THE WINNERS (AND LOSERS) OF A GLOBAL MARKETING GAME

HONORING ETTA JAMES >P.7

SONY BMG CHANGES AT THE TOP >P.6
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Contents

UPFRONT
5 WAL-MART TO LIFT ADVISORY STICKER BAN?
9 Making The Brand
11 The Publishers' Place
12 Retail Track
13 Digital Entertainment

FEATURES
18 WORLD CUP 2006 The world's biggest soccer tournament meets the music biz on marketing's field of play.
22 A SONG AT ANY COST Welcome to the pricing wars, where the same song can sell for $3 or be downloaded for free. What is music's true value?
25 A FAMILY AFFAIR Venues say "open Sesame" to Dora, Barney, Wiggles and more.

MUSIC
31 BRAND NEW NELLY Urban sound, urban look: Furtado unveils "Loose."
32 The Beat, Rhythm & Blues
34 Latin Notas, Nashville Scene
35 Higher Ground
36 Global Pulse, Classical Score
37 Reviews

IN EVERY ISSUE
4 Opinion
61 Backbeat
39 Over The Counter
39 Market Watch
40 Charts
58 Marketplace
60 Mileposts
62 Inside Track, Executive Turntable

360 DEGREES OF BILLBOARD

31 GANG OF THREE What do Courtney Love, Michael Hutchence and Ice Cube have in common? Not much, really. But we've got juicy posts about each of them on the blog that keeps on giving.
jadedinsider.com

36 CONFERENCE NEXT QUESTION British dance-pop act Bananarama is confirmed for a Q&A session at the Billboard Dance Music Summit (Sept. 17-20 in Las Vegas). The act will discuss its new album, "Drama." Details: page 63.

36 Global
16 The Indies, Garage Rock
17 Q&A: Amaechi Uzoigwe
30 On The Road, Boxscore

JUNE 10, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 3
An Artist’s View: New Media Is Not The Issue

Recording artist, producer and web site developer Todd Rundgren recently testified at a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in Washington, D.C., on digital radio and the future of the music industry. Here he reflects on his experience at the hearing.

There are likely a few more credible witnesses the [music] industry could have sent to the table to defend the status quo, but how it came to be the very least credible witness is probably testament to the credibility of their argument.

Edgar Bronfman is a liquor magnate who took a flier on Warner Music when it appeared ready to collapse and startled everyone when he propelled the brand with his own (?) money. Because he cared about the music. Did anyone fall for this?

I sat at a table with this man as he defended the rights of labels and their associated artists while simultaneously negotiating his reward for killing off another distinct brand and its legacy. Many industry giants would be spinning in their graves if they were not still alive and somehow mite with respect to the unbridled irony.

I spent most of my recorded life on a Warner label or subsidiary, and felt comfortable in the presence of Mo, Michael, Lenny, Ahmet, Jerry, et al. because I believed they approached me with respect. Ed probably has no idea what my contribution to the W cache, however minute, might ultimately be, because the time he ever reads this he will probably have unloaded the label.

Though my Senate testimony was sponsored by XM Satellite Radio, I did not and do not speak for them.

The issues that I and my peers will face have more to do with the cynical avarice of the witness for the RIAA than with the dangers of the new mediums and technologies they so fear and misunderstand.

And since immigration has moved every other issue to the back burner (placing new law out of reach), the industry resorts with the desperation of a late night candy-addicted invalid to the lawyer you.

It’s a horse race to see who can be the last to get monetary satisfaction. Meanwhile, the star witness for the plaintiff is third for takeoff in a private jet to ski holiday in Gdansk. With a full iPod.

SORAYA’S PASSING ‘A TRUE LOSS’

I want to thank Leila Collo for the wonderful full Latin Notas column on Soraya (Billboard, May 27). She was a great person and a mega talent.

Once Soraya performed an acoustic set in our offices—the best of several hundred we have had over the years. After she left our label family we exchanged notes regularly. She was funny and modest. When she became ill there was never a hint of sorrow or self pity.

A true loss to us all. Thank you for reminding me of what a fine person she was.

Jim Urie
President, Universal Music Group Distribution
Los Angeles

FEEDBACK

IAN COPELAND REMEMBERED

My friend Ian “Leroy” Copeland has died (Billboard, June 3).

“Leroy” reigned as the music industry’s tastemaker-at-arms, for millions, through-out the late ’70s and into the ’90s. He brought many artists to the planet’s livings through -out business media. He was the leader of the modern-day merry pranksters, many of whom now enjoy great lives as the deserved scholars of the business they have become—much of which is owed to their experience working for and with this man. Their respective resumes glow with their inclusion as part of the extended family he nurtured.

Danny Zelisko
President, Live Nation Southeast

WRITING US. Share your feedback with Billboard readers around the world. Send letters to Ken Schlager at letters@billboard.com. Include name, title, address and phone number for verification. Letters should be concise and may be edited. All submissions published shall become the sole property of Billboard, which shall own the copyright in whole or part, for publication.
Executives Exit
Sony BMG’s Ienner and Anthony resign

Dekker Dies At 64
Industry mourns the ‘king of ska’

‘Whistle-Stop’ Tour
Gavin DeGraw boosts ‘Chariot’ on the train

Funkmaster Flex
DJs endorse iTunes stores on stations’ sites

The ‘NEXXT’ Reality
G.R.I.T. Boys film for exclusive mobile show

UpFront

In Its Urge To Lean Urban, Wal-Mart May Consider The Sale Of Explicit Recordings

Major-label sales and distribution sources tell Billboard they see changes at Wal-Mart that suggest the retail giant could soon end its ban of music titles that carry parental advisory stickers.

Such a change would be motivated in large part by Wal-Mart’s apparent desire to increase its appeal to a younger, urban audience.

Wal-Mart has taken numerous steps in that direction. Artists such as Ashanti, Destin’ Child and Jennifer Lopez are among those with branded perfumes available at the mass merchant. Additionally, the retailer started a major promotion last year with BET, in which DVDs carrying the network’s imprint are packaged with CDs from select artists. And this summer, Wal-Mart will roll out Existo, an “urban sportswear” fashion line being overseen by Jeff Tweedy, a former partner in Sean “Diddy” Combs’ Sean John clothing line.

“We are always pushing them to take in stickered product so it wouldn’t surprise me if they are looking at it again, especially now with the urban clothing lines they are doing,” one major distribution executive says.

However, the executive cautions, “It’s certainly not imminent, or we would be having more discussions with them or their reps, and we haven’t had any talks on it. When it gets to a decision time, Wal-Mart is always concerned about the PR effect of such a change.”

Indeed, Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart is perhaps the most scrutinized U.S. retailer. As the last major holdout against selling stickered CDs, Wal-Mart surely is conscious of the Back That rival Kmart received from Christian groups such as the American Family Assn. when shoppers under 18 were allowed to purchase CDs with parental advisory warnings.

But Robert Posthoff, founder of image consultancy Brand Keys, says even Wal-Mart must be open to change. “They’ll become the old, stodgy, conservative, right-wing store that sells cheap stuff,” he warns.

Wal-Mart executives would not comment for this story, and label and distribution sources would only speak under condition of anonymity. One label executive confirms, “We’ve certainly heard that Wal-Mart has looked into including stickered product in their assortment.”

Still, some say Wal-Mart will continue to carry only edited versions of stickered CDs. Asked about speculation of a change, one distribution executive says, “There is no truth to it.”

Wal-Mart has refused to carry stickered product since the RIAA introduced parental advisory stickers in 1985. At that time, some chains initially restricted the sale of stickered CDs to customers under 18. Within a year, they began softening their stance and many retailers dropped their ban on stickered product altogether. In the ensuing years, hard rock and hip-hop—often with explicit lyrics—have thrived.

Meanwhile, the edited versions of CDs sold at Wal-Mart continue to move plenty of units. TVT VP of marketing Paul Burgess says that “clean” CDs can account for 20%-25% of a popular album’s overall sales. “The clean product is a hugely significant share of the market,” he says.

Yet Wal-Mart, the music industry’s No. 1 U.S. account, could have a huge impact on the market if it began selling stickered product.

“You would see an increase in total unit sales,” one label source says.

That source also predicts that Wal-Mart would “grab some market share from other retailers.” That’s a fear among independent merchants like John Henderson, head buyer at Vintage Vinyl in St. Louis, who says, “That’s always been our leg up. You can only get the clean version at Wal-Mart, and nobody wants that.”

If Wal-Mart is considering a change, sources credit the possibility to new blood at the executive level.

“People seem to think that Wal-Mart is revisiting that decision. There are indications that the new regime is more open to change,” says one East Coast head of sales at a major label.

Key to reshaping Wal-Mart’s image, label sources say, is executive VP/chief marketing officer John Fleming, who spent 14 years at Target before joining Wal-Mart in 2006. Also cited as driving change is David Porter, VP of Wal-Mart Stores, who was responsible for the chain’s exclusive recording deal with Garth Brooks.

Wal-Mart has looked at changing its policy before. Several years ago, the chain asked the music industry to come up with an age-appropriate rating system like the ones used for movies and videogames.

Label executives refused, saying it would be too expensive to set up a ratings board to deal with the annual number of new music titles, which is far greater than the flow of movie or game releases.

Now the labels are wondering if Wal-Mart will initiate its own changes. “What they need to do is pretty clear,” Pas-sikoff says. “Music’s hipness quotient is much higher than a T-shirt.”

CONTINUED ON p6
Sony BMG Exec Shuffle

The apparent power struggle between new Sony BMG Music Entertainment CEO Rolf Schmidt-Holtz and Sony Music’s highest-ranking creative executives has reached its breaking point. Don lenner, Sony Music Label Group (SMLG) chairman/CEO, and Michele Anthony, president/COO of the division and executive VP of Sony BMG, abruptly resigned their posts June 1.

No reason was given for their exits, but company insiders say the moves suggest yet more culture clashes in the turbulent recorded-music joint venture begun by Sony BMG last year.


Sony BMG COO Tim Bowen will serve as interim label head.

The exits of lenner and Anthony, 18-year Sony veterans, closely follows recent promotions for both executives.

In March, Schmidt-Holtz, a Bertelsmann alum, promoted lenner to chairman of the label group in one of his first acts as chief executive. And last December Anthony was named president of SMLG.

At the time, lenner’s promotion was steeped in symbolic value to the divided joint venture—a vote of confidence in lenner in the shift to a Bertelsmann-owned Sony BMG, and an effort to stabilize the company’s upper-management ranks in the wake of former CEO Andrew Lack’s move to the nonexecutive chairman slot.

But some sources suggest Schmidt-Holtz was already plotting to oust lenner by the end of the year, following key second-half releases from Beyoncé, DMX and others. Meanwhile, relations between lenner and Schmidt-Holtz quickly strained.

One sticking point appears to have been Schmidt-Holtz’s April decision to merge Sony BMG’s Nashville operations—one of the last pieces of the joint venture to be consolidated.

Schmidt-Holtz handed control of the new combined unit to RCA Label Group Nashville chairman Joe Galante. John Grady, the president of Sony Music Nashville, was fired.

Galante reported directly to the company’s office, while Grady reported to lenner. lenner was proud of his efforts to revitalize the company’s Nashville labels, which included artists like Gretchen Wilson and Miranda Lambert in recent years.

More recently, lenner and Schmidt-Holtz butted heads over Columbia Records president Steve Greenberg, a Lack recruit. lenner felt Greenberg—a seasoned music executive—was shortchanged in an A&R specialist best-known for discovering Joss Stone while head of his own S-Curve Records—did not fit in at Sony and pushed for his ouster. Schmidt-Holtz, a Greenberg advocate, wanted to keep him. At press time, one scenario being considered was Greenberg starting a label through BMG.

The shake-up also leaves lingering questions about the future of the group-level artist development team of Michael Caplan, Dan Massie, Ken Nauthy, Jay Landers and Steve Lillywhite. lenner created the team to develop projects for Columbia and Epic. However, Columbia and Epic continue to staff their own A&R departments, and some label-level A&Rs execs inside Sony have expressed frustration with the two-tiered system.

The label group’s year-to-date current market share is 10.4%, down substantially from the 13.4% share it had a year ago, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Reaction from the management community has been mixed. “I think it’s been planned for awhile,” says Michael Lipman, manager of Sony artists George Michael and Anna Nalick, who was at 550 Madison Thursday morning immediately prior to the resignations being announced. “It’s an end of an era. New blood is a very good thing.”

Beyoncé’s manager (and father) Mathew Knowles sounded less confident in the move. “I have a high level of respect for Michele,” Knowles says. “It’s hard to replace the relationship I had with Donnie.” As for the planned fall release of Beyoncé’s next album, Knowles said he’s “hopeful there’s no impact.”

Additional reporting by Gail Mitchell and Melinda Newman in Los Angeles.

Biz’s New Headache: Viral Video Sharing

Just in case the recording industry did not have enough challenges blocking file trading of songs across peer-to-peer networks, blogs and other viral distribution channels, the major labels suddenly have a whole new piracy concern: music videos.

The rise of user-generated content sites like YouTube, MySpace, Google Video and iFilm has sparked a revolution in the viral sharing of music videos across these Web-communities. The problem is, much of the distribution taking place—outside a select number of promotional deals—is happening without the approval of record companies.

In recent weeks the RIAA has been stepping up its efforts to stop sharing of popular videos on such sites, particularly on the rapidly expanding YouTube. The site, which now claims more than 6 million visitors and 40 million streams daily, has become a haven for uncensored music videos, which users are capturing with TiVo and other digital video recorders and posting the files to the Web. Much of the material is coming from recorded MTV broadcasts.

The RIAA recently issued cease-and-desist letters to YouTube users sharing videos from the likes of Nelly Furtado, Beyoncé and Rihanna.

In the wake of the takeowns, users following links to the video are being greeted by notices of, “This video has been removed at the request of copyright owner: the RIAA because its content was used without permission.”

Reps for the RIAA and YouTube declined to comment.

However, one source close to the situation says that the recording industry is lobbying YouTube and other viral video sites to implement content-filtering technologies to identify and block unauthorized distribution of copyrighted works.

Among YouTube’s competitors, early attempts at filtering solutions are bearing out in various ways. A search on Google Video for clips from commerce partner Sony BMG yields only videos for-sale, while searches for videos from other labels’ artists produce unauthorized video postings. MTV’s viral video unit iFilm only allows music videos that it can monetize through promotional deals or ads. Meanwhile, MySpace—which has promotional and ad-supported music videos with the labels for a designated music video area of the site—is also seeing other unauthorized videos pop up in its viral video area.

The major labels are taking the position that these sites are responsible for policing their own communities. But in the meantime, they have been targeting individuals using these sites to share popular music videos, alerting them that they are distributing unauthorized works.

Those efforts have seen decidedly mixed results thus far. Many of the videos that labels request to be removed quickly resurface on the site in a matter of days—a fact that industry sources suggest supports the need for more stringent filtering by all viral video specialists.

Viral video sharing would not have been an issue just 18 months ago, when the labels still viewed music videos as a promotional tool for selling albums. But today videos are a rapidly growing moneymaker for the music business. The RIAA estimates that sales of music videos topped $3.7 million in three months, after being introduced in October. Meanwhile, the majors are also sharing in the profits of ad-sponsored video-on-demand offerings from AOL, Yahoo, Music Choice and others.

That is revenue the industry is keenly interested in protecting. And hopes are that YouTube and others will ink similar deals with the industry in the long run.

One industry insider familiar with the situation says, “The recording industry has an important anti-piracy goal in music video to ensure that business moves forward.”

Unauthorized swapping of music videos by popular artists like Rihanna has major labels worried that they are losing money from a new revenue stream.
**King Of Ska**

DIES AT 64

With the passing of Desmond Dekker, Jamaica lost its first international crossover star and one of its most beloved and influential voices.

Dekker died May 24 in a heart attack at his home in Surrey, England. He was 64.

Dekker, who is best known for his 1963 hit song “Israelites,” which was released on the Jamaican label of the Reggae Revival, was a key figure in the early days of reggae music.

His voice was described by many as warm and melodic, and his songs often reflected the struggles and injustices faced by the working class in Jamaica.

Dekker’s “Israelites” was a hit in the UK and the US, and it helped to popularize reggae music around the world.

He continued to record and perform throughout his career, with hits such as “No Woman, No Cry” and “Sail Away.”

Dekker was also known for his political activism, and he used his music as a platform to speak out against social and economic issues in Jamaica.

Dekker was born in Jamaica in 1944 and began his career as a singer in the mid-1960s.

He is survived by his wife, Sabine, and their two children.

Dekker is remembered as a trailblazer in the world of reggae music and as a leader of the Jamaican music industry.

---

**Billboard Honors James**

Legend To Receive Founders Award At R&B/Hip-Hop Conference

When Billboard’s seventh annual R&B/Hip-Hop Conference and Awards returns to Atlanta (Sept. 6-8 at the Renaissance Waverly), among the event’s special honorees will be Etta James. The Grammy Award-winning legend is the 2006 recipient of the R&B Founders Award.

Celebrating five decades as a recording artist, James joins previous R&B Founders honorees the Isley Brothers, Betty Wright, Isaac Hayes and Chaka Khan.

James is a soul survivor in the truest sense, having overcome drug addiction, financial pitfalls and obesity.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member is part of a select group of R&B pioneers— including B.B. King and Ronald Isley—who are still actively recording and touring.

Her latest album, “All the Way,” was released in March.

“Etta is a force of nature who continues to influence all genres of music,” Billboard executive editor/associate publisher Tamara Conniff says. “We are thrilled to honor her.”

A Hip-Hop Founders designate will also be announced.

Both awards were established to honor the legacies of pioneering artists in R&B and hip-hop whose influence still carries a major impact today’s black music.

James and the hip-hop honoree will formally accept their statuettes Sept. 8 during the awards show that caps the three-day conference.

As with previous years, the R&B/Hip-Hop Conference will offer topical panels addressing key trends and issues confronting the black radio and record industries, featuring top-level executives, artists and business professionals.

Keynote sessions, featuring a to-be-announced major R&B/hip-hop artist, plus showcases presenting current stars and cutting-edge newcomers round out the three-day agenda.

For more information on the R&B/Hip-Hop Conference and other Billboard events, go to billboardevents.com.
Old People Rock

AARP Plans A Multiplatform Music Campaign

This is not your father’s AARP. Today’s AARP members are more apt to shake what their mama gave them by rallying around the music of Elton John and Paul McCartney and newcomers like James Blunt and KT Tunstall, than Perry Como and Andy Williams. With its 50th birthday approaching, AARP wants to connect with its 36 million members on a greater emotional level. With no shortage of potential new members—someone in the United States turns 50, the age at which one can join, every seven seconds—AARP is looking to music and entertainment to help build that bridge.

To that end, AARP has tapped Pasadena, Calif.-based DMI Music & Media Solutions to develop its first fully integrated music branding strategy. DMI’s three-year music plan for AARP will roll out in September, according to DMI CEO/chief creative officer Tena Clark. Among the ideas hatched about are a traveling musical revue, a music festival, an introduction to AARP “birthday CD” for those turning 50 and the creation of a music microsite at aarp.org. Clark likens the future online destination to “a Myspace for boomers.”

DMI will also nurture the organization’s audio footprint by featuring music in AARP products such as CDs, ad campaigns, special promotions and events, and on the Internet. DMI will handle music licensing and royalty administration.

Clark also plans to create an “audio logo” or jingle that will be used across all relevant AARP platforms. “Increasingly, companies are utilizing music as a strategic means to reach people,” AARP director of creative initiatives Rick Bowers says. He points to the numerous ways Starbucks and Target have brought music into their worlds to make “deep emotional connections” with their audiences.

Brand analysts and consultants call AARP’s foray into music a smart move. Multitasking baby boomers need a break from their busy lives. “Music offers that respite,” says Cheryl Swanson, founder/president of Tunstall, a brand strategy firm in New York.

Although music is an important part of baby boomers’ experiences, the demographic is not necessarily courted by youth-obsessed record labels.

AARP is addressing an audience that has supported the music industry by buying, and not illegally downloading, music these last few years, says Robert Passikoff, president of Brand Keys, a consulting company in New York that specializes in brand and customer loyalty. “So, it then becomes, how do you best engage that audience? Music, as a platform, is a smart way to go.”

