

PLYMOUTH JAZZ FESTIVAL: Sting headlined the second annual Plymouth Jazz Festival for three days (beginning April 21) on the island of Tresco. Attendees enjoyed local talents and performances by such artists as Natalie Cole, Patti LaBelle and Doug E. Fresh.

PHOTOS: JOHN GANNON
WATCH WHAT YOU SIGN
Care to own a dozen masters and the publishing of early recordings from Sara Evans before she signed to RCA? Also, log on to eBay, where Gary Daily, an early rep of the artist’s, is auctioning them. A few years back, Track hears that Daily attempted something similar. After a lawsuit over the music was reportedly settled, the tracks are, once again, up for bid with the sale subject to the terms of the assignments between Evans and Daily. This auction closes on the evening of May 21— not at all coincidentally the same night that Evans is up for top female vocalist at the 41st annual Academy of Country Music Awards in Las Vegas. Even if she walks away with the trophy, the night may be bittersweet at best.

FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET
Although there is no official soundtrack for the Bryan Singer-directed summer blockbuster, “Superman Returns,” Record Executive-Publisher magazine has learned, from sources that need not be named, “Superman” album release on June 13. Executive-produced by Bruce Roberts and Greg Mertz, the themed collection contains several fun covers, including R.E.M.’s “Superman” by the Academy Is... , the Kinks’ “(I Wish I Could Fly Like) Superman” by the Sun, Duran Duran’s “Sunshine Superman” by the Films and Foo Fighters’ “My Hero” by Paramore. A number of other acts contribute their own newly penned tunes, among them Motion City Soundtrack’s “The Worst Part” and American Hi-Fi’s “The Rescue.” In a very cool tie-in, fans who purchase the entire album on iTunes will receive an interactive booklet that includes classic DC Comics covers from “Superman” comic books through the generations.

DEVINE WAVES GOODBYE TO COLUMBIA
Track hears that Columbia Records Group West Coast GM/senior VP of A&R Tim Devine has decided to leave the label at the end of this month. Devine joined Columbia in 1996 following a stint at Capitol and has worked with a number of acts. Additionally, he brokered the deal between Aware Records and Columbia. Devine did not return calls requesting comment.

CABBAGE PATCH CHRIS
Chris Mars, founder of the lifestyle label Petrol Records, recently stopped by Track’s Los Angeles office at the start of his six-week world tour touting Petrol’s new distribution deal with EMI (Billboard, March 4). The grueling schedule must surely remind him of his days at INXS’ manager, but the raconteur held Track spellbound with stories of leaving the band in the mid-’90s to run an organic farm in his native Australia. In fact, he has veggie to thank for his return to the music biz.

In 2001, Murphy was on an agricultural tour of France and a friend took him into a grocery store to buy some wine. It seems the wine section was also well-stocked with music. Quesi surprise! “I heard this music, and it got my heart thumping again,” Murphy tells Track. “I walked out of there with $2,000 worth of music.” Once back home, he started Petrol with a series of compilations devoted to the music of specific countries.

First release through EMI is a tasty collection tailor-made for summer. “Roadtrip: Road to Nowhere,” an album of covers recast with edgy rhythms by a collection of international artists. Track’s favorite cut on the June 20 release is, hands down, Atom’s clever reworking of Neil Young’s “Cinnamon Girl.”

FIND THE COST OF FREEDOM
What makes an icon? In these often troubling times, maybe it’s just having the courage of your convictions. David Crosby, who, along with Graham Nash and Stephen Stills, was honored as a BMI Icon at the performing rights organization’s annual Pop Awards dinner May 16 in Los Angeles, took the opportunity to make a suggestion. He didn’t have to name names—nor did he have to hit people over the head. He only had to speak a simple truth: “There may never have been a better time than now for songwriters to stick up for their country,” says Crosby, who recently, in an e-mail to the Pasadena Weekly, called for the impeachment of President Bush. “Songs are truly valuable things. They carry ideas. Ideas are the most powerful stuff on the planet. This is a great time if you love this country to stick up for what you believe in.”

ARTISTS IN ACTION
The May 12 MusiCares/MAP Fund benefit honoring Metallica’s James Hetfield and promoter Bill Silva turned Los Angeles’ Music Box Theater into one big 12-Step meeting at times, as presenter Margaret Cho joked. However, it’s a good bet that no 12-Step meeting ever featured performances by Tom Waits, Velvet Revolver, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, Jason Mraz and Hetfield, who was joined by bandmate Robert Trujillo, while Metallica’s Lars Ulrich and Kirk Hammett cheered from the sidelines.

Drawing the most laughts of the evening was host/comedian Greg Behrendt, 43, who had some advice for promoters in dealing with the over-40 crowd. “Start the show at 7 p.m. No opening act—they can come back when [they] have hits. No one under 25 is allowed. The act plays one hour, no hide-and-seek with the hits. Get me home by 9 p.m. in time to see ‘The Sopranos.’” Also he had merch suggestions for baby boomers: A Weezer day planner and AudioSlave tea cozy. The evening raised more than $300,000 for the Recording Academy’s addiction recovery program.

RECORD COMPANIES: Skaggs Family Records and RS Entertainment in Nashville up Charlotte Scott to GM. She was director of licensing and royalty administration for the label.

Toucan Cove Entertainment in Seattle names Leisa St. John senior VP of promotion. She is based in Florida. St. John was VP of promotion at London/Sire/Curb Concord Music Group in Los Angeles names Peter Holten VP of international sales and marketing. He was VP of NOW brand/commercial marketing at EMI Music/Castillian Music.

Universal Motown Records Group in New York elevates Sandra Brummels to VP of creative services. She was creative director.

Show Dog Nashville promotes Tony Morrelli to national promotion director. He was Southeast regional promotion and marketing director.

Virgin Records in New York names Joshua Freni senior director of A&R and strategic marketing. He was director of A&R/special projects at TVT Records.

PUBLISHING: Peermusic in Los Angeles up Yvonne Gomez to Latin creative director, West Coast and Mexico. She was West Coast Latin creative manager. Famous Music/Publishing in New York names Bryan Glover VP of finance. He is based in Los Angeles. Glover held the same position at BMG Music Publishing.

BOOKING AGENCIES: International Creative Management in New York names Craig Bruck concert department agent. He was founder of Bruck Talent.

MUSIC IS THE ANSWER
Eric Clapton has been tapped as the new ambassador of the Entertainment Industry Foundation’s National Arts and Music Education initiative. Also doing its part is Mercedes-Benz USA, which donated $1 million to the cause. Together, they will raise awareness of the need for more arts and music education programs in schools. For additional info, log on to ei.foundation.org.

CYBER SAFETY FOR KIDS
Ricky Martin has taped three multimedia videos for the Navega Protegido campaign, which promotes online safety for children. The Latin America and Caribbean initiative is sponsored by Microsoft Latin America and the Ricky Martin Foundation. For more info, log on to navegaporotograjardo.org.
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