BUY BUY BOOMERS

According to a survey conducted by the RIAA, the 45-plus age bracket is responsible for the biggest jump in music sales in the last 10 years. In 1996, the 45-plus group accounted for 15.1% of music sales. Last year, this figure rose to 25.5%. It was the largest gain of the eight age groupings. Except for the 10-14 and 40-44 age groups, which both showed slight gains in the same time period, the other age groups showed a decline in music sales.

Bruce Lundvall, president of EMI Jazz & Classics, is not surprised by the statistics for the 45-plus age bracket. “The group represents more than 50% of the population—and they like their music.” Lundvall should know. The labels under his watch (including Blue Note, Angel and Manhattan) are responsible for such adult-skewing, platinum-plus acts as Norah Jones, Sarah Brightman and Celtic Woman.

Lundvall’s only question is why has it taken the AARP this long to bring more music into its fold.

That said, music is no stranger to AARP’s business. James Taylor performed at AARP’s annual event for its members two years ago, in October. Elton John will take to the stage in Anaheim, Calif. And AARP magazine recently featured McCartney on the cover.

With a membership drive that never comes to a halt, AARP finds itself in a very advantageous and powerful position. And today’s aging baby boomers are more active than ever. They are not necessarily looking at golf courses or rocking chairs—or, retirement, for that matter. “They are looking for ways to engage in life,” Bowers says. “Creating lifestyle opportunities for them is key.”

DeGraw Gets New Boost For ‘Chariot’ On Whistle-Stop Tour

Artists hit the road on a daily basis. But Gavin DeGraw is on the rails—train tracks, that is, with his current Taste Revolution tour, sponsored by Miller Lite.

“I love it, man,” DeGraw says, calling from a train track somewhere between San Antonio and Dallas. “This is far better than a bus. There’s not as much swerving, and there’s no local traffic.”

DeGraw’s “whistle-stop” tour commenced May 18 in Los Angeles and concludes June 3 in Miller’s hometown, Milwaukee.

The trek hits 11 cities, with private acoustic performances on the train for contest winners. The J Records artist will also perform hard-ticket gigs at local venues in eight cities.

Since embarking on this tour, sales of DeGraw’s nearly 3-year-old debut album, “Chariot,” have spiked. For the week ending May 28, “Chariot” showed a 53% gain from the previous week.

Sales of the enhanced CD, “Chariot—Striped,” released in 2004, have not experienced a similar bump in sales.

Combined sales for the two titles are 1.1 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

The Taste Revolution Express is a “pimped” passenger train featuring a dining car, performance car, lounge car with plasma TVs and videogames and, of course, beer.

DeGraw says he had discussions with Miller’s travel team and agent Johnny Podell before the Taste Revolution opportunity, produced by Live Nation, came about. So when Miller Lite approached his agency, they “didn’t know I’d been thinking about the same thing.”

DeGraw says he’s now considering a coast-to-coast train tour. “Oh, hell yeah. No doubt about it. We go through so many cool areas of the country, where nothing’s touched. I’m actually trying to organize another one. I’m having so much fun on this.”

Additional reporting by Michael Paolella.
Making The Brand
MICHAEL PAOLETTA mpaøletta@billboard.com

Origins Of A Deal
Artist KT Tunstall Cross-Pollinates With Lifestyle Brand

R
elentless/Virgin artist
KT Tunstall is feeling
"bloody marvelous," thank you very much.
"By nature, I'm quite
an insouciant person," Tunstall
says. "But what's been happen-
ing has been truly mental."

Indeed. Her debut album,
"Eye to the Telescope," recently

received much love from
"American Idol" (runner-up
Katharine McPhee) performed
lead single "Black Horse and
the Cherry Tree"), resulting in
major sales spikes and new fans
for Tunstall. Meanwhile,
the Scottish singer/songwriter is
preparing for a headlining U.S.
tour. Oh, and there's also her
just-inked partnership with Or-
gins, the beauty, wellness and
lifestyle brand that is part of the
Estée Lauder family (bill-
board.biz, May 19).

"When I signed my record
deal, to make and play music
was the goal," she says. "During
my 10 years of being a musician,
I understood the concept of
putting on a show and people show-
ing up. And, I knew there was
this energy I could reappro-
priate once I got seated. "Welcome
to Tunstall's new, sorted—and
to Origins—peppermint-
scented—world.

The wheels of the Origins
deal, which runs through the
end of the year, were put in
motion in February. Origins
execs caught Tunstall's live

TUNSTALL

performance during Olympus
Fashion Week at Conde Nast's
Vogue Takes London to New
York event.

Discussions followed be-
 tween Origins and Tunstall/Vir-
gin. It became readily apparent
that both sides were looking for
the just-right alliance.

For Virgin Records senior di-
music (exclusive acoustic
tracks) and imagery. "The ex-
clusive content empowers our
brand," Myers says. The shops
will also sell the artist's "Eye to
the Telescope" CD, which is
now being packaged with an
Origins insert.

On June 9, Tunstall will stop
by the Origins counter at Macy's
Herald Square for a meet-and-
greet and signing. Later that
day, at Tunstall's concert at New
York's Webster Hall, Origins will
set up an Oasis Experience
Room, where concertgoers can
receive scalp massages and other
wellness services.

The experience room will be
repeated at two dates on Tun-
stall's September trek, which will
coincide with a radio and viral
promotional campaign.

Along the way, the Tunstall/
Origins partnership will raise
money and awareness for Pro-
ject Sunshine. The not-for-profit
organization provides free pro-
grams and services to children
with cancer, AIDS and other life-
threatening illnesses. In Decem-
ber, Tunstall is scheduled to
perform at its benefit concert
in New York.

Ultimately, Tunstall views her
Origins partnership as a cool
platform and a great opportu-
nity. "We both approach our
business in the same way—with
an environmental point-of-
view," she says.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE:
After a letter-writing campaign
from advocacy group Dads &
Daughters, Hasbro has pulled
the plug on a line of dolls based
on the Pussycat Dolls. Appar-
ently, some folks don't wish their
little girls were hot like the chart-
topping A&M/Interscope fe-
male group.

We've been scratching our
heads ever since this deal be-
tween Hasbro and the act's
label A&M/Interscope was first
announced last month. Still,
we couldn't help but also grin
at the doll line's inherent camp
value. Let's face it, the Pus-
sey Cat Dolls would have looked
so at home next to the Bratz dolls
in our collection.
Fogel And Cohl Back Together As Live Nation Buys Into CPI

Live Nation’s new deal with Toronto-based Concert Productions International and its Grand Entertainment division reunites two of the most powerful figures in the touring business.

Arthur Fogel, music chair-
man of Live Nation, heads up TNA, the firm’s international touring division. Until 1999, he worked for concert industry pioneer Michael Cohl, the CEO of CPI. Together they staged some of the biggest tours in history. Now Live Nation has taken a controlling interest in CPI and a 50% stake in Grand Entertainment—best-known as the worldwide promoter of the Rolling Stones. At the same time, Cohl joins Live Nation’s board of directors, which expands to 10 seats. The deal formalizes an existing arrangement whereby Live Nation/TNA executes and financially backs the Stones tours and other Cohl ventures. Now, instead of lining up individual projects, CPI and Live Nation are formal partners.

Cohl created the model for full-service global touring, producing giant-grossing tours by the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd and U2—including the Stones’ ongoing Bigger Bang tour, projected to be the top-grossing trek ever. CPI has also created new revenue streams around the tours that it produces, such as VIP ticketing, fan clubs, merchandising and DVDs.

Fogel is Cohl’s only peer in producing international tours, including this year’s Madonna and U2 treks. Live Nation predecessor SFX acquired TNA from Cohl in April 1999. Cohl retained the right to work with the Stones; Fogel moved to the newly formed entity that became Clear Channel Entertainment and ultimately Live Nation.

The move by Live Nation to buy into Grand Entertainment and CPI is a “natural evolution,” Fogel says. “For me it’s great, it’s like things have come full circle. Obviously, we’ve been working together before this deal went down, but it’s good to have Michael officially part of the family. I always enjoy his view of things and his counsel.”

CPI will continue to operate as a separate unit and will work in conjunction with Live Nation’s existing global touring division led by Fogel. CPI will spearhead Live Nation’s initiatives to secure rights to content beyond the live show, including recordings, films, DVDs and more.

Cohl began his career in 1969 as a local promoter and created CPI in 1973. He has put together projects in most fields of entertainment, including music, sports, theater, film and TV. Billboard honored Cohl with its first Legend of Live award at the 2004 Billboard Touring Conference & Awards in New York.

TOURING BY RAY WADDELL

Retail From The Radio

Emmis Stations Add iTunes Music Stores To Their Web Sites

Listeners to hip-hop bastions WQHT New York and KPWR Los Angeles have a new way to enjoy music—at 99 cents a pop. The two Emmis Communications stations recently introduced the first radio-branded iTunes music stores on their Web sites. Jay-Z handled the ribbon-cutting duties, announcing the store openings on-air. Busta Rhymes welcomes store visitors when they go to the site.

By July, Emmis plans to open customized online stores for the rest of its 23-station chain, which includes modern rock WQKX (Q101) Chicago, top 40 WQOU Indianapolis and country KZLA Los Angeles.

The goal is “to create a manner that is relevant to our audience, while giving the user all the ease of use and flexibility,” says Ray Mena, VP of Emmis Interactive, the division that spent six months building the back end for the stores. For example, iTunes peddles repertoire from 540 hip-hop artists. The WQHT and KPWR stores offer artist catalog only from the roughly 200 artists they play.

In-studio and station-festival performances are on the drawing board at Emmis as well, along with exclusive artist remixes of tracks.

While Emmis is the first broadcaster to strike an affiliate deal with Apple, stores offer artists owned by Greater Media, Citadel Communications, Bonneville International, ABC Radio, Clear Channel Radio, Beasley Broadcasting and others have been selling Windows Media downloads from individually branded online stores developed by New York-based Music to Go. XM Satellite Radio has partnered with Napster to sell music downloads, and future models of high-definition radio receivers are expected to include a “buy” button.

The Windows Media-based radio stores sell from 100 to 1,000 songs per week, according to Music to Go president/CEO Jeff Specter. About 10%–15% of store visitors make a purchase, he says, with adults targeted rock, country and AC outlets generating more sales than younger-targeted stations, where visitors browse more and spend less. Specter says the average purchase is seven or eight songs.

The big win for the stations isn’t a payday from tracks sold—the amount they earn per digital download is 5%, according to sources—rather, as Specter says, “The real payoff for the radio stations is the [Web site] traffic they’re getting.” Building a stronger bond with listeners, imaging stations as tech-savvy and incorporating free music download cards into ad packages are other benefits, programmers say.

Mena expects the Emmis iTunes stores to produce four times as many sales as their Windows Media equivalents, since Apple controls 80% of the digital music market. “If we focus on the product and work with artists and labels to really connect artists with music in a way that radio hasn’t been able to do before, sales will follow,” he says.

Radio giant Clear Channel hasn’t made the retail plunge yet but plans to. “Yes, radio will be a player,” Clear Channel president of online music and radio Evan Harrison says. But Specter warns it is going to be a tough go. “The growth is going to be as a middle America, the consumer who has heard about it but doesn’t know how to do it. Then, boom, radio, their trusted source for music, takes them by the hand and shows them how to do it. The song they just heard is right in front of them.”

Whether radio becomes a significant music retailer hinges on how robust an online experience it provides, says Mike McGuire, VP of research at Garner. “DJs still are arbiters of taste in some cases,” he says. “Radio can be a measurable and important contributor as long as it continues to invest in Web site features and functionality that provide value to music fans. But that two-way interaction is a whole different way of addressing an audience than your average radio station is used to doing.”

For now, Emmis and other broadcasters are counting on well-known personalities like KFWB’s Big Boy and WQHT’s Funkmaster Flex to endorse music on the air and drive listeners to their new “digital endpoints,” credit card in hand. “As an industry, we’re great at promoting music, which ultimately leads to sales,” Mena says. “But there’s a big difference between being a point-of-promotion and a point-of-purchase. This will allow us to bridge that gap.”

www.americanradiohistory.com
Songwriters Slow To Use Termination Rights

With BMG Music Publishing hitting the auction block, conversations among songwriters' rights to terminate publishing deals are heating up. Some observers say publishers could lose their value when rights revert to songwriters. But most songwriters will simply make new deals with the same publisher or shift to another one.

U.S. copyright law allows an author, such as a songwriter, to terminate agreements that assign (sold) or licensed rights in their copyrights. Heirs of Hank Williams and Roger Miller have recaptured rights for songs like "Your Cheatin' Heart" and "King of the Road," respectively, under old copyright law.

But a brief search of records in the Copyright Office database reveals that few songwriters have taken advantage of this right. In fact, since 2003 triggered the first notice period to terminate rights under current copyright law, contemporary writers of the late 1970s—whom industry lawyers would expect to terminate their rights—have not done so yet. If they do not send notices and terminate deals within a five-year window, they will lose the opportunity to get their rights back.

Under the 1976 Copyright Act, an author who assigned or licensed rights (exclusively or nonexclusively) on or after Jan. 1, 1978, may terminate that deal and get all rights back after a certain period of time. This can be done even if the contract says that the author (e.g., a songwriter) waived the right to do so—a contract may not change this absolute right under copyright law. If the author is no longer living, certain members of the author's family or a representative may also terminate the deal.

This five-year window begins at the end of 35 years after the agreement was signed by the author or 40 years after the song was first published (e.g., released on a record), whichever occurred earlier. The author must provide a written notice that complies with federal regulations. The notice must be provided no earlier than 10 years before the five-year period begins and no later than two years before that period ends.

In some cases, assume that an 1980 songwriter entered a songwriter's agreement and assigned all or a portion of copyright interest in all songs written in the past and all songs written during the next five years to a publishing company. Song One was written, recorded and released in 1978. Song Two was written in 1985, but not recorded and released until 1995.

The rights in Song One (1978) can be terminated during the years 2013-2018. The notice of termination may be sent no earlier than 2003 and no later than 2016. The notice must include the date that the termination will be effective, which must fall within that five-year period and at least two years after the notice was served on the recipient—the current rights holder. This gives the current rights holder two years to get ready for the revocation of rights to the author or the author's heirs.

The rights in Song Two (1985/1995) can be terminated from 2015 to 2020. The notice may be sent no earlier than 2005 and no later than 2018. The five-year period is calculated by adding 35 years to the date of the 1980 agreement (2015), adding 40 years to the date of the 1995 publication (2035), determining which year is earlier (2015) and beginning the five-year period from that date.

Even if the notice is sent 10 years before the five-year period begins, it will not be effective until that window begins. The notice must also give the current rights holder at least two years' prior notice to prepare for the revocation of rights.

Like all matters of a legal nature, there are additional conditions and technicalities. For example, if the author's publishing company entered a co-publishing deal, then there will be some legal technicalities to clear up to take advantage of this legal provision. If the author wrote a song under a work-made-for-hire agreement—typically the type of agreement composers sign for motion picture scores—the author may not terminate rights.

When there are co-authors, a majority of authors may terminate the rights under an agreement. The rights will then be terminated for all authors.

Songwriters' lawyers say there is no reason to ignore this right; the author or heirs can shop a new deal once their rights reverts to them. But be sure to consult a copyright lawyer; the notices must comply with certain requirements and be recorded with the Copyright Office to be effective.
The larger independent labels have never had it so good. Indie labels capable of generating more than $2 million in annual revenue are being offered the most attractive deals ever seen by the U.S. record industry.

For example, Rendezvous Records, which sources say generates about $3.5 million in annual revenue. When its deal with RED was ending, the owners apparently sensed the opportunity in the marketplace and began with an aggressive “ask.” To ink a new distribution contract, Rendezvous management wanted a $2 million advance, with plans to invest in the label.

RED and the Alternative Distribution Alliance (ADA) weren’t interested, sources say, but Koch, Fontana and Navarre met with the label. Eventually, Rendezvous reaped a $1 million-plus advance from Fontana, according to sources.

“I wish that were true; that would be the good deal,” says Hyman Katz, founding partner of Rendezvous. “It’s inappropriate to dis- close the deal in print, but whatever value was put on our company was based on a tremendous amount of due diligence.”

While other sources say there may have been a large advance, it was in the form of a “rolling advance,” which means payments will be made in installments, with more funding becoming available when the initial installments are recouped.

In addition to increased advances, indie labels are enjoying lower distribution fees in some cases.

One indie label GM says distribution is “getting cheaper because everyone is in crazy wars to sign labels.” While independent labels are happy with this turn of events, the distributors are grousing about it and blaming one another. “It’s become a very competitive landscape because of distributors that are ultra predatory,” one indie distribution executive laments.

The main distributors competing for the bigger indie labels are Fontana; RED, ADA, and its incubator labels EastWest and Asylum; Caroline; Koch Entertainment Distribution; and Navarre. The first four are owned by the majors, respectively. Universal Music Group, Sony BMG, WEA and EMI.

Historically, fees have ranged from 18%-23% of a title’s wholesale cost for distribution services, which usually includes pick, pack and ship (known as fulfillment), account solicitation and handling returns. Fees can reach the 25%-30% range, if they include marketing, radio promotion, credit risk and collections.

Fees also depend on a label’s volume for the year.

Most distributors still charge about 23%. One indie distributor says, “Our distribution fee blends in at 22%, with a low of 16% and a high of 35%. But most of our deals are for 23%.”

One indie-label consultant says Fontana gives advances readily and is offering deals that carry 20% distribution fees. On the other hand, he says, “ADA pretty much acts like advances don’t exist. So does RED, but if you present them with the right deal, they will provide advances.”

However, not every label needs a big advance. Epitaph would rather focus on “getting a good distribution fee, and even before that, getting good service,” label GM Dave Hanson says. Likewise, Missa Callazzi, VP of Megaforce, says, “I’d rather pay a little more to have a full-service distributor.”

One indie executive places the distribution fee floor at about 16%. “The label’s know if you push too hard on the distributors’ margin then the level of service will go down.”

Nevertheless, an executive with one of the aforementioned independent distributors says, “I have heard of fees in the 14%-16% range, but I won’t play in that arena. Don’t do a deal for less than a 20% fee.”

Naturally, there are exceptions. When Victory Records, whose deal with RED is up at the end of 2006, becomes available, that executive can see something happening in the 12%-14% range.

Most independent executives blame Fontana for the erosion fees. One independent distribution company head says, “Fontana doesn’t seem to care if they make money, they just want to build market share.”

Universal Music Group Distribution president Jim Urie lists such accusations as “preposterous.” First off, the company is hitting its projections on distribution fees, and secondly, like others, it is responding to competition, he says.

Fontana GM Steve Pritchett wryly responds to charges that Fontana is rolling the marketplace by observing, “That seems to be the common wisdom out there in the marketplace. But it is surprising how many times we do make offers, and labels come back to us and show us that someone offered them better terms with bigger advances or bigger lines of credit.”

But unlike other indie distributors, Fontana can be “competitive because our cost structure is very different. We use a lot of UMGD capabilities.”

Some also point the finger at Koch Entertainment Distribution, while others blame the Warner Music Group incubator labels. Indeed, Johnny Phillips, VP at longtime indie distributor Select-O-Hits in Memphis, blames the majors in general. “The majors who own independent distributors are paying outrageous prices for stuff that is unproven,” Phillips says.

In particular, he singles out Fontana and Asylum, the WMG incubator label that signs indie labels and/or acts and puts them through WEA.

The major label-affiliated indie operations are the main companies operating at the lower end of distribution fees and higher end on advances. They can do so because they usually get some services from the parent’s major-label distribution operation. Further, major-label executives are used to lower distribution fees. The majors typically charge their labels between 11% and 13%, depending on whether the label is owned or just has a distribution agreement.

Despite this trend, Phillips says, he’s not changing his fee structures.

“We are already down as far as we can go,” he says. “It doesn’t make any sense to go lower, or you start losing money.”

While Select-O-Hits does not give out large advances, in certain cases when it makes sense, the company might agree to an advance that is 25% of the ask, and maybe agree to provide another 50% of the ask in the form of marketing dollars that the distributor itself will spend on a label’s acts.

Likewise, RED president Bob Morelli says his company is taking a different approach. Instead of lowering fees, RED built up its services by adding a radio department and a street team so that the company can offer more services to its labels.

An even better strategy, according to Phillips, is to get to the label he wants first and lock it up before Asylum or any other major-affiliated company becomes aware of it.
Hello, your career is calling.

In these fiscally conservative times, acts must often prove their ability to generate a viable fan base before record labels will even consider adding them to their rosters.

To that end, several incumbent acts are turning to the mobile phone—traditionally a platform reserved for marketing established acts—to launch their music careers.

Take the G.R.I.T. Boys—a hip-hop group developed and promoted by superstar Paul Wall. Looking to raise above the crowded music scene of their native Houston, the Boys agreed to be the subject of a reality series called “NEXTX,” filmed exclusively for distribution over mobile phones.

The idea, the group’s manager/producer Pretty Todd of Mo Betta Grooves says, is to do something that would generate attention and expose their music to a greater audience.

“Labels these days do not invest in artists,” he says. “They wait for artists to invest in themselves. You could be Tupac, but if you’re not selling records or don’t have a radio song, you’re not gonna get a deal. You have to do something yourself to show the label something tangible.”

The G.R.I.T. Boys are not alone. Many other artists are embracing ring tones as a way to connect with fans and perhaps build an audience.

Several ringtone providers, software developers and even wireless carriers have begun offering unsigned acts an avenue to create and sell their own ring tones.

Mobile content developer UrbanWorld Wireless, for instance, has struck deals with several unsigned rappers to develop exclusive ring tones as part of its “Street Beat” service. Among the participants are up-and-coming hip-hop artists Chor: Boy, Papoose, Spudnik, Rapper and Swing. The company taps celebrities like Ice Cube to host mix tapes featuring these artists, and then creates exclusive ringtones as an extension of them.

Cingular Wireless teamed with MySpace in April for its Mobile Music Studio effort. Acts can submit an original song to Cingular via a dedicated MySpace page, which the carrier then converts into a master ring tone. Artists can then post a link on their MySpace site that allows fans to buy that ringtone through the Cingular store.

Other companies, like Groupietunes and Xingtones, offer similar services that let artists create their own ringtones and sell them to their fans directly.

But as popular as ring tones and other forms of mobile music may be, simply jumping in the pool doesn’t guarantee the idea will float. Ringtones are primarily a marketing play—something fans buy to advertise their affiliation with an established act, not necessarily to discover new ones.

“I don’t believe mobile content is by any stretch the be-all, end-all,” Xingtones CEO Jonathan Schreiber says. “It’s not even the beginning. There has to be a concerted effort where mobile, MMS, SMS, trivia, contests and images come together to accomplish the goal.”

Some in the mobile industry are paying attention to these broad seeds. After all, the companies behind these mobile music efforts frequently have as much to gain as artists do, should an act use their platform to find success. By placing bets on emerging talent now, these companies hope to reap financial and promotional rewards later.
Good Lordi!
Finnish Metal Act Wins Eurovision Song Contest

ATHENS—Finnish rock act Lordi claimed a groundbreaking victory at the 51st Eurovision Song Contest here with “Hard Rock Hallelujah,” the first heavy metal song to compete—much less win—the prestigious annual event.

But after the triumph in Athens’ 16,000-capacity Olympic Arena, a new challenge awaits Lordi: building upon its breakthrough.

Viewers in 38 countries voted for the Sony BMG Finland “monster metal” quintet whose Alice Cooper/Kiss-inspired makeup and dress has drawn comparisons to more recent acts like GWAR and Slipknot.

Sony BMG Finland managing director Kimmo Valtanen says breaking Lordi worldwide is a high priority for the label and plans are already in place to take full advantage of the ESC win.

“Our company sees the long-term potential of the band,” Valtanen says. “Monster movies and cartoons sell well, so there should be no reason why we can’t translate this concept into album sales. So far we have release commitments from [affiliates in] 18 countries in Europe and interest from the United States, Australia and Asia.”

According to Nielsen Music Control, “Hard Rock Hallelujah” swiftly picked up airplay after the May 20 ESC win, adding stations in Ireland, Greece, Norway, Spain and Portugal to pre-win supporters in Finland, Sweden and Belgium. The song was written by the band’s frontman Mr. Lordi (Tommi Putaansuu); publishing is controlled by Sony BMG.

Lordi has issued three albums through Sony BMG in Europe since 2003. Shipments total 120,000 units. Valtanen says, with strongest sales in Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Latest album “The Arockalypse” was released in March.

CASTING A WIDE NET

Final figures for the 2006 ESC are not yet available, but organizer the European Broadcasting Union estimates the event drew more than 100 million TV viewers.


However, regular Eurovision observers admit a win doesn’t guarantee massive sales.

“The impact of ABBA’s 1974 victory with “Waterloo” has never been exceeded and nothing can really compare today,” Stockholm-based Swedish Songs manager director Peto Nylen says. “But in most cases, he adds, “a winner becomes a very valuable copyright for any publisher.”

To millions of viewers across Europe, the Eurovision Song Contest is an annual event lasting more than three hours. But to the thousands of delegations from the attending countries, it is a 10-day affair, filled with drama, humor and parties.

In fact, there are so many simultaneous parties it is impossible to attend them all. On one night in Athens during Eurovision, the choices included a seaside feast thrown by Cyprus, a dignified event at the home of the Swedish Ambassador; and a “Big Four” party hosted by the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Spain.

Those who chose the “Big Four” soiree probably regretted it. Drinks tokens ran out so early that by the time the U.K. delegation arrived, they had to go without alcohol—despite paying for the hall.

The Swedish Ambassador’s guests, on the other hand, admitted to being so stuffed after the hors d’oeuvres they were surprised to find a full dinner was also being served—and they didn’t need drink tokens for the never-ending bar.

It is not all partying, of course. That’s just at night.

During the day, there are seemingly endless rehearsals and press conferences. Each country’s participant in the televised semifinal who then qualifies for the final has no fewer than eight rehearsals, plus its two actual performances. And each country’s entrant formally meets the press twice, then schedules as many private interviews as time permits.

The press conferences are often the biggest source of drama. The Icelandic entry was sung by TV actress Ágúst Eva as the outrageous Silvia Night. And during the week she never broke character.

At a press conference, her onstage dancer warned journalists not to look directly at Night while asking questions. When a woman identifying herself as a U.K. reporter made a query, Night shouted, “You’re looking me in the eye!” She then had her 6-foot-7-inch bodyguard remove the “reporter” from the press center, kidding and screaming.

Greek TV reports failed to mention the journalist was actually another actress from Iceland and local viewers soon turned against Night. They also didn’t like the fact that she cursed at TV crews, “dissed” this year’s Greek entrant Anna Vissi and refused to remove an expletive from her song, “Congratulations.”

It was all meant to be a joke, but the rest of Europe didn’t get it. Boos echoed during the broadcast. Night did not make it through the semifinal.

But sometimes the drama wasn’t so orchestrated. When one reporter asked Sweden’s Carla Oland what she thought of Vissi, she immediately responded: “I just hope I look that good when I’m that”. Suddenly realizing she was about to insert her foot in her mouth, she quickly added: “… young”.

The born-again Christian singer was also asked what she thought of her gay fans. “I’m proud to be a gay diva,” Carla said.

Well, maybe it came out wrong, but the sentiment was in the right place.

While Night alienated Europe, the members of Finland’s Lordi charmed all, despite resembling the unholy love children of Kiss and the Klingons.

Lead singer Mr. Lordi was asked what he ate for breakfast. “Children,” he scowled. But then he swiftly turned into a “regular guy,” talking in a heartfelt way about his band, its music and what it meant to be in the contest. Night could take a lesson, more than one attendee suggested.

In the end, Europe’s viewers simply voted for their favorite song. The experts thought it might come from Russia or Sweden or Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they were all wrong.

The Finnish monsters swept the board, with Lordi’s “Hard Rock Hallelujah” scoring more points than any song in the history of Eurovision, and Finland—without a top five finish—made its way to 17th place overall. Lordi’s victory was praised by the likes of Sir Paul McCartney, Simon Cowell, and club promoter Danny López Jr.

The band members, who are all in their late 20s, said they dedicated the win to “all of Finland, and the music industry in general.”

“The moment was surreal,” says lead singer Mr. Lordi (Tommi Putaansuu). “The audience was whistling, and I saw some tears. I think we proved that it’s possible to win with heavy metal.”

But the band members were already planning their next moves. “We’ll be back in five years,” says singer Mr. Lordi. “We’ll be back in five years.”
WMI’s Joint Venture Boosts Africa Presence

LONDON—With a series of strategic partnerships, Warner Music International appears to be shifting away from its traditional arrangements in far-flung markets.

Most recently, the music major announced it has entered into an "equity relationship" in South Africa that allows it to capitalize on local talent at home and internationally. The new media-based joint venture with South African entertainment media firm Johncom Communications (Johncom) will also give WMI a strategic fulcrum for the greater African market.

The joint venture in Johannesburg comes on the heels of a similar arrangement in South Korea, where WMI is partnering with local Internet service provider SK Telecom (May 27). Other emerging markets, such as Russia, are being "closely watched," WMI CEO Gerolamo Caccia says.

WMI executives say the latest development represents a sign of changing times under the leadership of Chairman Vien. Three months into his tenure as New York-based chairman/CEO of the global operation.

"As the company continues to transform into a content business, our job will be to find a good balance and identify the best way to progress," Caccia says.

"Now, we need to be more creative in the way that we approach individual markets," he says. "What we would like to do is to tailor-make our presence in other markets and strike a partnership with crucial players."

Not all competitors agree with the tactic. "If at all, a JV should be a shortcut to a sustained dominant market position," one major-label executive says. "In reality, a JV is frequently the quick fix to get into a market, accompanied by wishful thinking that the new partners will not be mainly self-serving."

The South Africa deal, unveiled May 22, sees WMI join with Johncom, described by Caccia as a "very active and energetic" business, and its subsidiary Gallo Music, the country’s largest independent record label and WMI’s local licensee.

WMI has an undisclosed controlling stake in the new company, Warner Music Gallo Africa, which will have worldwide digital rights to Gallo’s domestic repertoire. The 80-year-old Gallo archive includes works by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Lucky Dube, Pro-Kid, Lusanda Spiritual Group, Thandiswa and Simphiwe Dana.

Johncom is no stranger to the major music players, having once been an equal partner with PolyGram in South Africa. PolyGram (now Universal Music) increased its stake in the venture to a majority in the 1990s, and Johncom subsequently exited the joint venture completely.

Physical product from WMI and Gallo will be handled in South Africa through WMGA. The new venture will be the licensee for the major’s roster of international acts in sub-Saharan Africa. WMI will distribute the WMGA roster internationally.

"This gives us huge opportunities, especially on the digital side," says Ivar Hjortbarger, CEO of Gallo Music Group, who will add duties as CEO of WMGA. "How can you get into 50-plus countries automatically as will be the case with the digital side of the WMGA deal? You need a big brother from the technology and digital side."

The potential for digital music exploitation in South Africa is vast. As of October 2005, the local market accounted for roughly 27 million cellular lines, compared with 4.7 million fixed lines according to research firm Equant. Separate statistics gathered by the Wireless World Forum suggest the country will count almost 30 million mobile phone users by 2007.

"We want to have a different approach," Caccia says. "We need to adapt the business model to the existing market by evaluating the assets, resources, the strengths and weaknesses. I feel this best represents a new way to approach a business."...

Additional reporting by Diane Coetzee in Johannesburg.

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JACKSON UPSTAGES KODA

Avex-signed vocalist Kumi Koda was the big winner at the fifth annual MTV Video Music Awards Japan in Tokyo. Koda collected three awards: best female video and best video of the year for "Butterfly," as well as the "best buzz Asia from Japan" award for the video of "Trust You."

However, her victory was shadowed by a rare appearance by Michael Jackson to receive the MTV Japan Legend Award. In a brief acceptance speech, Jackson thanked his Japanese fans for their loyalty.

Other winners, chosen by MTV viewers, included Defstar Records vocalist Ken Hirai (best male video) and Warner Music’s Green Day (best rock video). The show featured live performances by Koda, Japanese-American rap duo Def Tech, Kelly Rowland and Rihanna, plus a duet between John Legend and Hirai.

MTV Japan says portions of the show have been made available to MTV channels around the world.

---Steve McCLure

RECORD YEAR FOR PPL/VPL

British collecting society Phonographic Performance Ltd. and its sister company Video Performance Ltd. drew in a record level of license fee income during 2005.

PPL income in 2005 was £86.5 million (£162 million), up 4.7% on the previous year. VPL income totaled £12.8 million (£24 million), up 45.8%. The society attributes the latter increase to increased performing rights in the broadcast and public performance areas.

PPL’s costs-to-income ratio was 14.5%; VPL’s was 10.9.

The results were published ahead of a formal presentation at the PPL annual general meeting June 7 in London.

PPL collects and distributes airplay and public performance royalties in Britain on behalf of more than 3,500 record companies and 40,000 performers. VPL administers broadcast, public performance and dubbing rights in music videos and has more than 1,000 member companies.

---Lars BRANDLE

IVORS FOR GAMBLE & HUFF

Soul songwriting/production team Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff received the annual special international achievement honor at the Ivor Novello Awards for Songwriters May 25 in London.

 Fellow veterans the Bee Gees (Academy Fellowship) and Kinks vocalist Ray Davies (Performing Right Society award for outstanding contribution to British music) were among the other writers honored at the 15-category event.

The British Academy of Composers & Songwriters presented the awards during a gala at London’s Grosvenor House Hotel held in association with authors’ bodyPRS.

Awards are either decided by Academy members or based on performances/exports. Gamble and Huff first collaborated more than 40 years ago and launched the influential Philadelphia International label in 1971. Their catalog includes such hits as “Love Train” by the O’Jays, Billy Paul’s “Me & Mrs. Jones” and Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes “If You Don’t Know Me by Now.”

Other winners included New Order, KT Tunstall, James Blunt and Jethro Tull’s Ian Anderson.

---Tom Ferguson

GOING MOBILE IN INDIA

Indian mobile phone operator Hutchison Essar has launched what it claims is the country’s first legal, mobile-delivered music download service.

The "Hutch—Music on Demand" service offers Hutchison Essar’s 16 million subscribers access to 100,000 downloadable titles, including international and regional repertoire from the four major labels plus numerous independent labels.

Tracks are priced at 20 rupees (44 cents) per download. The content is licensed via Switzerland-based mobile digital rights management developer Secure Digital Corporation, whose DRM technology is already being used by Hutchison’s 3 network, T-Mobile International and O2 in the United Kingdom, plus operators in Germany, France, Australia and Canada.

Hutchison Essar is a subsidiary of international mobile carrier Hutchison Telecom.

---Juliana Koranteng
Caroline Likely To Expand Under New Chief

Expect Caroline Distribution to start putting more emphasis on marketing, perhaps even starting an in-house label group to develop imprints, à la Red Ink at Sony BMG's RED Distribution.

The distributor is expected to announce that Ryko Label Group president William Hein will take over for departing GM Rick Williams any day now. An EMG representative declined to comment.

Williams started at Caroline in 1988 to open the company's West Coast branch. He was eventually promoted to VP of sales in 1994 and had been the GM since 1998.

Caroline Distribution opened in 1993 out of Richard Branson's New York apartment. Williams led Caroline's shift from being largely an importer to a large distributor of third-party labels. He helped navigate the company through its integration with EMI, which purchased Caroline in 1993.

Labels credit Williams with building Caroline's roster of hard rock and hip-hop/electronic labels. Today, Caroline's top labels include Century Media, home to Shadows Fall and Lacuna Coil, and indie hip-hop brands Definitive Jux and Stones Throw.

Labels contacted by Billboard seem less worried about Williams' departure than the chance that EMI and Warner Music Group will merge. The latter is home to one of the largest independent distributors on the market, the Alternative Distribution Alliance.

But the impending appointment of Hein would indicate that Williams' ouster—and no real reason has yet to be given for his departure—was not caused by any merger that may or may not be on the horizon (Williams did not return calls by deadline) In fact, sources indicate that Hein will be bringing in from former Rykodisc senior VP of sales and marketing Neil Levine to look at starting an umbrella group that offers greater sales and marketing services to budding imprints.

It would be a welcome move, some labels say. One label head noted that he hired an outside marketing firm for his label, but would have preferred to see his distributor offer such services at a better price. Describing some of the marketing services Caroline offers, another Caroline-distributed label head noted that the staff at Caroline "are not really young trendsetters."

But neither, of course, is Hein, and some were looking forward to a shake-up. Increased competition in the indie sector has had distributors such as Universal Music Group's Fontana, ADA and RED rethinking more like marketing firms than pick-up and ship companies. Some have been awaiting Caroline to more aggressively adopt such rhetoric.

"They've been focusing more on that," Giganomic president Derek Evers says. "He brings up a division like Red Ink, and whiel he notes that many of Caroline's labels wouldn't be interested, he adds that "a lot of us young indies need that."

Still others, like Century Media president Marco Barbieri, were happy with the status quo. Century has a clause in its contract that allows it to send larger projects up through the parent company, but has yet to take advantage of it. "We feel really taken care of the in the last five or six years," he says. "But we drive a lot of our own things, and a lot of smaller labels may not have the experience, finances or staff to do so."

But exactly what kind of services Caroline would begin to offer that would differ are as yet unknown. The distributor has had a reputation for taking chances on small, artist-run or odd labels, such as Peanut Butter Wolf's Stones Throw or Greg Anderson and Stephen O'Malley's Southern Lord Records. It's doubtful that a change in command would simply be due to EMI wanting Caroline to take a more active role in developing artists.

Additionally, with two former top Ryko executives thought to be jumping to Caroline, one has to wonder about Rykodisc's future. The latter was just acquired by WMG (Billboard, April 1), and a spokesperson for the latter says the label will continue to operate as its own entity. According to a WMG statement, Ryko president Jim Cuomo "will expand his duties as interim president of Rykodisc." That should quiet the rumor that Rykodisc would cease to exist, at least for now.

ELO Kiddies.

Cheap Trick shows the world what the word legendary is all about by capturing its Coolest Song in the World This Week with "If It Takes a Lifetime."

The new album, "Rockford," is out this week. Some of you are digging "Perfect Stranger" which is great because there are five songs that are even better: "...Lifetime," "Dream the Night Away," "Come On Come On Come On," "Give It Away" and "Welcome to the World."

Happily, it's still the original four East Side Kids: Rick Nielsen, Robin Zander, Tom Petersson and Bun E. Carlos. From now on, they've got to record more than two albums every 10 years. There's a whole generation of kids waiting to see and hear the real thing.

And the same goes for John Jett, who also drops some wax this week. More on that next time.

What is it lately? Open season on milestones...

COOLEST GARAGE SONGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE/LABEL</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IF IT TAKES A LIFETIME</td>
<td>CHEAP TRICK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTER THE GARDEN</td>
<td>NEIL YOUNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARE YOU READY FOR IT?</td>
<td>THE HOLOGRAMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERYONE KNOWS</td>
<td>JOAN JETT &amp; THE BLACKHEARTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTHING TERRIBLY NEW</td>
<td>THE HELLACOPTERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANDS</td>
<td>THE RACONTEURS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORLD WIDE SUICIDE</td>
<td>THE RACONTEURS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEADY, AS SHE GOES</td>
<td>ARCTIC MONKEYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I BET YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR</td>
<td>BUZZCOCKS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COOLEST GARAGE ALBUMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE/LABEL</th>
<th>ARTIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BROKEN BOY SOLDIERS</td>
<td>THE RACONTEURS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
<td>PEARL JAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIVING WITH WAR</td>
<td>NEIL YOUNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHATSOEVER PEOPLE SAY I AM, THAT'S WHAT I'M NOT</td>
<td>ARCTIC MONKEYS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF EARTH</td>
<td>THE STROKES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISION VALLEY</td>
<td>THE VINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHOW YOUR BONES</td>
<td>YEAH YEAH YEAHs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLAT-PACK PHILOSOPHY</td>
<td>BUZZCOCKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCK &amp; ROLL IS DEAD</td>
<td>THE HELLACOPTERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES</td>
<td>RAY DAVIES</td>
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TODD MARTENS tmartens@billboard.com

CRISTINA SCABBIA of LACUNA COIL

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Amaechi Uzoigwe

BY TODD MARTENS

As the record industry weighs the long-term impact of new technology, Definitive Jux co-founder Amaechi Uzoigwe plans not to be caught unprepared.

In May, Uzoigwe’s hip-hop label launched its own digital download store. Now, Uzoigwe reveals that Def Jux will release only digital product for the remainder of 2006—an unprecedented move for a company of its stature.

Michigan-born Uzoigwe formed Def Jux in 2001 with producer/rapper and Company Flow frontman El-P, whom he managed. That was shortly after Company Flow parted ways with Rawkus, having grown increasingly uncomfortable with that label’s mainstream ambitions (it was about to announce a joint venture with MCA) and what Company Flow perceived as a lack of promotion.

In five years, New York-based Def Jux has become arguably the most recognizable underground hip-hop. In addition to El-P, the Caroline-distributed label is home to producer RJD2, rapper Aesop Rock and political hip-hop outfit The Perceptionists, among others. While El-P, RJD2 and Aesop Rock are not household names, their albums regularly sell more than 70,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Uzoigwe’s ambitions do not stop at underground hip-hop. In 2004, he formed management and marketing firm World’s Fair with Flaming Lips manager Scott Booker and Play It Again Sam America managing director Kevin Wortis.

In this Billboard interview, Uzoigwe discusses the growth of indie hip-hop and what he has learned about surviving in the digital marketplace.

Q: How is Def Jux doing at indie retail these days?
A: Indie retail is so trend-oriented nowadays. That Brit-rock and indie rock are the trend, that’s all they want to sell. Two or three years ago, it was all indie hip-hop. We did huge numbers out of indie retail. Now indie hip-hop isn’t the hipster music it was.

Q: Were you prepared for this declining support?
A: We had four or five artists who put up big numbers, so we were able to create a real solid platform for the future. We know we can sell X amount anytime Aesop Rock or El-P put out a record. It is not speculative. It becomes a question of how many we think we can sell, and we’re up for that. Maybe we thought it would keep growing and growing, and the cats from the underground would be mentioned in the same sentence as the major-label rappers. That hasn’t happened.

Q: With the creative differences that drove Company Flow from Rawkus, are you dead set against working with a major?
A: We’ve had plenty of discussions about that. We approach business realistically, and El-P has never been one to say he makes music for the masses and is going to make a radio hit. We’d rather keep the money. We know we can sell 100,000 records worldwide. For us, that’s a platinum hit. For a major label, that’s a big loss. We could take their bank loan, essentially, and be in debt for years, or we could do it ourselves. But the Rawkus experience left such a bad taste in our mouth. It just furthered our resolve to do it on our own, and have no one to blame or depend upon but ourselves. We didn’t want to play the game. You’re powerless, and you’re blaming other people for what they didn’t do.

Q: Are you a Caroline-distributed label, how closely are you watching the merger talks between EMI and Warner Music Group?
A: We’re watching that pretty closely. We’ve become pretty invested in it, though, because that talk has been going on for years—about EMI selling itself or buying someone—and it never seems to come to pass. This time it seems more real. It seems like something is going down. We don’t know what to think. It’s so much out of our control. I think we’ll be OK because we do good billing, and we’ll be looked at as an asset.

Q: The shrinking indie retail base seems to have forced independent distributors to become more focused on digital distribution. How is this affecting your sales?
A: A month into operating our digital store, what have you seen?
A: We’re seeing thousands, and I probably shouldn’t reveal the revenue, but it’s been thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. We’re selling full albums. About one-third of our sales have been digital.

All this has done is underscore the fact that in order to make this work we need to market, market and market. We’re really double-dipping on it, to the point where we’ve decided not to release any more physical CDs this year.

Q: Zero physical releases?
A: Only digital.

Q: What about upcoming albums by El-P, Aesop Rock and Company Flow?
A: All for next year. We could put physical stuff out this year, but we decided if we’re picking up this flag and waving it for digital commerce, we should go all out and really invest into this service and force people to deal with us on those terms. It’s a risk, but a calculated risk. We feel this is the future.

Q: What is coming out online?
A: We will have exclusive music from all the aforementioned, plus the whole roster. Most of the stuff we will debut on our site exclusively, and some stuff will stay on our site exclusively. We’re loading the [site] with all our big dogs. This is not an ancillary thing. This is not an experiment. I don’t think people will take us seriously if we don’t take it seriously. Let’s put our money and our quality music into it. We’ll see. In a couple of years we’ll either be idiots or geniuses.

Q: Is this the first step to becoming an all-digital label?
A: That is something we have talked about, and maybe down the road that will happen. But we’re not ready to make that leap. We do too much solid business physically. We have great relationships with our distributors, and we’re not abandoning that. It’s where most of our money is, and we’d be remiss to take our foot off that pedal.

Q: Are your fans ready?
A: That’s a hell of a question, and we don’t know. We shall see. If we’re that convinced that this is the bridge to the future, we may as well help build it, and figure out how much of an impact digital will have. It’s harder to do that when you’re on the sidelines of an iTunes or eMusic. 

JUNE 10, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 17

www.americanradiohistory.com
THE WORLD CUP 2006
KICK OUT OF MUSIC

The World's Biggest Soccer Tournament Meets The Music Biz On Marketing's Field Of Play

BY PAUL SEXTON

GETTING A TUNE OUT OF MUSIC

The most popular recording this year may not be a song, but rather a five-note melody called “Bamboo.” The simple chant of the word, composed by the relatively unknown Nadir Khayat and Bilal Hajji, will almost certainly be heard by an accumulated audience of as many as 30 billion TV viewers in the space of about a month. Such is the branding reach of the Federation Internationale de Football Assn. (FIFA), world soccer’s governing body. “Bamboo” has been selected as the official melody for the 2006 FIFA World Cup, the biggest soccer festival on earth, which will kick off June 9 in Germany. The melody will be sold as a ringtone, used in special FIFA-targeted remixes of hit songs and will feature prominently in advertising from such sponsors as Adidas, Budweiser, Coca-Cola, McDonald's and Phillips. The sheer universality of soccer—“football” to fans of the sport everywhere outside the United States—has traditionally given it an unrivaled advantage over other spectator sports in luring the global music business to its commercial possibilities. Three million spectators are expected to attend games during the monthlong tournament. FIFA reckons a TV audience of 1 billion will watch the July 9 final in Berlin and expects some 30 billion views of the tournament in total, up from the 28.8 billion from the 2002 event. This year, though, it’s not just music smartly courting FIFA’s audience, but FIFA seeking out the unique marketing and branding possibilities—and energy—that today’s music stars offer. To that end, FIFA hired an outside agency, Sweden’s Engine, to manage music projects, as opposed to licensing those projects to a major recording company, as had been done in the past. It was Engine that commissioned “Bamboo”—the highest-profile composition from the World Cup, but by no means alone. The tune, whose publishing is administered through Kobalt Music Group under a deal the latter recently struck with FIFA, is featured in a specially commissioned, official FIFA remix of the Shakira/Wyclef Jean track “Hips Don’t Lie,” in EMI-signed German megastar Herbert Grönemeyer’s “Celebrate the Day” and in classical crossover group Il Divo’s “The Time of Our Lives,” performed with R&B star Toni Braxton. All these tracks—and scores of catalog hits from such international stars as Elton John, Elvis Presley, Kelly Clarkson, Rod Stewart and others, strategically selected for various territories—will be included on “Voices,” the official FIFA compilation that Sony BMG will release June 6 around the globe. Grönemeyer will perform “Celebrate the Day” before the opening game. Il Divo and Braxton will perform “The Time of Our Lives” at halftime in that game and also at the July 9 tournament final. Shakira and Jean will perform their FIFA-endorsed collaboration before the final kicks off.
Beyond the enormity of the viewing numbers, these are fans that are ripe for a strong marketing campaign, says Ben Pudfield, London-based group account director at advertising agency GCI. In the United States, GCI accounts include the Women’s Tennis Assn. Tour and Major League Baseball.

“It goes beyond demographics into psychographics,” he says. “If you’re talking to an audience on a subject as emotive as sport or music, you connect with them on a level that’s impossible through mainstream advertising.”

**A CROWDED FIELD**

With so many marketers trying to reach football fans, they can be easily overwhelmed. “If you look at all the commercials on TV at the moment, they’re all trying to do something World Cup-related,” says London-based Rick Blaskey, managing director of the Music & Media Partnership. Blaskey has worked closely with sporting bodies on a number of official tie-ins, executive-producing Sony’s official album of the 1998 soccer World Cup and four consecutive Rugby World Cup albums. “You don’t know which brand is which, and as it’s been reported recently, U.K. consumers have already been showing signs of fatigue in football-related marketing.”

He adds, “We always say, ‘Music cuts through the clutter.’ If you had the most joyous song that everyone was singing, and it was McDonald’s or Coke or MasterCard as a sponsor, it would be brilliant.”

One of the more intriguing regional, FIFA-themed albums is French independent label Because Music’s June 12 Pan-European release “Africa Plays On.” The label says the album is intended as a showcase for the diversity of African music, conceived by sports manufacturer Puma and New York-based music production collective Onda.

Puma sponsors six sub-Saharan African football associations, including four qualifiers for the 2006 finals: Angola, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo. The album features such artists as Senegal’s Akon and Baba Maal and Angolan Waldemar Bastos, plus heavyweight U.S. contributors like John Legend.

“The World Cup, and the rising significance of the African teams, provides us with an exceptional vehicle to promote African music beyond the core world music market,” because U.K. marketing manager Jenny Adlington says, “Puma’s expertise in youth marketing,” she adds, “is an extremely valuable tool in reaching diverse audiences with this music.”

Snack food brand Pringles, owned by Procter & Gamble, has prominently allied itself with the tournament in recent weeks with U.K. packaging featuring stars of the England soccer team. That has now been extended to tie-in with one of the many unofficial songs on sale in that market, the England Supporters Band’s “Enger-land (Sing Along With Me).” Released June 5 as a download by Universal Digital and a week later as a physical single, the track is executive-produced—and the deal brokered—by Blaskey’s Music & Media Partnership.

GCI is the advertising agency for Pringles. “The fact that [the song] is going to be launched as a download is very much about where our audience currently is, what is a relevant part of their life,” Pudfield says.

“Pringles is a global business retained in so many different countries, and football in particular is the one thing that ties those markets together. It’s as relevant in the U.K. as it is in Trinidad & Tobago. Rugby and cricket are both things we’ve looked at recently, and the trouble is they’re too country-specific. There’s nothing that cuts through like football.”

**BACKFIRE STRATEGIES**

FIFA turned to Engine to strategize the best possible music and marketing playbook. “We’re the governing body of world football, but we’re certainly not a music company,” says Rupert Daniels, World Cup music program project manager for FIFA. “We do have a lot of expertise in the world of entertainment, licensing, TV and marketing rights, but we identified the need to work with a professional company with a wide range of experience in the music industry to act as our consultants.”

Engine’s strategy for the 2006 games was to build an entire branding campaign around an “official melody” — “Bambool.” This is the first year the tournament has had such a recording, which Engine managing director Bjorn Lindborg describes as “the FIFA sonic brand.”

“We wanted to utilize all different mediums for distribution,” Daniels says. “It’s the world’s biggest event, and a lot of the sponsors we work with [have their own] sonic brands. That gives you an association—even if you don’t see it, you hear it.”

“We tried to make ["Bambool"] the backbone of the entire music program,” Daniels says. “It is incorporated into the official song ["by Il Divo"], into the official theme ["by Herbert Grönemeyer] and into the Shakira song ["Hips Don’t Lie (Bambool"]). You can also buy it individually as a ringtone with the official animated emblem.”

“Bambool” could be extended into a full symphony, it can be a Latino style, classical, hip-hop,” Daniels continues. “It gives the tournament an audio identity, along with the strong visual brands we have like the World Cup trophy itself and the official emblem.”

The melody will

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**SALES HEADING SOUTH**

When the World Cup begins June 9, four Latin countries will be competing, and two of them—Brazil and Argentina—will have a serious shot at winning. But while fans cheer, the music industry in Latin America will probably be singing the blues as paralyzation of any non-soccer-related activity sets in. If past cups are any indication, average consumers are more likely to be watching matches than attending concerts or buying music, even when that music is World Cup-related.

"Traditionally, World Cup months is a slow sales month in the region," says Raúl Vazquez, who has lived through at least four cups, both as a region president and in his current post as regional director for IFPI Latin America.

"To give you an idea, every company in the country lets employees off midday so they can watch the games," adds José Antonio Eboli, GM of Universal Music Brazil. "As far as our business is concerned, there is a glut of releases previous to the cup. Acts know that during World Cup no one wants to know anything about buying albums."

"Soccer is soccer," says Arturo Velasco, head of Televisa Música in Mexico. "It’s not that music disappears, but people are 100% into soccer, and everything else takes second place. But labels still look for certain tracks or compilations. It is an opportunity, after all."

Indeed, a smattering of World Cup-themed compilations are being released in various countries. EMI Televisa’s World Cup album, for example, is “Mexico Mexico,” and includes the title track performed by pop act RBD. The track is the official theme of the Mexican soccer team and the Televisa network in Mexico, and is being promoted through a video featuring RBD with members of the Mexican team. It is also featured in a Cingular TV campaign that kicked off in May. Cingular has the exclusive rights to the ringtone for 45 days.

Televisa is also pushing “Siquitumb,” a remake of a song popularized during the World Cup in 1986 in Mexico. The new version of the track, recorded by girl group Chic Pack, is the official theme of “Televisa Deportes,” the network’s sports show. The track is the lead single off Chic Pack’s self-titled debut.

Universal is also taking a nationalistic approach with the release of “Samba Goal-Powered by RIO,” a compilation featuring the favorite songs of Brazilian player Ronaldoinho Gaucho, who has been twice voted the top world player by FIFA. The album, which streets worldwide June 20, also includes one song performed by Gaucho himself.

While there are obviously sales expectations for these compilations, World Cup-themed releases are largely seen as a means to promote specific artists during a unique event.

The World Cup could certainly help raise the profile of new Sony BMG artist Chelo, for example, whose single “El Cha Cha” is the official track for Mexican network TV Azteca. Similarly, Univision Records is releasing “Arriba, Arriba!,” a compilation of cup-themed songs whose title track is performed by Univision Music Group artists Ana Bárbara, Pablo Montero, Mariana Seoane and Anais. The song, which is selling briskly as a ringtone, is the official World Cup theme for all Univision-owned networks and gets played multiple times on a daily basis.

"Certainly, we would love to sell some of those records, but it is also about imaging and amplifying their fan base," Univision Music Group president/CEO José Behar says, referring to Montero, Seoane, Ana Bárbara and Anais. “They will be able to access a fan base that would not normally be their core.”

Meanwhile, Warner Brazil is taking advantage of the World Cup by promoting “Eu Quero Ver Gol” (“I Want to See a Goal”), an old track by rock group O Rappa, recently rerecorded for its MTV acoustic album. The label will also release the compilation “Play Brazil.” Scheduled to street worldwide during the tournament, it optimistically banks on the Brazilian team’s World Cup performance.

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**In Latin America, One-Track Minds Forget About Music**

By LEILA COBO

A CHEL0 song will play on a Mexican TV network’s World Cup broadcasts.
As an artist, landing an “official” song—be it for the FIFA tournament as a whole or for a specific nation—is an obvious coup in terms of exposure. But World Cup status does not ensure a global hit. Sony BMG president of Continental Europe Maarten Steinkamp says, “When we did Anastacia’s ‘Boom’ for the (2002) tournament in South Korea and Japan, it just didn’t click at all,” he says. “Anastacia was not selling in Latin or Asian (markets), or in the U.S., so it was a very European-driven thing. For Anastacia’s profile in Europe it was fantastic, but it didn’t connect to the other regions.”

Of course, for plenty of other artists, the exposure yields marked results.

Steinkamp points out that Ricky Martin’s “La Copa De La Vida (The Cup of Life)” benefited greatly from being the 1998 World Cup’s official international theme. However, he adds that, prior to that tournament’s kickoff, the single was “well on its way to being a multimillion seller. People tend to forget that—it will be the same with ‘Hips Don’t Lie.’”

The Shakira/Wyclef Jean track has already topped Billboard’s European Hot 100 Singles sales chart, reaching No. 1 May 17, and has hit pole position in Germany, Holland and France. “Hips Don’t Lie” is a perfect fit for the World Cup, Steinkamp says, as Shakira comes from Latin America, “which is a big football region, and she’s huge in Europe—a big football region.”

The song was recently added to Shakira’s current Epic album “Oral Fixation Vol. 2.” However, the version on “Voices” (the 19 official FIFA compilation that Sony BMG will release internationally July 6) is a World Cup-customized “Bamboo” mix.

Steinkamp points out that, for acts like Shakira or Il Divo, the World Cup is not the only aspect of their campaign. “It’s great,” he adds, “it will give them a highlight—we can sell the compilation in the markets where that’s relevant, then we move on.”

Sony BMG is also releasing England’s own World Cup anthem—“World at Your Feet”—by Independiente/Sony BMG melodic rock band Embrace—as endorsed by the country’s ruling soccer body the Football Assn. The track will be released June 5, five days before the team’s opening game against Paraguay in Frankfurt.

—Paul Sexton

playlist

Five FIFA nations among FIFA’s largest territories chose an official World Cup anthem—sing ‘em loud and try not to slut.


3. Australia “Green and Gold”: Freedom of Thought (Universal). Released as a single May 27.

4. Mexico “Mexico! Mexico!” by RBD (EMI). Released as a download single May 2.


Additional reporting by Wolfgang Spahr in Germany and Mark Worland in Italy.
IN THE PRICING WARS, WHERE THE SAME SONG CAN SELL FOR THREE DOLLARS OR BE DOWNLOADED FOR FREE, WHAT IS MUSIC’S TRUE VALUE?

BY BRIAN GARRITY
ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN KELLY
The major labels tabled their fight with Apple Computer over pricing in digital music when they all signed new one-year licensing deals for the iTunes Music Store in April. But the industry debate over what a song should cost is anything but over. Even as 99 cents remains the most common price tag for tunes, efforts are afoot in the mobile music business and in other parts of the PC-based downloading market to test the limits of the iTunes-favored buck-a-track format. To understand just how slippery music pricing has become, look at the smorgasbord of prices for a hit tune like “Check On It” by Beyoncé. Among the cell phone carriers, Sprint is selling the track as an over-the-air download for $2.99, Verizon is selling it for $1.99 and upstart mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) Amp’d Mobile has it for 99 cents. Among iTunes’ competitors, Walmart.com has it for 88 cents, and subscribers to Real Networks’ Rhapsody can buy it for 79 cents. Add in black-market competitors and the pricing environment gets even more dynamic. Users of Russian sites like Allofmp3.com can download it for 10 cents. And, of course, it’s also widely available across leading peer-to-peer (P2P) networks and a handful of blogs for nothing. So what’s the song actually worth?

There’s no set answer, economists say. “When iTunes sets a price of 99 cents for a song, it comes out of thin air,” says Bill Green, a professor of economics at New York University’s Stern School of Business. “You’re dealing with a product that at the margin doesn’t cost anything to produce. So the price that you see in the market reflects almost entirely what people are willing to pay, rather than on the cost of supply.”

Harold Vogel, a veteran media analyst and leading entertainment economist, says that is very different from the way the music industry has priced its products historically. In the days of vinyl, cassettes and CDs, the labels set their wholesale rates at roughly double the price of their manufacturing costs and then the retailers attached an appropriate markup.

With no physical manufacturing costs to frame the pricing conversation, labels and retailers are now looking to a variety of new ways to assign value to songs. The following is a breakdown at the leading methods labels and retailers are exploring to price tracks.

**THE CD MODEL**

The tactic behind the most common pricing model, the 99 cent track, is at its heart a re-destruction of CD economics. Labels and retailers are backing into the price tag using a crude formula that goes like this: If the average album has 10 tracks and the average retail cost of a CD is $10, then the price of a song should be $1. Label and retailers are using a similar approach in pricing subscription content, setting rate structures and monthly subscriber fees that approximate an album purchase.

**PROS**

Every song for 99 cents is a simple basic message that consumers can understand and a formula that has worked particularly well for Apple in building a customer base for the iTunes Music Store. Likewise, at an average of $9.99 per month, PC-based subscription services are appealing to consumers who are used to paying that much for CDs.

**CONS**

Labels and retailers alike are constrained by the limitations of jamming old-world pricing economics into a new product. Most CDs don’t have just 10 songs, and they most certainly don’t typically cost $10. Between 1999 and 2003 the average list price of the CD grew from $13.65 to $15.06, before ratcheting down slightly in 2004 to $14.93, the RIAA reports. Also, an arbitrary static price of 99 cents isn’t necessarily indicative of what economists would call a song’s “surplus value”—the amount of value above 99 cents consumers are getting for the music. If the surplus value is considerably greater than 99 cents, labels and retailers could theoretically charge more for a song. The one-size-fits-all approach is also causing antitrust concerns. New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) have launched probes into digital pricing practices.

**THE VARIABLE MODEL**

In this controversial approach there isn’t a set price for a song. Instead a track’s price is determined by a number of factors including:

- **its timeliness, popularity, genre and the status of the artist releasing it.** Under this model the average track may cost 99 cents, but hit songs might cost $1.99, a song from a developing artist could cost 79 cents, and back catalog tracks might sell for 49 cents.
- **Labels and retailers can use pricing to maximize demand for music in various stages in its lifecycle.** Such a strategy could spur consumers to buy a lot more music from new acts and legacy artists, proponents say. Digital music leaders like Real Networks chairman Rob Glaser has been calling for lower pricing opportunities for years. The music industry already uses a similar approach with album prices in the digital and physical worlds, using introductory artist, front-line and catalog pricing tiers with out pushback from consumers.
- **Resistance to the model remains formidable.** Concerns persist among some labels and retailers—Apple most notably—that while variable pricing may work for a mature album business, the digital music market is still too new to be confusing consumers with different price tags for different songs. Critics of variable pricing say the strategy is merely aploy to gouge consumers interested in buying the most popular songs. Antitrust probes from Spitzer and the DOJ are also likely to have a chilling effect on the ability to roll out variable pricing strategies in the near term.

**THE CONVENIENCE MODEL**

The principal behind the price tags of mobile music products and portable subscription services. In this model the labels and the retailers determine pricing by platform. Consumers who want instant access to music or want the ability to walk around with any song they want have to pay a premium price for access.

**PROS**

Labels and retailers maximize the value they can get for an individual song by exploiting impulse purchases and heavy music users. Mobile music retailers, in particular, may be emerging as the new equivalent of the mall-based CD retailer that can charge higher prices based on location and the preponderance of impulse buyers. Over-the-air downloads are selling for as much as $3 a song. Convenience is also central to the portable subscription, where fees typically run around $15 per month. There are early signs that the strategy works, at least in the mobile space. Sprint announced in April that it has sold more than 2 million downloads at $2.50 apiece since introducing the service in October.

**CONS**

Labels and retailers may have a hard time drawing in meaningful numbers of consumers to buy such offerings. Given that PC-based stores are selling songs for 99 cents or less, and there are still plenty of P2P options to get the song for free, consumers may balk at the prospect of paying as much as triple the amount to download a track to a phone. Indeed, blogs, MySpace, iTunes-Pepsi bottle caps and free album previews via portals like AOL all are combining with file sharing to make the case to many consumers that music is something not necessarily paid for anymore. Critics contend sky-high prices for tracks will only push consumers away. Additionally, the mobile space is divided over where to price over-the-air downloads. Any service offering a dual-delivery solution—one track to the phone and another track to the PC—faces higher operating expenses, particularly on the publishing side where double mechanical royalties must be paid. But MVNOs like Amp’d Mobile are already targeting music pricing as a point of differentiation from bigger carriers by offering tracks at a price competitive with iTunes and other PC retailers. And research suggests that most carriers are charging too much for downloads.

**THE VALUE ADDED MODEL**

In this model, labels and retailers are charging a premium by moving its focus beyond the song itself, adding additional features and bundling other products along with a track. Examples of this trend include downloadable music videos, single and video download bundles called “singles” and new mobile bundles that may include a ringtone, wallpaper and a game or video along with the track.

Labels avoid having to place direct value on an individual song—a practice they have never been comfortable with. Labels and retailers also benefit from selling higher-margin product and providing additional benefit to the consumer.

**CONS**

Pushing bundled products down the throats of consumers in the form of bloated, overpriced CDs, plus the deletion of physical singles, is what drove the revolution in song downloading. The music industry needs to be careful to not repeat the sins of the past with new bundling. Given the rate of P2P file sharing and the amount of digital tracks sold last year, consumers are interested in songs first and foremost. The music industry needs to be careful to not force additional products and features on fans simply in the name of higher margins.

**THE VIEW**

**Wither the cost of a song? The industry finds itself at a crossroads when it comes to pricing music: embrace commoditization, or stress value?** Billboard samples the leading perspectives in the debate.

**THE DISCOUNTERS**

The industry may be clamoring for a variable price structure so it can price front-line hits at a premium, but market forces are aligned against them. Harold Vogel, president of Vogel Capital Management, says a big challenge in driving prices up is supply and demand. Supply is indefinitely expandable in the digital era, while demand is often limited to a short window of time.

**THE APPRECIATORS**

Despite all the pressure for lower prices driven by CD burning, peer-to-peer piracy and more, some economists and industry analysts continue to maintain efforts need to be made to position music as a higher-value product. “Music’s status can be changed,” says Barry Sosnick, president of research firm Earful, “by altering its marketing mix—price, product, promotion and distribution. Of these variables, a lower price would be the least effective, and possibly detrimental to sales.”

**THE STABILIZERS**

It may not be perfect, but the industry has already found its baseline price for a song: 99 cents. More than 352 million digital tracks were sold last year, according to Nielsen SoundScan.
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A Family Affair

Venues Say 'Open Sesame' To Dora, Barney, Wiggles And More

BY KEN TUCKER

ike the young audience they target, tours on the family circuit are growing by leaps and bounds. Since family tour tickets are generally priced lower than ducats for music concerts, in the $15-$30 range, they may never match their big brothers on the music circuit. But promoters and venues agree that there's always a place on their calendars for such events.

"Family shows are a huge part of our business," Global Spectrum COO John Page says. Global Spectrum owns and operates the Wachovia Center and the Wachovia Spectrum in Philadelphia, plus 55 other facilities nationwide.

In 2005, the top-grossing family show, as reported to Billboard Boxscore, was Feld Entertainment's Disney on Ice. The tour grossed more than $37.1 million and nearly 2 million people attended.

HIT Entertainment's The Wiggles: Sailing Around the World did more than $9.7 million in gross sales last year, while drawing more than 332,000 fans for 63 dates.

Live Nation/Nickelodeon's production of Dora the Explorer drew nearly 282,000 kids and their families last year and brought in more than $9 million. Meanwhile, Vince Egan Enterprises' four Sesame Street Live tours combined for a $7 million gross and played to nearly 450,000 people, according to Boxscore.

Page believes that the kids touring market continues to expand. "It's definitely growing," he says. "With the advent of cable—with Disney Channel and Nickelodeon—there is a huge demand for kids to see their...continued on >>p26
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There are three Sesame Street Live shows touring the United States, plus one on the road internationally. In 2005, VEE added Care Bears Live, which has turned out to be another successful brand. Meanwhile, Dragon Tales Live just wrapped its fourth season on the road, hitting roughly 50 cities.

But Sesame Street Live remains the standard bearer. The newest show, Super Grover! Ready for Action is the first in this year after hitting arenas and theaters, while Out of This World will play approximately 75% of its shows in theaters. In all, the Sesame Street shows will do 220 dates in 2006.

Interestingly, the VEE formula has shows move from larger markets to progressively smaller markets over a several year period. Shows start in bigger venues and cycle down as they are replaced by newer versions. Eventually the oldest show—this year it's 1-2-3 Imagine!—moves to the international market.

Meanwhile, the Wiggles, Barney, Dora (plus her cousin Diego) and VeggieTales, a Christian-themed show, among others, continue to attract audiences from coast to coast.

HIT's Barney Live, which didn't go out last year, has performed in more than 30 cities on the first leg of the Let's Go Tour since January. It's the fourth tour for the beloved purple dinosaur, who first hit the road 10 years ago.

While not a traditional arena or theater vehicle, another HIT property, Thomas the Tank Engine, will attract more than 1 million visitors this year, according to the company. A Day Out With Thomas, now in its 11th year, is an experiential program and will make more than 40 stops at local scenic railroad sites and museums in 2006, with a mix of train rides, activities, character appearances and music.

The Wiggles, celebrating 15 years together, started in their homeland of Australia and came to the United States in 1998. After signing with Lyric Studios, which later became HIT, the band began opening shows for Barney. Kids and parents quickly caught on, and soon the group was headlining its own shows.

The band sets aside three months for U.S. touring each year—April, August and November. During that time, the Wiggles will hit 60 markets, doing as many as 150 shows.

Earlier this year, the Wiggles left their longtime home at HIT to open their own U.S. touring office, although they remain with the company for DVD and CD distribution.

"It's been fantastic," Sloan Coleman, VP of live events for the Wiggles USA, says of the tour. "It's done just as well as it did last year and the year before. We're right on the mark."

Coleman, who left HIT with the Wiggles, says the band will launch a new tour, Wiggle Dancing, in August.

In addition, the Wiggles' alter ego Dorothy the Dinosaur will come to the States this year with Dorothy's Dance Party, which will hit smaller markets and venues (1,500-2,000 seats). It will also have a lower ticket price—generally in the $7-$22 range—than other kids shows. That tour, which will come ashore in June and again from October to December, is designed to give kids in alternate markets "the Wiggles experience," Coleman says, noting that with a 12-week U.S. touring schedule, "the Wiggles can't be everywhere."

Meanwhile, Big Idea's VeggieTales Rockin' Tour Live, which partnered with AEG Live this year, just finished a 52-market run that started in March and performed about 100 shows. The tour's will go out again after Thanksgiving for a 20-date Christmas tour.

The Christian-themed show took a different route this year, after hitting arenas and theaters last year—it focused on large churches. "There are so many mega-churches in the United States that we just decided to partner with the churches that have supported us all these years," says Ron Smith, who serves as executive producer for the show. "It was very successful for us."

While the return to churches as venues did provide cost savings, Smith says there were challenges. "We didn't have the same stage every day," he points out. "It was literally different every single day."

Like other companies that have a stake in video and music sales, Smith says that tourism is measured by more than just ticket sales—it means exposure for the franchise. "For us, just having this [tour] out there is important," he says. "I'm looking at numbers a little different than someone else might."
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Taking The Lead
In-House Marketing Adds Major Value To Arena Shows

BY RAY WADDELL

With competition among venues more fierce than ever, the more marketing muscle an arena can provide, the better.

In-house arena marketing teams are no longer the stepchildren of the concert promotion world. In today’s tight concert business, the arena’s in-house marketing staff often takes the lead.

At the same time, the efficiency and economy of digital marketing are giving arenas—with their already valuable databases—more clout than ever.

Digital marketing is “critical!” for the U.S. Airways Center in Phoenix, according to Paige Peterson, president/GM of sports and entertainment services, which oversees the arena, as well as downtown Phoenix venues Chase Field and the Dodge Theatre.

“Digital marketing is redefining the way we sell tickets,” says Bob Schwartz, VP of marketing for Global Spectrum, the Philadelphia-based facility management firm.

“The ease in which we can serve our consumers” is the driving factor of e-marketing, he adds. “If you look at our Web site, for example, and click on an event, you will more readily put into situation of up-sale and information, whether it’s for suites, food, club boxes, parking or whatever. All of these consumer conveniences are right at your fingertips, so the consumer can immediately make their choice with maximum ease.”

Much of the digital marketing success of U.S. Airways Center comes via Downtown Live (downtownlive.net), a synergetic marketing effort among the arena, Chase Field and Dodge Theatre.

Downtown Live makes use of the “power of three,” Peterson says. “The beauty of it is these people at Downtown Live are members, this is an opt-in service we provide to those interested in sports and entertainment,” he points out. “These are active members, we know what they’re interested in and what they’d be interested in buying. It’s very easy to segment the data and do specific e-mail marketing campaigns. And it’s also a great means to keep active in our dialogue with the buying patrons.”

As a result, Peterson says an average of 35% of concert tickets for U.S. Airways Center are sold through the Downtown Live program. “The percentage sold via the Internet is much greater, but our marketing efforts with Downtown Live have been very successful,” he says.

Schwartz says that often more than half of Global’s ticket sales for family shows and concerts comes as a result of Internet marketing, with consumers both finding out about and purchasing tickets electronically. For the Global-run Wachovia Center in Philadelphia, a presale e-blast for two Bon Jovi shows sold more than 12,000 tickets and Paul McCartney’s presale e-blast sold 5,000 tickets.

Schwartz says Global marketers can focus their digital-marketing efforts via Smart DM, Global Comcast’s customer relations management resource.

“Ticketmaster provides the data, and Smart DM helps us define our audience so we can intelligently utilize database marketing,” he says.

“For example, we have Gretchen Wilson coming in the fall. In the summer, we have shows by Kenny Chesney and Tim McGraw/Faith Hill. We will take the databases from both of those shows and send out an e-mail blast prior to tickets going on sale for Gretchen Wilson. That doesn’t cost us any money, and it’s minimal effort to get this out to tens of thousands of consumers who are our target audience.”

When the Wachovia Center promoted last winter’s Motley Crue concert in-house, the Smart DM list for similar rock shows led to 6,000 tickets sold during the presale.

“There’s almost a new vocabulary emanating from all this,” Schwartz says. “There was never such an activity as a presale a few years back. Now a presale dictates the momentum of a show. You can tell just from an e-mail blast if you’re going to need to do more advertising, if you need another e-mail blast or even if you can pull back on advertising because your tickets went off so well.”

Peterson agrees. “Everybody’s seeing how important the Internet is and what an effective tool e-marketing is to be in touch with consumers and our customers,” he says. “That’s the nature of the service industry. If you don’t know what they want, then you’re not really going to provide the best service you can.”

Agents and promoters are very much taking notice of what the arenas can offer in terms of marketing. “In-house marketing from the arena is a crucial and necessary value add this day and age,” says Ken Frasnaglich, agent for 3 Doors Down, adding that some arenas—but not all—are being proactive in offering in-house marketing. “Sometimes, they need to be prodded.”

Promoter Rick Franks, president of Live Nation Detroit, says arenas are becoming more proactive in offering marketing to a date. “Any time they can add value to an event it is positive; everyone is welcome to help try and sell the tickets,” Franks says. “But the number of music acts that can play an arena is getting smaller yearly.”

Franks says what the arena can offer in terms of marketing is a factor sometimes as to whether a particular arena gets a date. “But it’s still just one of 15 factors that go into touring decisions,” he adds.

Venues are quick to let promoters and agents know what they have to offer.

“When we’re pursuing any show, we inform them about what all of our marketing efforts will include,” Peterson says. “With the experience we’ve had at U.S. Airways Arena, I think the promoters are more than comfortable and are in fact supportive of our efforts. We view every show as a partnership. It’s a partnership with the promoter and the artist, and we’re all on the same team trying to accomplish the same thing: a successful campaign that does everything to help the artist get the building filled and provide the best experience we can.”
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Zombies Ready To Attack The States
Founder Rod Argent Resurrects Classic Band

The Zombies are very much alive. Rod Argent, founder of the seminal British rock group, will follow up a summer run as a member of Ringo Starr’s All-Starr Band with a U.S. tour by the Zombies.

"I never wanted to reform the Zombies," Argent says, adding that the reunion had to include "doing some new stuff as well. It sounds like a fresh new band with an immense amount of energy, [plus] we’re really happy to do all of the old stuff. It’s a blast to do those songs live.”

When Argent’s post-Zombies group Argent (“Hold Your Head Up”) split in 1975, he says, "I thought at the time that my musical career was going to go in a different direction, [like] writing for films and television, particularly here in England.

Instead, Argent turned to producing other artists’ albums, including Nanci Griffith’s seminal “Late Night Grande Hotel.”

“I produced several million-selling albums from 1987 to about 1999,” he says. "It was nothing else but a producer, and I’m still doing that. But it got to the point where I was sick of doing it again.”

A chance meeting with original Zombies singer Colin Blunstone revived their creative partnership. Argent was playing a charity gig, and Blunstone happened to be in the audience.

"He got up just on the spur of the moment and sang ‘She’s Not There’ and ‘Time of the Season’ with me, and it honestly felt as if we’d just been together two weeks before rather than God knows how many years ago," Argent recalls. "We suddenly found ourselves doing a few concerts together just for a bounce, and, in fact, that somehow turned into four tours of America. We just got back from a tour of the Philippines, we’ve toured in Europe. We just are all over the place.”

Since then, Blunstone and Argent have recorded two studio albums and just released “Live at Blytham Theatre” on Rhino Records, and Argent says he’s "having a ball" playing live.

"In fact, after Ringo’s tour, Colin and me and the Zombies—as we’ve reintroduced the name—will be touring again in the States and Canada starting at the end of August.

Joining Argent and Starr on the All-Starr Band tour will be Sheila E, Richard Marx, Biny Squier, Edgar Winter and Mark Rivera.

"It’s a very exciting idea for me to do this tour and play with a great bunch of musicians," Argent says. "A friend of mine, Paul Carrack, did one of Ringo’s tours recently, and when the idea came up he said to me, ‘This is such a great experience, you have to drop everything and do it.’"

Argent says Starr is a big influence for him as a songwriter.

“When the Beatles first came out in England, the groove that Ringo had was revolutionary at the time. He didn’t sound like any other drummer,” Argent says. "The Zombies first record, ‘She’s Not There,’ was one of the early songs I’d written. That idea of starting the song with a sort of broken rhythm very much came out of listening to Ringo and the way he had patterns on the beginnings of verses. The idea of playing with him after all these years is just fantastic.”

THE ZOMBIES’ COLIN BLUNSTONE and ROD ARGENT, inset, will tour once Argent, below, ends a stint with Ringo Starr.
Brand New Nelly

Urban Sound, Urban Look; Furtado Unveils 'Loose'

Chalk it up to corporate merger, limited promotion or maybe just a record that was too different from her first—whatever the reason—Nelly Furtado's last record tanked.

Most artists would love to sell 400,000 copies of a record in the United States, as Furtado did on her second release, "Folklore" (DreamWorks), which hit stores in November 2003. But it was a disappointment compared with the sales of her 2000 debut, "Whoa Nelly" (DreamWorks), which moved 2.4 million, according to Nielsen SoundScan, and featured the hit song "I'm Like a Bird." In part, the success of "Folklore" was affected by something out of Furtado's control—the sale and merger of DreamWorks Records to Universal Music Group. After the process was complete, she found herself on the Geffen Records roster—a label very enthusiastic about her new record, "Loose," due June 20.

"We've been working on the marketing plan since late '05, and we've focused well in advance on Nelly and what we were going to be doing from now up through Christmas," says Paul Kremen, head of marketing at Geffen. "We have a very strong record, and it's really just about getting people to hear it."

The first single in the United States, the urban-based "Promiscuous," produced by hip-hop uber-producer Timbaland, is making an impact on radio, retail and the digital world.

For the week ending May 25, the single's third week at radio, it charted in eight of the top 10 mainstream top 40 markets and at No. 9 on both The Billboard Hot 100 and Pop 100 Airplay charts. At Apple's iTunes Music Store, "Promiscuous" is the most downloaded song at press time.

She's one of those artists that bridges the gaps between urban and rock music; she's very pop-oriented, yet has a rhythmic feel," says Tracy Austin, PD of KRBK Houston, which is spinning "Promiscuous." "And we ran out of Gwen Stefani to play, and I think this will pick up where that left off."

"Promiscuous" and its video feature Furtado with a "new" urban sound and sexier image, something that isn't sitting well with all her fans. Much has been written, especially in the blogosphere, about Furtado selling out to a more accessible sound and a video that's being criticized for hitting the lowest common denominator.

"The video is indicative of the vibe we wanted to create with the song. It's a club track, and we took the opportunity to make a club video," says Chris Smith, Furtado's manager.

The sound on "Loose" was a direction Furtado says she long planned. "I knew this record would have to explore my urban sound a little more because I had been promising the fans that for a long time." Smith points to the urban vibe on Furtado's debut. "The urban component on this record is more than "Folklore," but not any more than it necessarily was on the first album. It's more of a grown-up first album and a natural evolution from the first," he says.

According to the artist and her manager, Furtado's urban sound was strongly supported from the highest of levels at her record label group: Interscope Geffen A&M Chairman Jimmy Iovine. In recent years, Interscope has been most successful with such urban artists as Eminem and 50 Cent, and artists with an urban influence, like Gwen Stefani.

"Jimmy originally suggested me and Timbaland should work together," Furtado says. "He said, 'You guys made a promise years ago and never delivered on it.' He gives you the straight goods, and as an artist that's valuable. He really pushed me and helped push my boundaries."

The sound of "Loose" took direction after Furtado took Iovine's suggestion and met with Timbaland in Miami last year during a recording session that was expected to produce two songs. But drawing inspiration from the collaboration with Timbaland, the city and the other artists recording at the Hit Factory studio, Furtado emerged with 10 tracks, which make up the bulk of the new record.

"When you're recording at the Hit Factory in Miami, it's extremely exhilarating," Furtado says. "Tim's in one studio, Scott Storch in another, Cash Money and Lil Wayne upstairs. It was really stimulating."

Whatever the driving force behind Furtado's sound on this record, the result is widely anticipated. "Right from the beginning, from hearing the single, expectations were up," says Carl Mello, buyer for New England's Newbury Comics chain. "And when you have the Gwen Stefani album completely over, it's a good time to step in."
Better The Devil You Know

Where's King Diamond when we need him?
The music industry, which many people have accused of being evil—if not downright "devilish," as Michael Jackson called former Sony head Tommy Motola several years ago—has an unprecedented opportunity. June 6 will be the first album release date in history that correlates numerically with the Mark of the Beast: 666.

Since it's good enough for the marketing campaign for the remake of "The Omen"—Los Angeles is blanketed with black billboards with the date 6/6/06 on them—we decided to take a very tongue-in-cheek look at ways the music community could commemorate the day. We imagine it as a global Halloween of sorts, only with better special effects and plenty of tricks but no treats, except for devil's food cake.

- A potential parlor game: Come up with a list of artists and executives who may have sold their souls to the devil for their success. If legendary bluesman Robert Johnson does not top your list, immediately quit playing, study a little musical mythology and then hightail it to a record store for God's sake.

"American Idol" contestants are not eligible. For the bonus round, ask which guitar wiz was born on June 6, 1960. (The answer: Steve Vai.)

- All the Christians and gospel acts in the world should put out records June 6 to combat that day's evil forces. How about a Celebrity Death Match between the members of Mighty Clouds of Joy and Decide? Among the few gospel albums coming out June 6 are "God's Going to Be With You Always" from the Rev. Melvin Buf ford, "The Struggle Is Over" from Youth for Christ, "Ultimate Praise" from Breath of God and an album that we would like to carry with us every day to shield us from garden-variety evil: "Gospel Legends Vol. 1: The Soul Stirrers." If that CD won't cast off all the 666, beautes, nothing can.

No mainstream superstars are releasing albums that day. The biggest names we could come up with were AFI, Zero 7, Jean Jett, Elvis Costello/Allen Toussaint, Yung Joc and Katie Melua.

Death metal band Cradle of Filth intended to put out its new Roadrunner record June 6, but, according to a label rep, "the production of the album came to a screeching halt because Dani Filth had throat problems." Dani, maybe God is trying to tell you something. Don't make him send locusts to get your attention.

- It may be a sign of the apocalypse that "Karaoke to the Music of Johnny Cash: I Wanna Be Like Cash" is out June 6. Imagine thousands of drunks warbling "A Boy Named Sue" as they wobble in karaoke bars across the country at the same time. See what we mean?

- Radio Free Satan is, understandably, very excited about the day, which must be like Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving and the Super Bowl all rolled into one for the Internet webcaster. RFS is throwing "Satan's Rockin' 666 Eve" June 5 in Los Angeles, a concert featuring Krell and Living Deadgirl of Head- ship Pinups, among others. Attendees can win free T-shirts and porn. The next day, RFS will release its sixth-anniversary compilation album.

We wonder if Dick Clark knows that RFS Website features his likeness with devil's horns and 666 on his forehead?


- And as for King Diamond, the alleged Satan worshipper will be playing in Essen, Germany, June 6. We hear good seats are still available.

Shance Is First Project For Play:Tyme

Fledging Label Leveraging Album To Attract Investors And Grow Roster, Staff

Before and after Sylvia Rhone's long- rumored chief exec of Def Jam at Motown Universal was officially announced, tongues wagged over how soon Richard Nash would rejoin his former Elektra boss. But the ex-senior VP of urban promotion had something else in mind. "I surprised a lot of people by not coming back into a major-label situation," Nash says. He logged nine years with Elektra before it merged with Atlantic two years ago. "But the time was right to do something for ourselves."

"Ourself" now includes Nash along with fellow Elektra promotion alum Mike Kelly. The "something" is the pair's self-funded, New York-based label Play:Tyme Entertainment. The 14-month-old company released its first Alternative Distribution Alliance distributed project in February, R&B singer Shance's "Every Woman Dreams." In the midst of negotiating with two more R&B acts, Nash and Kelly are molding Play:Tyme into a full-service label. The roster includes two rock acts—just-signed Vaeda (due this summer) and Kunek—plus pop/rock group Lil' Mojo. There are also plans to eventually segue into rap/hip-hop.

Right now, the plan is to build the label's base via the Shance and Vaeda projects and thereby attract investors. The Play:Tyme principals are investigating Wall Street routes. "We have one solid option," CEO Nash says, declining to reveal more details. "But there are a couple of other options we're also trying to lock down."

Once more funding is raised, Nash and president Kelly plan another staff hire from the R&B A&R sector. Rounding out the Play:Tyme team so far are CFO Annette Gowan (an ex-Wall Street executive) and A&R chief Chris Howard (formerly of Interscope).

Some might question the strategy of leading with a veteran adult artist who has not released an album in five years. Shance, whose Imajah Records operates as a joint venture with Play:Tyme, is best-known for her 1991 No. 1 R&B/No. 2 pop hit, "I Love Your Smile."

To date, Shance's album has sold a modest 20,000 units, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Lead single "Every Woman Dreams" peaked at No. 62 on the Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs chart and No. 17 on the Adult R&B chart. Second single "Take Care of U" also hit No. 15 on the latter chart and is No. 85 on Hot R&B/Hip-Hop Songs. Both singles benefited from video support, an uncommon scenario for many indie projects.

Acknowledging that competing against bigger label fish and netting radio airplay are ongoing challenges, Nash and Kelly remain jazzed by what has transpired so far.

"We still have a lot of work to do," Nash admits. "But we're not in panic mode to make quarterly numbers. We can take more time to make sure the artist is given a good shot."

Kelly, a former radio programmer, adds, "We still have the passion and drive for this business. Now, it's on our own terms."

In five years, Nash wants Play:Tyme to be on par with a Wind-up, Koch or TVT. No mean feat, considering the industry's tough environment.

"It's everyone for themselves," Nash declares. "As for us, we're dug in this foxhole, and we aren't getting out."
Rocky Mountain Hip-Hop High

The next hip-hop hot spot is percolating "in the middle of nowhere."

Or Colorado, as Procussions member Mr. J Meireiros feels most people view it.

Given the state's conservative stance, rap would appear to be an unlikely byproduct. But the Colorado Spring-nurtured Procussions—as well as other independent acts in the Denver/Boulder area—are determined to make the music industry aware of the brewing hip-hop scene on tap in Colorado. Even if—as Procussions and Deux Process did—they have to leave the state to do so.

Other Denver-area rappers making noise include MC D.O., recently crowned the Best Voice of Denver's Underground by Boulder Weekly magazine. Two years ago, he and his former act, Ground Zero Movement, joined rock group the Fray as winners of Westword magazine's annual local music awards. The Fray has since signed with Epic.

Other area rappers plying their trade include Black Pegasus, Kingdom, Lost Gems, Don Bias and Deuce Mob—best-known for its Thump Records release, "Going Solo," in 1996. Now back in Denver after a stint in Los Angeles, Deuce Mob is readying a new album with Houston's Chingo Bling and other guests on its own Concrete Poetry label.

National record labels are taking notice. Rawkus Records marked its relaunch with the May 30 release of the Procussions' album, "S Sparrows for 2 Cents." Established in 1996, Rawkus built its reputation on a series of critically acclaimed rap albums by Talib Kweli, Mos Def and Hi-Tek, among others. The label, which temporarily closed in 2004 when Geffen/Universal did not renew its joint-venture agreement, is now distributed by Sony BMG's independent distribution arm, RED.


However, Deux Process and the Procussions only got signed after they relocated to L.A. a few years ago. Having exhausted Colorado's less-extensive circuit of radio, open-mic and club gigs, both groups felt the only recourse was to move to a larger market—for their careers' sake as well as that of other area hip-hop acts.

"After four or five years, we had great local buzz," Meireiros says. "But no one from the music industry was trying to holler at us. We figured if they won't come to us, we'll come to them."

"We'd done everything there to solidify our careers," Deux Process member Vise Versa (aka Mike Landers) adds. "Everywhere we turned, doors were shut in our faces. We thought if we could bring the national scope on us outside the state, that would help the scene here.

Vise Versa and bandmates Chief Nek (born Alan Johnson) and DJ Shawn Dub are on the first leg of a promotional tour that swings through the Northwest and as far down as Jacksonville, Fla. The group will kick off a second national sweep in July.

Procussions members Meireiros, Rex and Stro started the Storm Tour—featuring Ayezalone, Diverse and others—May 30. The tour runs through July 16.

While others have opted to leave Colorado, local radio is supporting some of the rappers. KQKS Denver spun Deux Process' "Take the Dance" in recent weeks. KMGG Denver has played "This Is the Way," the first single from Deuce Mob's new album, 65 times in the last several weeks, according to Nielsen BDS. The song has also received 15 spins on KDAY Los Angeles.

In fact, D.O. says he has stayed "because I want to help finish building the scene that's been started here. I'm proud the Fray is taking off, but it's frustrating. When do the powers that be here start nurturing the hip-hop artists as well? Denver is a pot ready to explode."

Denver Area Rappers About To Peak
A Who's Who in Colorado's Brewing Hip-Hop Scene

**DEUX PROCESS**
**ALBUM:** "In Deux Time"
**LABEL:** Avatar Records, distributed by Fontana/Universal
**THE SOUND:** Melodic, intelligent, true school rap à la A Tribe Called Quest
**REASON TO BELIEVE:** Conquering the national college charts with first single "Take the Dance"

**THE PROCUSSIONS**
**ALBUM:** "5 Sparrows for 2 Cents"
**LABEL:** Rawkus, distributed through RED
**THE SOUND:** Socially conscious, percussion-driven rap with rock and soul influences
**REASON TO BELIEVE:** Pioneering label Rawkus (Talib Kweli, Mos Def) relaunches with this group

**D.O. THE FABULOUS DRIFTER**
**ALBUM:** "Industry Guys" (due July 4)
**LABEL:** 5 Points Plan Recordings (no national distribution)
**THE SOUND:** Rugged, street-conscious rap with sharp rhymes
**REASON TO BELIEVE:** Crowned Best Voice of Denver's Underground by Boulder Weekly magazine

**DEUCE MOB**
**ALBUM:** Untitled (due this summer)
**LABEL:** Concrete Poetry Records (no national distribution)
**THE SOUND:** Latino group known for its hardcore rap
**REASON TO BELIEVE:** One of the first Denver rap acts to secure a national deal when it signed with Thump Records and released "Going Solo" in 1996

JUNE 10, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 33
Latin Notas

LEILA COBO lcobo@billboard.com

LATIN SHIPMENTS DOWN IN Q1
Radio Programming, Gas Prices And More Yield 18% Drop

After five years at Billboard, I have grown accustomed to the labels predicting doom and gloom. No matter how well the market is doing, someone always says, “It’s tough out there.”

Now, according to RIAA first-quarter Latin numbers obtained by Billboard (the RIAA does not make these public), these fears are being validated.

Shipments for first-quarter 2006 are down compared with the same period last year. This marks the first two years in which Latin shipments—defined as music that is at least 51% in Spanish—declined, according to the RIAA.

What is alarming is not the drop itself, but its size: Shipments, after returns, numbered 12.9 million units from January to March 2006, down 18% from the 15.8 million units registered for the same time frame in 2005.

Many in the industry attribute the drop in shipments (and, ergo, in sales) in part to rising gasoline prices and immigration crackdowns, which have made many Latin buyers fearful of going shopping.

This partly explains the smaller shipments. And it most certainly explains what many are predicting will be higher returns for the next quarter, fueled by lower sales in April, the month of the immigration protests.

But several retailers point to the overwhelming number of reggaetón compilations from 2005 that are now being returned.

Reggaetón shipments were a disappointment. The subgenre falls under the RIAA’s newly created “urban” Latin classification, formed, in part, in response to the increasing amount of reggaetón product. But net shipments of “urban” music, which also includes hip-hop and rap, were only 872,000 units for the first three months of 2006, after returns, which totaled a high 42%.

All told, Latin urban music— as tallied by the RIAA— accounted for only 6.7% of all shipments for the first three months of the year, falling behind even tropical music.

I politely beg to differ, however, from those who say that this is an indication of the imminent decline of reggaetón as a whole.

Commercially speaking, this is still a young genre that lacks a deep catalog. The bulk of its sales comes from fewer artists, other compilations, and new acts again and again, consumer interest finally dips.

This year will see the release of new studio albums by the biggest names in reggaetón, among them Daddy Yankee, Tego Calderón, Hector El Father and Don Omar, whose “King of Kings” debuts this issue at No. 1 on Top Latin Albums and No. 7 on The Billboard 200—something few Latin acts at all accomplish. This year, not last, will really test the staying power of the genre.

Beyond reggaetón, however, blame on poor sales can at least partly be attributed—as usual—to radio, which is playing either oldies or only a limited number of new tracks and acts.

However, I see hope. Regional Mexican music, the perennial savior of this market (despite high returns this time around), is developing new acts in the minima de la sierra subgenre; tropical music is having little hic-cups with success with acts like Andy Andy, Michael Stuart and Andy Montañez (with a reggaetón/salsa album). And pop, more than any other genre, is really seeing a new wave of talent with full-label backing (Camila, Jeremías, Eduardo Cruz and Anais, to name a few).

My prediction? Before year’s end, Latin pop radio will finally have to capitulate to these new sounds, opening its airwaves to new acts as it did with reggaetón two years ago.

Then, sales may spike again.

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Nashville Scene

PHYLIS STARK pstark@billboard.com

Digging Into The Past For Future Hits
Lyric Street’s Doug Howard Hears Hits In Songs That Have Been Around

Doug Howard believes in second chances. And with good reason.

During the last 15 months, Lyric Street Records, where Howard is senior VP of A&R, has landed three No. 1 hits with songs that had previously been recorded by other artists. Such songs are usually shunned by A&R types, often on the belief that if they weren’t good enough to be singles the first time around, no second chance is warranted.

But Howard says there are plenty of reasons an older song may not have reached its full potential. The artist or producer, for instance, may not have really nailed the song in the recording. And even if the song was single-worthy, with tracks lasting as much as half a year at radio, labels rarely have time to get to all the potential hits on a CD.

Sometimes, he says, it’s just a matter of timing, such as when the label decides the act needs to release an up-tempo single in favor of the potential hit ballad or vice versa. And occasionally, an act is dropped by its label before all the potential singles can be gotten to.

For all these reasons, Howard is now actively soliciting the best of such songs for his acts. In a recent pitch sheet distributed to Music Row publishers and writers, Howard, who is also senior VP/GM of Disney Music Publishing’s Nashville office, asked to hear “one or two killer songs that have been cut, but never gotten released as a single.”

He stresses that he only wants songs “the publisher truly believes are overlooked hits.”

As a publisher himself, Howard says, he and his writers have always found it “extremely frustrating when a great song would get recorded and then, for whatever reason, if it is not released as a single other artists are reluctant to take a shot with it.”

His confidence in such material has been bolstered by three recent hits. Rascal Flatts’ “Bless the Broken Road,” which spent five weeks at No. 1, was previously cut by the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Melodie Crittendon, Geoff Moore, Bob Carpenter and by its co-writer, Marcus Hummon.

Rascal Flatts’ “What Hurts the Most,” a four-week No. 1, was cut by Mark Wills and also tracked by Faith Hill, although it never made it onto one of her albums.

Josh Gracin’s “Nothin’ to Lose,” a No. 1 last year, was previously recorded by former Mercury artist Marciel.

A non-Lyric Street example is “Change the World.” First cut by Wynonna but not released as a single, it later became a Grammy Award-winning hit for Eric Clapton.

Those hits, Howard says, “serve to remind me of the treasure trove that exists.”

“Most publishers are in a position, good or bad, of having to be current with what they’re pitching,” Howard says. “A lot of times (they) don’t have the time to go through back catalogs. All I’m saying is just because a song wasn’t picked as a single, somebody at some point believed in this song enough to cut it.” Thus, it may be worth another listen.

Right now, Howard has on his desk the entire back catalog of writer Bob McDill, which he’s going through track by track looking for unmined gold. Among the dozens of songs that McDill is well-known for writing are “Gone Country,” “Amanda,” “Don’t Close Your Eyes” and “She Don’t Know She’s Beautiful.”

At the same time, Howard is trying to make albums so chock-full of A-sides that in the future other artists might scour those CDs for potential singles. As an example of a tune that was never released as a single simply due to timing, Howard cites “Where You Are” from Rascal Flatts’ last album, “Feels Like Today.” He predicts the tune “will end up as a big hit single if someone has the courage to take a shot with it.”

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Prodigal Son Returns
Kenny Bishop Records Southern Gospel Set

Kenny Bishop's two worlds collided May 17 at the governor's mansion in Kentucky, when politicians and music industry folk mingled at the launch party for his Daywind Records' solo debut.

Bishop, who works with Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher, returns to Southern gospel music with an impressive self-titled set. Produced by Woody Wright, the album is the definitive collection on grace, mercy and redemption. What makes it most powerful is that it's being delivered by one of Christian music's prodigal sons.

For nearly 20 years, Bishop performed with his father, Kenneth, and brother, Mark, in the award-winning trio the Bishop Boys. They were at the peak of their career with such hits as "You Can't Ask Too Much of My God" when Bishop had an affair and went through a divorce. In the rock or hip-hop community such a misstep would be of little concern, but in Christian music it can end a career, which is what happened to Bishop. His father retired, and his brother continued as a solo artist.

Bishop had long been involved in Kentucky politics, so when then-congressman Fletcher began making a bid for the governor's office, he recruited Bishop for his campaign. For the past several years, Bishop has worked with Fletcher, and is currently executive director of the governor's mansion.

Though his days in gospel music appeared to be behind him, the governor and other friends encouraged him to resume singing. Bishop admits it was not an easy decision.

"There are some times when I lay down at the end of the day and say, 'Do I really want to do this?'" he admits. "When we first came off the road, I felt this real sense of relief. I didn't have to live up to this standard that everybody expected me to live up to, and it wasn't talking about having a license to go out and do things I shouldn't do. I'm just saying I didn't have to live up to the expectations of always being happy, always being successful, always having it all together, always having an answer, always being spiritual..."

"I wasn't always the person people saw on the stage singing. I wasn't the exact opposite either, but I wasn't as consumed by my faith as it appeared."

Bishop says he went through a rebellious phase, but it ended in a Lexington, record community, and Daywind Music Group VP Norman Holland signed him to a deal. Bishop also signed a deal with the Tana Ionon Agency and is doing concerts again on weekends. His first single, "The Prodigal's Dad," is gaining steam at Southern gospel radio.

Bishop says several things factored into his decision to return. "For all those people who continued to write to me, call me, send me e-mails and say, 'I'm praying for you. I'm still lifting you up and still calling your name to God,' I wanted them to know that their prayers worked. There was also a sense of pride in me that I felt when politicians and music industry folk mingled at the launch party for my Daywind Records' solo debut."

I feel like now that I am more capable of singing and sharing and ministering from my heart than I've ever been.

—KENNY BISHOP

Kenny Bishop performed songs from his self-titled Daywind Records project during a reception at Kentucky Gov. ERNIE FLETCHER's home. Pictured, from left, Daywind Music Group president ED LEONARD, Fletcher, Bishop, Billboard's Christian music correspondent DEBORAH EVANS PRICE, Daywind VP NORMAN HOLLAND and the governor's wife GLENNNA FLETCHER.

MADREPO
California band Maderepoe evokes extreme reactions in people, much to vocalist Kinski Gallo's delight. For every avid fan, Gallo says there are "people that just want to kill us." The band's genre-hopping music keeps the listener guessing. One moment, the foursome revs up heavy rock guitars for "Pictures," and in the next, it delves into the sunny, Violent Femmes-inflected pop of "The Part of Me You've Thrown Away." The band even goes bilingual on Spanish gem "Anímame (The Blues Armada)." All can be found on "Overblown," which JVC/Imperial Records is distributing in Japan, and Universal will handle for Scandinavia and Iceland. The band released the album May 23, but it is still trying to hammer out a distribution deal for the United States. Maderepoe will tour the United States and Scandinavia this summer.

Contact: Kelly MacGuinn, MAD Ink PR, 818-766-5612

—Christa Titus

MADEREPO

DUENOW
After self-releasing its first album, recording the next and preparing to embark on a national tour, Chicago duo Duenow was struck with lingering illnesses, personal demons and, ultimately, reality. "We wanted to be watched on TV and end up on the radio," guitarist/vocalist Zach Duane says. "We wanted to be huge, and we nursed that dream—that hallucination—for a long time."

Duenow is rock at its core, but the duo pours on a serious dose of rockabilly, country, pop and even hip-hop (see the twosome's honky-tonk cover of Eminem's "Without Me"). Last year, the pair released the full-length "If You Could Only See What They Are Doing to You" on small indie United for Opportunity. With a little more than a year left on the imprint's three-year deal, Duenow is hoping the exposure will eventually bring the act closer to its dream of a major national tour.

Contact: Jenny Rubin, jenny@goodcooppr.com

—Katie Hasty

DUE NOW

MADEREPO

MADEREPO

MADEREPO
Everything Rosy In Zero 7’s Garden

Having started their musical careers in the 1990s as “gofers” at a London recording studio, Henry Binns and Sam Hardaker have long since blossomed into full-fledged artists as electronica act Zero 7. Atlantic Records issued the duo’s third album “The Garden” internationally May 22, with a U.S. release due June 6.

Zero 7 launched a U.K. tour booked by Primary Talent International May 25, featuring Swedish folk/pop artist Jose Gonzalez as guest vocalist. Nine European shows supporting James Blunt will follow in July ahead of an Aug. 27 headline set at the KCRW World Festival at Los Angeles’ Hollywood Bowl.

Gonzalez is a featured vocalist on “The Garden.” Although largely unknown at the time of recording, he is a hot property in Europe and his album “Veneer” (Peacock): is BPI-certified platinum (300,000 U.K. shipments).

London-based Atlantic U.K. VP of international Torsten Luth claims “The Garden” represents real growth for Zero 7. He admits Gonzalez’ involvement “has definitely helped coverage in the U.K. and parts of Europe,” but notes that “he’s hardly known by the rest of the world—and the album stands on its own.”

Zero 7 is signed to Universal Music Publishing.

—Steve Adams

TANGO STEPS: Paris-based French/Swiss/Argentine act Gotan Project is taking its tango/electronica fusion on the road. The trio kicks off European theater and festival shows June 17 in Zagreb, Croatia, taking in 14 countries before ending Oct. 20 in Marseille, France. Booker is Paris-based Aliax. Gotan Project will also play the KCRW World Festival alongside Zero 7.

Goton Project issued its debut set “La Revancha del Tango” in 2001 on band member Philippe Cohen-Solal’s own label Ya Basta. Label manager Laurent Dubrulle claims global shipments have passed 1 million copies.

Sophomore album “Lunático” (Ya Basta) was issued internationally April 11, licensed in France to Barclay/Universal. Dubrulle claims 60,000 domestic shipments, with U.S. and U.K. shipments through XL/Beggars at 25,000 and 15,000, respectively. “Lunático” peaked at No. 6 on Billboard’s European Albums chart on April 26.

Dubrulle says the international campaign for “Lunático” will largely rely on word-of-mouth. “There will be very little marketing, except in France where Barclay has TV and poster ads,” he notes.

Goton Project’s publishing is through Ya Basta/Science & Mélodie.

—Aynsley Pichelin

AUSSIE DIVAS: Four past “Australian Idol” contestants have teamed up as the Young Divas for a national tour Down Under: Sony BMG-signed DeAraugo, Curuenavuli and Williams are managed by Sydney-based David Caprice Management. Coleur is signed to Mebourne-based label/manangement firm Public Opinion.

“We found it challenging to launch major concerts for them individually,” David Caprice admits. “We felt that by putting them together, we’d create a supergroup and maybe bring all their fans out for a significant tour across Australia.

The act’s cover of Donna Summer’s 1989 hit “This Time I Know It’s for Real” (Sony BMG) entered the Australian Recording Industry Assoc. chart at No. 7 on May 14. The Divas publicly insist the tour is a one-off, as Curuenavuli and DeAraugo have solo releases out shortly. But Caprice says an album is possible if the 30,000-ticket tour sells out.

—Christie Eliezer

Golijov’s Opera A Hit

At first blush, a new opera meditating on the life and death of Spanish poet/playwright Federico Garcia Lorca seems an unlikely choice to be a chart hit. However, Osvaldo Golijov’s “Ainadamar” is precisely that.

Released last month by Deutsche Grammophon, the opera’s world-premiere recording features soprano Dawn Upshaw, mezzo-soprano Kelley O’Connor and soprano Jessica Rivera alongside the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and conductor Robert Spano, a longtime Golijov champion. Its sales success mirrors that of DG’s first Golijov release last year of the song cycle “Ayere,” which also put Upshaw front and center.

Amid his gorgeous lyrical lines and brilliantly colored orchestration, Golijov embroiders the guitar and cante jondo (“deep song”) idioms of traditional flamenco with lilting Afro-Cuban grooves and hypnotic field recordings made in Chiapas, Mexico.

Born in Argentina to an Eastern European Jewish family, the 45-year-old composer is intimately familiar with the notion of shifting identity, whether he is contemplating his own or other people’s. “There are very few isolated places in the world today,” Golijov observes. “So identity—whether cultural, religious or musical—is a very fluid concept.”

He notes that his extraordinary palette of musical colors and idioms on which he draws is part of that fluidity. “When I use flamenco, for instance,” he explains, “it’s because I need to evoke a certain emotion, not because the music is ‘flamenco.’ I modulate between cultures. I use them in the same way that other composers use tonal areas or modulate from key to key.”

Upshaw, a frequent muse for Golijov, sings the role of Margarita Xirgu in “Ainadamar.” She says that what he asks of her technically and emotionally has changed the way she approaches her own art.

“There’s an honesty and a beauty in his music,” Upshaw says thoughtfully. “Working with him has put me in a position where I am looking at my own life and my own music in a different way, and I am asking myself different questions, because I’m so moved by what he is doing.”

Upshaw’s enthusiasm seems to be shared by audiences, programmers and critics alike. This summer will see a broad sweep of Golijov’s performances. These include 1996’s “Last Round” at the Seattle Symphony and at Germany’s Schleswig-Holstein Festival, as well as 2002’s “Three Songs for Soprano and Orchestra,” featuring Upshaw, which the Minnesota Orchestra and conductor Osmo Vanska will perform at Amsterdam’s Concertgebow and the London Proms.

This August, Yo-Yo Ma will give the world premiere of Golijov’s new work for cello and orchestra with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and conductor Donald Runnicles at Tanglewood.

Electronic act ZERO 7 will be touring the United Kingdom, Europe and the States this summer.

Classical Score

ANASTASIA TSIOLCAS atsiolcas@billboard.com
REVIEW SPOTLIGHTS

ALBUMS

ELVIS COSTELLO & ALLEN TOUSSAINT

The River in Reverse

Producer: Joe Henry

Verve Forecast

Release Date: June 6

Though Costello’s band the Imposters are the entirely capable rhythm section (and Steve Nieve the standout second keyboardist), the dominant sound on “The River in Reverse” is the familiar, sophisticated strut of Toussaint’s elegant piano fillets and filigrees. There are five new Costello/Toussaint compositions here, seven wonderful, mostly obscure Toussaint tunes and Costello’s artful, achingly tite song. Toussaint, who was unfamiliar with Costello before their meeting, may have arched at the cleavorty enigmatic lyrics like those to “Six-Fingered Man” (“playing a seven-string guitar”). Among the co-writes, “Ascension Day” is a smart minor key update of Professor Longhair’s “Tipitina,” while “International Echo” is a jazzy variation on the classic “Sea Cruise” bounce. Costello’s vocal range is challenged like never before, but his phrasing is always on the money, and Joe Henry’s production makes it all sound so natural.—WR

AFI

December underground

Production: Jerry Finn

Release Date: June 6

On “December underground,” AFI is just as comfortable flanging memorably cold hardcore attire (“Kill Caustic”) or donning poppier modern threads (“Summer Shudder”). The California quartet tightly knits genres together, keeping the sonic patterns from becoming too busy. “Miss Murder” meshes Green Day’s “Minority” with the bouncing tempo of Stevie Wonder’s “Higher Ground.” “The Missing Frame” is the piece de resistance: ’80s new-wave tymbats and “oh, oh, oh” shoutouts that evoke U2 for a rousing anthem. Then there’s “Presidio ’21/2,” whose music-box chimes and the languid undertone make it an unsettling lullaby. There is plenty to love here, so don’t be surprised when you find it has become the current soundtrack to your life.—CT

JULIET VANEGAS

Limón y Sal

Producers: Cachorro Limón, Goran Soricin

Sony BMG

Release Date: June 6

An album of melodic love, lost love and simple happiness. The follow-up to Vanegas’ 2004 breakthrough, “Sil,” it has an award-winning pedigree. This time, Vanegas’ line of almost innocent simplicity, which is not to say that “Limón y Sal” is a simple album, but rather its clean, well-crafted melodies stand on their own, aided by acoustic arrangements and the earnest, innocent quality of Vanegas’ vocals. Tracks like “Duice Compania” are sweety beautiful, while “De Que Me Sirve” can be the best described as a pop tango with a dollop of attitude. Vanegas is a cool songwriter who is too smart to wallow in angst or self pity. Instead, she says things succinctly and effectively (“I don’t love you anymore”), often punctuating with her soulful accordion.—LC

SINGLES

TAYLOR HICKS

Do I Make You Proud

(4:12)

Producers: Absolute, Dane Way

Writers: P. Wilson, A. Watkins, T. Ackerman

Publisher: not listed

Anista Records

Taylor Hicks’ victory in the fifth season of “American Idol” presents a mighty challenge for label J. How do you take a charismatic physical presence that won voters and convert his unexceptional vocal talents into mass-appeal hitmaking? Hicks’ long-term prospects seem powerfully slim (297 Purple velvet?) and first single “Do I Make You Proud” is an insipid bid for acceptance beyond the pageant’s borders. The Billboard Hot 100 has traditionally propell’d “A.1.” to Number 1, thanks to robust post-finale sales, and Hicks will likely triumph. In terms of seeing his name on the single charts a year from now, our bets side closer to the Ruben Studdard column than to Kelly Clarkson’s.—CT

PHARELL

FEATURING KANYE WEST

Number 1

(3:58)

Producer: Pharell

Writers: P. Williams, K. West

Publishers: various

Interscope

Pharell and Kanye West’s first musical alliance as is unexpected as one would anticipate from the rapper/producer innovators. This midtempo groove is the fourth single that may be on Pharell’s extensively delayed solo debut. “In My Mind” here, the Neptunes’ more recognizable half inscribes his signature off-key falsetto over otherworldly keys and bells, though his simplistic rhymes are mediocre at best. Despite excessive ad-libbing, West showcases his knack for mixing unusual pop-culture references with artfully absurd phrasing (“I resurrected my god Jesus of Nazareth/too fresh as a prince while they Jazzy Jeff”). It may take a few listens, but should catch on with each radio spin.—CH

POP

CRACKER

Greenland

Producers: David Lowery; John McCutcheon

Cooking Vinyl

Release Date: June 6

What’s most surprising is how focused, tight and rocking the 14-song collection is given co-leader David Lowery’s break- overnching theme—a regrettable past mired in booze/dope/hangovers and marred by heartbreak. “Greenland” opens with its best song: the country-twanged “Something You Ain’t Got,” the sole, apropos co-write by American Minor’s Rob McCutcheon. The rest is easily Lowery’s most personal conveyance. Recurring topics—relationship strike-outs, cops breaking up bashes, reflection (the gem “Night Falls” whose meaning comes right out of my mouth like butterflies)—and caffeinated hope (the reggae-influenced “Better Times Corning Our Way”). Lowery’s humor also surfaces, as in his yam- filled care on “Everyone Gets Dani’s Favorites.” Fellow Cracker founder Johnny Hickman is featured on glistening guitar.—DO

TOTO

Falling in Between

Producer: Toto

Release Date: May 30

Anyone who knows TOTO only for its cadre of hits in the ’80s (“Rosanna,” “Africa,” et al.) simply knows little about this enduring dream team. “Falling in Between,” its 18th disc over 30 years—and first in four years—unites members David Patich, Bobby Kimball, Steve Lukather, Mike Porcaro and Simon Phillips with first-time keyboardist Greg Phillinganes (Eric Clapton, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder). The band experiments with world beats, blowtorch rock and a genuinely more progressive imporrtant Kimball supports the expert instrumentation with consummate lead vocals that flash with passion, while frequent free-guitar wielding solos from maestro Lukather never overshadow Toto’s strongest suit: indelible melodies. There is even a trio of ballads here as beautiful as anything that ever hit the singles chart. The song “My Feet” shows that an act now free to experiment to it heart’s desire is still as capable of crafting the perfect pop song. This outfit has it all and delivers without fail.—CT

CHRISTIAN

HYPER STATIC UNION

Lifegiver

Producers: Mac Powell, Mark Heimermann

Hyper Static Union

RKT/Consuming Fire

Release Date: May 9

This talented foursome is the flagship act for RKT, Recordtown’s new rock imprint. Discovered by Third Day’s Mac Powell (who co-produced this disc), there’s been a lot of industry buzz around this band, and it more than lives up to expectations. Musically inventive and lyrically potent, Hyper Static Union boasts an ear-catching, fresh sound. At the center is frontline Shaw Lewis’ expressive vocals. Like a beacon, he shines bright and strong on every cut, particularly on “Praying for Sunny Days,” “Now That It’s Over,” “Overhead” and the title track. In a sea of new Christian acts, look for Hyper Static Union to distance themselves from the pack.—DEP

GOSPEL

TYE TRIBBETT & G.A.

Victory Live

Producers: Tye & Thaddeaus Tribbett, Daren Sorey, Columbia/Sony Urban

Release Date: May 23

On their second time out, Tribbett and the 18-voice ensemble continued on >>p38

ROCK

LOURDS

Lords

Producer: Ed Stadum

Breaking Records

Release Date: May 30

Billboard Underground headline Lourds is all fire and brimstone in a live setting, and the act’s 12-track self-titled CD, the debut project for New York-based Breaking Records, is an emphatic confirmation. Stadum’s lead-hot vim that led singer Lourds piques and provokes. The band’s namesake howls, growls and teases, but she is actually a musical prodigy who played violin at Carnegie Hall when she was 6. Now how often does a front rock chick grow up into anamped fiddle and mandolin? Truly incomparable. The set was helmed by Grammy Award winner Ed Stadum, who has produced for the likes of the Ramones, Smitherens and Living Colour. Highlights abound, including obvious launch single “Astoropos,” as well as anger anthem “Erased” and fun, fervor-hearted “You Suck the Life Out of Me.” Innovative and yet accessible, Lourds breaks the rules, while poised to break into the big time. Contact breakingrecordsusa.com.—CT

JUNE 10, 2006 | www.billboard.biz | 37

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RTTTT

from >>p37

Greater Anointing deliver one of this year’s most adventurous albums. With formidable command of gospel, R&B, jazz, pop and rock, Tribbett & G.A. forge a spine-tingling musical mix that is staggeringly original and exciting. “I Want It All Back” puts hard-edged rock guitars over a pumping bottom end, and “Bless the Lord” sports a jazzy, r&funk groove. “Everything Will Be Alright” begins as easy, catchy pop and evolves into a soaring gospel/R&B anthem. Spanish electric guitar and percussion back gentle vocals that build to a majestic, bombastic peak on “Everything.” —GE

ANDRAE CROUCH
Mighty Wind
Preceded by Crouch’s Luther “Mano” Hayes, Slave/Verity/Zomba Gospel
Release Date: May 23

As a seven-year hiatus. Crouch returns with the album of a lifetime that has long ago taken on legendary proportions. Though this is only his second studio album, Crouch has been described as a “contemporary” in production, on both striking new material (the driving R&B of the irresistible “O Give Thanks”) and stunning reinterpretations of classics (“Softly and Tenderly”). Crouch draws far less from musical trends than his own seemingly bottomless well of creativity. Guest appearances by Fred Hammond, Marvin Winans and Kirk Whalum among others, and strong choral accompaniment of the San Diego Mass Choir and New Christ Church Memorial Choir of God in Christ Church, all serve to

CRITICS’ CHOICE: #1 new release, regardless of chart potential, highly recommended for musical merit.

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Dixie Chicks Start Large, But For How ‘Long’?

When an act’s forthcoming release draws attention from “60 Minutes” and the cover of Time, you know you have more than an everyday album on your hands. Indeed, Dixie Chicks’ “Taking the Long Way” is a big deal, selling $26 million copies in its first week.

Sure, that’s less than the 780,000-unit start that the trio’s last studio album, “Home,” had in 2001, yet it still stands as the third-largest sales week of 2006. But if you think the ongoing reaction to Natalie Maines’ 2003 criticism of President George W. Bush’s Iraq strategy has become quite the hubbub, you are probably too young to remember how the Beatles’ career unfolded. As spirited as this debate has been, Maines vs. Bush supporters pales next to the firestorm that erupted in 1966 when it was reported that John Lennon said, “We’re more popular than Jesus now.”

The flag-waving finger-pointing that Dixie Chicks engendered from country radio stations and their fans seems small change compared with the backlash Lennon’s comment unleashed. Those were simpler times, yet heated by the Vietnam War protests that would come to a boiling point at the 1968 Democratic Party Convention, so difference of opinion was not digested as easily as it might have been if Lennon had made the same remark a few years later.

Some church leaders lambasted the band, Beatles albums were burned at public rallies. Lennon soon clarified his remarks with an apology that was hardly contrite, yet not combative. It’s possible some outraged fans never forgave the Fab Four, but they seemed to recover just fine. The band, which already had seven chart-topping albums under its belt, scored two more No. 1 sets during the year of that public relations nightmare, with 10 more to follow, including the 2000 compilation “1.” It remains the best-selling act in the United States, according to the RIAA’s certification data.

Putting passions for politics, religion and war aside, a big difference between the aftermath of Lennon’s comment and that which followed Maines’ anti-Bush remark was that the Beatles got through their fracas without alienating most of the stations that played their music. Country radio may have started the fire by reacting with boycotts, but Dixie Chicks threw gas on those flames more than once (Billboard, May 27).

So, as we size up the 31% gap between where this album starts and the bigger launch that “Home” raised in 2002, how much of that decline can be attributed to conservative Republicans abandoning the trio? And, how much of that difference comes down to the fact that “Home” had already launched two country radio hits by the time it reached stores, while the first two songs from “Long Way” had a tepid reception from the format that has given the Chicks more exposure?

Conversely, you wonder that among those half-million-plus purchases of “Long Way,” how many were gestures of support from people who bought a country album for the first time, because they agree with the Chicks’ politics and sympathize with the act after the backlash it experienced.

The question was never whether Dixie Chicks would mount a strong opening week, given the wide press coverage of this album’s arrival and their very considerable fan base. They have sold 24 million albums since 1998, when the “Wide Open Spaces” set moved them from the independent sector to Sony Nashville.

That places them 33rd in accumulated album sales compared with all acts tracked since Nielsen SoundScan opened its doors in 1991, more than country acts like Brooks & Dunn, Faith Hill or Kenny Chesney have sold during longer career spans. Of the 30 acts that stand ahead of them only five (12.2 million, Britney Spears’ 28 million and Creed’s 25 million) had debut albums that arrived later than 1998.

The bigger question is how long this album’s legs will be, especially if country radio keeps sitting this one out. “Home” scored the biggest sales week of the Chicks’ career, but its sales, 5.8 million, lag behind the SoundScan sums for earlier albums “Spaces” (8.4 million) and 1999’s “Fly” (8.2 million). When did sales for “Home” cool? In March 2003, about as soon as Maines’ quip hit the fan.
### HOT 100 AIRPLAY

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<td><strong>SHANE TAYLOR</strong></td>
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<td><strong>NAGAI NO YUUKIYA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>HERE AND NOW</strong></td>
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<td><strong>SHAYNA WARD</strong></td>
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**SINGLE CHARTS**

**Top Airplay Singles Chart**

Crafted from a national sample of data supplied by Nielsen Broadcast Data Systems. Singles are ranked by number of gross audience impressions, computed by oral-airing standards, with weightings of airplay for Nielsen data. The exceptions are the Rhinetic Top 40, Adult Top 40, Adult Contemporary, Modern Rock and Adult R&B charts, which are ranked by total detections.

**Songs Showing an Increase in Audience (or Detection) over the previous week, regardless of chart movement.**

1. **All Of Me** - John Legend
2. **Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Song)** - Jawsh 685 ft. Jason Derulo
3. **Love Me Like You Do** - Dua Lipa
4. **Parachute** - coldplay
5. **Heat (Staying Alive)** - Calvin Harris ft. Arlo Parks & FKA twigs
6. **Changes** - The Weeknd
7. **Shallow** - Lady Gaga ft. Bradley Cooper
8. **Lose You To Love Me** - Selena Gomez
9. ** Maher Zain** - Maher Zain
10. **The heights** - Weekend
11. **Dance Monkey** - Tones And I
12. **Calm Down** - H.E.R.
13. **Stay** - The Kid Laroi ft. Justin Bieber
14. **2U** - Justin Bieber ft. Coldplay
15. **Memories** - Maroon 5 ft. Labrinth
16. **Bad Habit** - Billie Eilish
17. **One More Time** - Daft Punk
18. **Judas** - Gospel For Us
19. **Waves** - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne-Marie
20. **Teardrops** - Sam Smith

**Top Digital Songs Chart**

Compiled from a national sample of digital sales supplied by Nielsen SoundScan. Single sales are totaled for all outlets and are added to the sales of the respective albums. The scale; final results are based on combined sales of a single and its respective album(s).

1. **All Of Me** - John Legend
2. **Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Song)** - Jawsh 685 ft. Jason Derulo
3. **Love Me Like You Do** - Dua Lipa
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5. **Heat (Staying Alive)** - Calvin Harris ft. Arlo Parks & FKA twigs
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17. **One More Time** - Daft Punk
18. **Judas** - Gospel For Us
19. **Waves** - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne-Marie
20. **Teardrops** - Sam Smith

**Top Rock Albums Chart**

1. **This Is What the Truth Feels Like** - The Killers
2. **Woman in the Moon** - Kanye West
3. **The Unfettered Intergalactic** - Tool
4. **The Creation** - Mars
5. **The New Abortion** - The National
6. **The Grand Budapest Hotel Soundtrack** - Various Artists
8. **Stardust** - Steely Dan
9. **Dark Side of the Moon** - Pink Floyd
10. **The Killers EP** - The Killers
11. **The Night of the Hunter** - The Avett Brothers
12. **Death From Above 1979** - Death From Above 1979
13. **The Devil's Cut** - The Devil's Cut
14. **The Wildhearts** - The Wildhearts
15. **The Used** - The Used
16. **The White Stripes** - The White Stripes
17. **The Black Keys** - The Black Keys
18. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
19. **The Black Keys** - The Black Keys
20. **The Strokes** - The Strokes

**Top Internet Charts**

**Top Downloads Chart**

1. **All Of Me** - John Legend
2. **Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Song)** - Jawsh 685 ft. Jason Derulo
3. **Love Me Like You Do** - Dua Lipa
4. **Parachute** - coldplay
5. **Heat (Staying Alive)** - Calvin Harris ft. Arlo Parks & FKA twigs
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18. **Judas** - Gospel For Us
19. **Waves** - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne-Marie
20. **Teardrops** - Sam Smith

**Top Physical Chart**

1. **The White Stripes** - The White Stripes
2. **The Black Keys** - The Black Keys
3. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
4. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
5. **The Black Keys** - The Black Keys
6. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
7. **The White Stripes** - The White Stripes
8. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
9. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
10. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
11. **The White Stripes** - The White Stripes
12. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
13. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
14. **The Strokes** - The Strokes
15. **The Strokes** - The Strokes

**Top Pop Charts**

1. **All Of Me** - John Legend
2. **Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Song)** - Jawsh 685 ft. Jason Derulo
3. **Love Me Like You Do** - Dua Lipa
4. **Parachute** - coldplay
5. **Heat (Staying Alive)** - Calvin Harris ft. Arlo Parks & FKA twigs
6. **Changes** - The Weeknd
7. **Shallow** - Lady Gaga ft. Bradley Cooper
8. **Lose You To Love Me** - Selena Gomez
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10. **The heights** - Weekend
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14. **2U** - Justin Bieber ft. Coldplay
15. **Memories** - Maroon 5 ft. Labrinth
16. **Bad Habit** - Billie Eilish
17. **One More Time** - Daft Punk
18. **Judas** - Gospel For Us
19. **Waves** - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne-Marie
20. **Teardrops** - Sam Smith

**Weekly Sales Chart**

1. **All Of Me** - John Legend
2. **Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Song)** - Jawsh 685 ft. Jason Derulo
3. **Love Me Like You Do** - Dua Lipa
4. **Parachute** - coldplay
5. **Heat (Staying Alive)** - Calvin Harris ft. Arlo Parks & FKA twigs
6. **Changes** - The Weeknd
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15. **Memories** - Maroon 5 ft. Labrinth
16. **Bad Habit** - Billie Eilish
17. **One More Time** - Daft Punk
18. **Judas** - Gospel For Us
19. **Waves** - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne-Marie
20. **Teardrops** - Sam Smith

**Top R&B Songs Chart**

1. **All Of Me** - John Legend
2. **Savage Love (Laxed - Siren Song)** - Jawsh 685 ft. Jason Derulo
3. **Love Me Like You Do** - Dua Lipa
4. **Parachute** - coldplay
5. **Heat (Staying Alive)** - Calvin Harris ft. Arlo Parks & FKA twigs
6. **Changes** - The Weeknd
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8. **Lose You To Love Me** - Selena Gomez
9. ** Maher Zain** - Maher Zain
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11. **Dance Monkey** - Tones And I
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15. **Memories** - Maroon 5 ft. Labrinth
16. **Bad Habit** - Billie Eilish
17. **One More Time** - Daft Punk
18. **Judas** - Gospel For Us
19. **Waves** - Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne-Marie
20. **Teardrops** - Sam Smith
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<th>Number (Price)</th>
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<td>Johnny Knoxville/Simon Cowell</td>
<td>UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOME VIDEO</td>
<td>30644 (14.98)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2</td>
<td>Martin Lawrence/Nia Long</td>
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<td>THE CHRONICLES OF NARINA (FULL SCREEN)</td>
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Austin Music Stalwart Clifford Antone Dies

To close friends he was known as “C.J.” To the music industry he was the man behind Antone’s, the famed Austin blues club. To all, Clifford Jamal Antone was a colorful figure, a respected friend of musicians and a driving force behind American roots music.

Antone died May 30 at his home in Austin. The cause of death has not been announced. He was 56.

Born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas, Antone moved to Austin in the late 1960s and attended the University of Texas.

In 1975, he and Texas blues singer Angela Strehli launched the original club, with zydeco musician Clifton Chenier performing on opening night. Antone’s became a haven for blues and soul luminaries including Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, Buddy Guy, Albert Collins and B.B. King. Antone’s also played a major role in cultivating the careers of such local talents as Stevie Ray Vaughan, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Bob Schneider and Charlie Sexton.

In the late 1980s, Antone launched his own label, Antone’s Records and Tapes, featuring much of the club’s top talents. Not long afterward he also opened Antone’s Record Store, specializing in American roots music.

Antone had relinquished ownership of the club in 1984 when he was convicted of possessing more than 1,000 pounds of marijuana and served 14 months of a five-year sentence in federal prison. The club is currently owned by a board of directors headed by his sister, Susan Antone.

In 2000, Antone was placed behind bars again for two years for pleading guilty for conspiracy to deliver marijuana and money laundering.

In recent years, Antone taught a course at the University of Texas on the history of the blues, raised funds for American Youthsworks and responded to Hurricane Katrina with an all-star benefit, “Neighborhood in Need.”

Antone’s devotion to roots music is captured in the documentary “Antone’s Home of the Blues,” which premiered at the 2004 South by Southwest Film Festival and will be released June 6 on DVD by Koch Vision.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the Clifford Antone Memorial Fund, care of Prosperity Bank, or to American Youthsworks.

— Sarah Han

DEATHS

Billy Walker, 77, of injuries suffered when a van in which he was riding overturned on I-35 near South of Montgomery, Ala., on May 21. Country legend and Grand Ole Opry star Walker was killed along with his wife and manager, Bev, and band members Charles Lilly Jr., 44, and Daniel Patron, 40.

Walker’s grandson, Joshua Brooks, 21, was seriously injured in the accident and remains hospitalized. The group was on its way back to Nashville after a show near Gulf Shores, Ala.

Born in Ballis, Texas, Walker built an early career as a regular on Dallas radio show “Big D Jamboree” as “the Masked Singer” in 1949. According to the CMT Web site, Walker was one of the first artists to record a Willie Nelson song. Although “Funny How Time Slips Away” reached only No. 23 on Billboard’s country singles chart, it helped establish Walker’s national reputation. He ultimately had more than 60 songs on the country chart, including his No. 1 hit, “Charlie’s Shoes.” He was a mainstay of the Opry after being inducted in 1960.

Freddie Garrity, 65, May 19 in Bangor, North Wales. He had been suffering from emphysema for several years. Garrity was the founder/lead singer of U.K. pop band Freddie & the Dreamers. Born in Manchester, England, in 1940 (some sources say he was born in 1936), Garrity formed Freddie & the Dreamers in 1959. After some success in Britain, the group followed the Beatles to the United States in the first wave of the British Invasion. Their wackiness played well with U.S. TV audiences and Freddie & the Dreamers quickly hit No. 1 on Billboard’s Top Pop Singles chart with “I’m Telling You Now” in March 1965.

The quintet’s wild stage moves—raising arms and legs in rhythm to the music—spawned a dance sensation, “the Freddie,” and another hit, “Do the Freddie,” which reached No. 18.

Garrity disbanded the group in 1971 and went solo, but he reformed the Dreamers in the mid-70s with new band members. He was married three times and leaves four children.
ACM AWARDS: The 44th annual Academy of Country Music Awards show honored the year’s hottest acts May 23 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Rascal Flatts, award-winning vocal group of the year for the fourth consecutive year, performed its No. 1 single “What Hurts the Most” with Kelly Clarkson at the awards show. From left are Rascal Flatts’ Joe Don Rooney,卡尔克、Ronnie Dunn and Gary LeVox.

HIP-HOP FINANCIAL SUMMIT: The Hip-Hop Survival Action Network’s Hip-Hop Summit on Financial Education gathered a large group of hip-hop celebrities and business leaders to speak with attendees about the importance of financial literacy at Manhattan Center Studios, Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City, June 19.

From left are HHAN Chairman Russell Simmons with panelists LL Cool J and Vahid F. DERZIEF, CEO Chris Lighty.

BMI FILM & TELEVISION AWARDS: BMI handed out more than 100 BMI crystals at its annual Film & Television Awards May 17 at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. The black-tie gala was hosted by BMI president/CEO Del R. Bryant and film/TV relations VP Doreen Ringer Ross.

A highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of the BMI Richard Kirk Award for Outstanding Career Achievement to film composer Harry Gregson-Williams (“The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe”). Gregson-Williams, center, is flanked by Bryant, left, and Ross.

Enjoying the Red Rocks from left, are BMI Director of Film/TV Relations Ray Yee, BMI Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Ray Hagen, BMI VP of Creative Relations Ray Yee, BMI Chief Executive Officer Ray Hagen, right, BMI President/CEO Ray Yee, BMI Chief Executive Officer Ray Hagen, and BMI President/CEO Ray Hagen.

BMI Crystal Awards were presented to BMI-composed songs, BMI-affiliated songs, BMI-affiliated composers and BMI-affiliated songs and BMI-affiliated songs.

From left are BMI chairman Russell Simmons with panelists LL Cool J and Vahid F. DERZIEF, CEO Chris Lighty.
HINTE’S FANTASY TENURE ENDS
Fantasy Records, now part of the Concord Music Group, has
handed pink slips to about a dozen employees. Among
those leaving the Berkeley, Calif.-based label is the beloved
Terri Hinte, who was with Fantasy for 33 years, the last 28 as
director of publicity. Her last day was May 31, but, trust,
she will not be forgotten. In fact, she will receive the A-Team Award
from the Jazz Journalists Assn. at a July ceremony in Pasadena, Calif.
And though Fantasy is revered in jazz circles, don’t for-
get, the storied jazz label was also the home of rock band Cre-
dence Clearwater Revival, disco pioneer Sylvester and R&B group
the Blackbyrds. So, for Hinte, love surely is all around.

JUST THE TWO OF THEM
ASCAP has tapped LL Cool J and Bill Withers as its legacy
honorees at this year’s Rhythm & Soul Music Awards.
Grammy Award-winning rapper LL will receive the ASCAP
Golden Note Award in recognition of a career that dates
back to the 1985 release of “Radio,” the first album issued
by iconic rap label Def Jam. Past Golden Note re-
cipients include Sean “Diddy” Combs, Jermaine Dupri,
Jay-Z and Quincy Jones. Fellow Grammy winner Withers
will take home the organization’s Rhythm & Soul Heritage
Award. Inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame last
year, Withers crafted classics as “ Ain’t No Sunshine,”
“Just the Two of Us” and “Lovely Day.” Former Heritage
Award honorees include Earth, Wind & Fire; Rick James;
and Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis. ASCAP’s 19th annual
Rhythm & Soul Music Awards will be held June 26 at the
Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles.

SOUNDS OF ‘WILDFIRE’
Lionsgate and the ABC Family network have big music-
related plans for the third season of its one-hour drama
“Wildfire.” What Track hears, the folks behind the hit show
are securing much new music for the new season, which
films in New Mexico from July through December.
As savvy Track readers recall, “Wildfire” was the first U.S.
TV show to license James Blunt’s “You’re Beautiful” as well as
put the singer on camera for two songs. The series worked similarly with Jem and new Lionsgate publishing signing Aidan Hawken, who each have album (sophomore and
debut, respectively) due later this year. Music by rising star KT Tunstall was heard in season two.

By the way, Track also hears that iTunes-only mixes of music from
“Wildfire” seasons one and two will be available in the fall. The
“Wildfire: Season 2” DVD and a third volume to the show’s
iTunes music series will arrive around the time of season three’s
January 2007 premiere.

GET YOUR MIND RIGHT
By now, Track readers are aware that EMI Music
Publishing chairman Martin Bandier and Alicia Keys will co-
host a June 5 event in MTV’s “TRL” stu-
dio. What you have likely heard is that the pair will
discuss a new educational program for college students who are entering the music business. From what Track
hears, Bandier and Keys will reveal details of the program—
scheduled to launch at Syracuse (N.Y.) University in the fall—during a bidding process and college stu-
dents. We may not be surprised if another EMI Music Pub-
lishing heavyweight (think Def Jam Recordings president/CEO) makes a surprise appearance.

BACK TO THEIR ROOTS
It appears that the B-52’s are working on a new album in the state where it all began for them.
Georgia. A Track correspondent, who just happened
to be in Atlanta recently, ran into band’s front man
Fred Schneider. When asked what he was doing in the
ATL, Schneider, who resides in the NYC, said the band was writing and recording new songs. Accord-
ing to Schneider, the group’s pioneering dance-rock sound remains ever-present. And yes, Cindy Wilson
is very much a part of the band.

FASHION WITH A TWANG
According to Track’s sources on Nashville’s Music Row and
in the global book publishing world, much buzz is
surrounding “Manuel: The Cowboy Couturier—Dress-
ing Hollywood, Presidents and the Kings of Country.”
In fact, the work in progress appears to be a main topic of
discussion at several publishing houses around the
world. (A bidding war may even be on the horizon.) Ap-
parently, folks are salivating over the coffee-table trib-
ute book’s dreamy mix of clothing design, celebrity and
British lensman Cambridge Jones’ cool photography.
Manuel, as he is universally known, has dressed many
in rhinestones and embroidered roses, such as country
stars George Jones, Dolly Parton, Alan Jackson and Keith
Urban, along with Madonna, the Rolling Stones, Cher, John
Wayne, John Travolta and the Grateful Dead. The Nashville-
based designer’s client list also includes President George
W. Bush, but Track won’t hold that against him.

SCHIFRIN’S NEW MISSION
As Tom Cruise struts around the world promoting “Mission:
Impossible III,” Track is confident that composer
Lalo Schifrin is smiling—big time. The six-time Academy
Award nominee and four-time Grammy Award winner, per-
haps best-known for composing the original “Mission: Im-
possible” theme, is on a worldwide trek in support of his
new disc, “Letters From Argentina,” which pays homage
in his homeland.

EXECUTIVE TURNTABLE

RECORD COMPANIES: J/Arista Records in New York
promotes Stephanie Lopez to VP of urban adult promo-
tion. She was senior national director.
INR Records/SRE Recordings in Nashville promotes
Nicki Silverman to manager of promotion. She was
label coordinator.
BNA Records in Nashville names Buffy Cooper
Southeast regional promotion manager. She was national
promotion director at Epic Records.
TVT Records ups Joe Wiggins to VP of urban publicity
and video promotion. He was urban publicity director.
MCA Music Philippines in Manila names Ricky Ilacad
managing director. He held the same position at Warner
Music Philippines.
Immergent in Los Angeles names Stacy Paris product
manager. She was production manager at Trifilms.

PUBLISHING: BMG Songs in Los Angeles ups Derrick
Thompson to senior VP of urban music. He was VP
at BM in Nashville names Jody Williams VP of writer/pub-
lisher relations. He was president of Jody Williams Music.

MEDIA: MTV Networks chief digital officer Jason
Hirschorn resigned his position to “explore entrepre-
nurial opportunities.” Effective immediately, MTV
Networks Digital executive VP Nick Lehman will take
over most of Hirschorn’s duties.
MTV Networks International in Miami names Melissa
Quinley executive VP of Viacom Brand Solutions-
Europe. She is based in London. Quinley was senior VP of
international marketing partnerships and ad sales at
MTV Networks Latin America.
CMT in Nashville promotes Laurian Ryan to director
of music and talent development. She was manager.

RELATED FIELDS: EMI Music Group senior VP of digi-
tal development and distribution Ted Cohen is leaving
the label to form his own consultancy, TAG Strategic.
Roo Media in New York names Steve Quillin COO. He
was senior VP at Sony Music
Send submissions to shana@billboard.com.

G A O O D W O R K S

LIZA WITH A ‘Z’
Liza Minnelli will be honored at the 14th annual American
Society of Young Musicians’ Spring Benefit Concert & Awards.
The June 13 fund raiser will be held at the House of Blues in
Los Angeles. Proceeds from the event will go to the ASYM’s
Musicians Development and Support Fund. For more info,
log on to asmusicians.org.

SOUL OFFERING
Tim McGraw and Faith Hill’s Soul2Soul II trek will make a
special stop July 5 at the New Orleans Arena. Net profits
from this one show will be donated to the couple’s Neigh-
bors’ Keeper Foundation, which provides funding for the
purchase of goodwrenches for those still suffering from the
effects of Hurricane Katrina.
The Billboard Q&A with British duo BANANARAMA!

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